

November 2, 2025

All Saints Day

“Coming Out of It”

Revelation 7:9-17

*“These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

Have you every been angry at God? It happens to Christians sometimes; especially when someone dies; dies young when his or her whole life was ahead of them. It happens when one suffers an enduring affliction seemingly for no reason. Believers do get angry at God.

Have you ever been disappointed with God? That happens also. One desires one outcome but what materializes is the opposite. One unfairly loses a job, doesn't get accepted to a school, suffers a circumstance that destroys a dream. We get disappointed because the life we sought is not the one God gives.

Do you ever get frustrated with God? Why all the pain? Why all the evil? Why is this world such a mess? Why is my family such a mess? Why am I such a mess? We get frustrated with God simply because we expect better and we think God should deliver on that. We expect the peace, joy and contentment Scripture speaks of but the reality is conflict, bitterness, pain and want.

But this is the hard truth with which many, many Christians struggle. This is simply the world that sin has made it to be. This is the world into which the evil one and his legions have been cast. Genesis chapter three details the fall into sin and the result is curse: curse on the devil, curse on man, curse on woman, curse on the ground, curse on every single bit of creation. This is the great tribulation.

Now I do have to qualify that statement a bit. Revelation does seem to indicate a time of great persecution and hardship for Christians before Christ's return and that may be understood as the great tribulation proper. But we live in the end times, and those Beatitudes that Jesus spoke in the Gospel lesson makes pretty clear we are called to live a love that is counter to the way of the world. There's going to be friction. Jesus elsewhere talks of those who follow Him facing various trials and tribulations unique to believers. So I stand by the statement. Your life here is your personal great tribulation.

We grind against this because here and now is where we are and we want it to be better. But the promise of it all being better is a future promise. Hope, joy, contentment—these all can be present gifts by faith in Christ—these should be present for all who call on His name—but we have these in the midst of and in spite of the darkness surrounding us and the curse still afflicting us, not absent it.

It is incredibly important Christians understand this. If you think Jesus is supposed to make the here and now all peachy for you, that is a recipe for despair. He doesn't promise to do that and a cursed world is going to afflict you sooner or later. This is why the so called “prosperity Gospel” is so evil. It claims if you have faith, Jesus will make the here and now great. Thus, when that doesn't happen it sets people up to think Jesus has failed them when He most certainly has not.

And you might be thinking to yourself, “Gee Pastor Rich, thanks for such a dark message on the Sunday of All Saints. It's almost as depressing as the New Orleans Saints.” Well, that might be true if the cursed world was the only place we could see ourselves. But it's not.

Look at John's vision. He sees "*a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands.*"

We read this and think it is a future glory; that which we look forward to in eternity. But I want to point out a little something in the grammar. I checked the original Greek just to be sure about this and the ESV translation is correct. The elder identifies these as "*the ones coming out of the great tribulation.*" He doesn't say, "have come out." It's not past tense. It's present tense. While this vision may indeed be a future picture, I think it is also a present picture. It is the present tense for the church of the first century, and also for our present; the church of the twenty-first century.

Who are these saints coming out who are clothed in white? "*They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*"

Where does one get washed in the blood of Christ? Holy Baptism! Have you been baptized? Yes? Then your robe has been washed! This vision is about you...now! You have been made a holy saint in the blood of the Lamb!

What does this mean? This means that as this cursed creation behaves in all sorts of nasty ways you know that you are not part of it. You are coming out of it...now...it's in process! This is the reality of the washed! We are standing in this very vision of paradise today!

Think about it. We are baptized. We today confessed our sins and Christ Jesus through your pastor declared you forgiven, justified, holy saints of God. We are going to receive the very risen, ascended and glorified body and blood of Christ into ourselves today as the guarantee of reconciliation and life everlasting. We are here, standing before Christ, in hymns and liturgy and prayer joyously proclaiming, "*Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb! Amen. Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.*"

We are the white-robed saints in the vision! And yes, of course, it is a now-and-not-yet kind of thing, but that makes it no less true. We are not bound to the cursed earth. When we are afflicted here it is not an enduring thing. We are coming out of it.

This is the wonderful truth of which we should remind ourselves whenever we become disappointed or frustrated or angry with God. Actually, this is why we should bring all that before God in prayer. The very act of prayer is a reminder of this blessed reality.

How can you pray? Because you are a saint; His saint, washed in the blood of the Lamb. He hears you because He has brought you to saving faith in Christ and you stand wrapped in Christ your brother, made a holy child of God. We bring our angers, frustrations and disappointments to our Father as children do. But in doing so, behind all that is the trust the knowledge you are indeed "coming out" of whatever the tribulation is.

This does not make light of our troubles. Indeed, Christ as our brother endured them Himself, even unto death. But it is His resurrection that proves those washed in His blood are today coming out of the darkness already, standing in His marvelous light.

I'd like you to remember this especially in the toughest of times. This ugly, cursed creation will afflict saints with all manner of evil. Truth be told, because we endure in Christ we may endure even worse affliction than the unbelievers around us, being targeted by Satan, taken advantage of by the evil, suffering humbly in love as Christ did. But we are always coming out of it, destined for glory before the throne. We even stand there today, now and not yet.

When the world does its worst and it makes you disappointed, frustrated or angry, even when the cursed consequence of death draws near, bring it to God and remember what He has

done for you. You are baptized. You are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Whatever it is, you are coming out of it. You are His saint, and you are coming home. Amen.