



# ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

## THIS SUNDAY September 2 & BEYOND

### “Living Water Leads to Real Loving”



For all the times that someone has said, “All Jesus wants is for us to love each other”, it is clear to me, at least, that people want to live their lives without really wanting to work at exactly what they claim Jesus is saying.

But even more than the way that we treat each other in love, that statement, by some, often implies a desire to not have to be held accountable to any higher source.....(ahem) like Jesus. Perhaps the issue is just not having yet believed that Jesus, as he claimed, is God.

So, my reply to that statement is often, “That’s not the only thing Jesus says about such things.” That may be more than someone wants to dig into and the conversation dies away. Or someone may think my statement is offensive to their statement, and the conversation immediately becomes tense and quite untenable.

Can’t we all just get along with each other? Well, no. We can’t “JUST” get along. Fortunately, God has given us a really precise understanding. It includes a commitment to God, and a commitment to each other, with handout descriptions of those attitudes and behaviors and actions that will destroy “loving each other” and descriptions of those attitudes and behaviors and actions that will actually be helping us love each other and get along with each other.

While we are all here on earth in this life and Kingdom, it will never just be an easy thing.

In the Gospel lesson for this Sunday, September 2, 2018 (in fact, all three of the readings, and the Psalm, too) this understanding is spoken of. Belief in God, besides the hope in the promises that God makes for us in his presence with us and our presence with him forever, includes the standards of living that he demands of us. In other words, ethical living comes and is sustained by faith in God! It is nearly

impossible to maintain an ethical life without a belief in God. And then God tells us what it means to live a moral life with each other; taking that ethical life and applying it morally into our relationships with each other. And THEN the statement “All Jesus Wants....” can be seen to be seriously lacking, despite understanding the sincere intent. And ESPECIALLY when Jesus says in the Gospel that such right living is evidenced, that is, produces fruit not by outward rules and restrictions necessarily, but by the heart. A heart given to God.

In the Gospel Jesus points to what comes out of the heart, and then doesn't leave it there. He shares a list of behaviors that can actually come out of someone's “heart” and into action. Bad, wrong, action.

“For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man.” That means that the goodness and peace and love which we all “just need to put into action” will be interrupted, never get going, flash out, flame out, corrode if these other things are in operation. That's what defile means. In agricultural terms it can be said that you can have a plan for the best of fruit and crops, but if you plant in soil that either is not prepared, or is full of contaminants, that crop will never be realized. Okay, that begins to make sense. But there is one more part of the equation, or formula for understanding about how this all has to be to work God's Kingdom of love and peace. And that would be a solid relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, who is the vine, the living spring, the good soil all wrapped up into One. In this same Gospel Jesus points to this clearly when he quotes from a Hebrew Prophet, Isaiah, hundreds of years before. And Moses, although not quoted by Jesus in the Gospel, but who says it clearly in our first reading for Sunday, says (and I am going to paraphrase)

If you honor Me (God) with your lips, and keep your heart right close to Me;  
Then your worship of Me will be right, and you will teach my teachings to all men.

So, we hear the first and basic necessity for this love and peace we hope for all people: your right relationship with God! That's because he provides all that is necessary, even understanding of what good fruit and a good crop looks like in the first place! And he gives us the strength to recognize what good things need to come from our hearts, that will then provide not defilement, but enrichment for those crops to grow.

In agricultural terms it can be envisioned by a common scene in the San Joaquin Valley: a canal for water, which provides the necessary element for growth, running along a field of prepared soil, and 8-foot corn plants growing as far as the eye can see. And they will get taller, and bear much fruit as long as they continue to have good soil fed by plenty of water.

God is your living water. Let him water your heart, and be diligent in forming your heart for enrichment not defilement, so that you may bear good fruit which will include the command of Jesus that we love God and each other!

Fr. Robert G. Eaton, Interim Rector

Readings for this Sunday – The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Deuteronomy 4:1-9 Psalm 15 Ephesians 6:10-20 Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

## CALENDAR

**SUNDAY: The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue*—

*Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.*

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)