

Pastor T.C. Arnold  
All Saints  
Revelation 7:9-14  
November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2014

Many times the familiar songs we hear on the radio will take our thoughts back to a different time and place. Some memories happy, I suppose. Some sad, I imagine as well. Familiar hymns we sing on any given Sunday will at times do the same. Sometimes I've heard some of you say, that hymn was sung at my confirmation. Sometimes you have said, "We sung that hymn at my parent's funeral." To this day, when I hear the hymn, "Children of the Heavenly Father" I always think of my father. He loved that hymn and we sang it at his funeral. Certain songs take us back.

When we sing our hymns today, we are not the only ones singing. Of course, Christians around the world are singing these hymns. The saints in heaven sing with us as well. Heaven sings along with you today. How blessed it is, to come into a place like this and sing with the saints – the ones next to you... the ones that have preceded you into heaven. When we breach that doorpost of the sanctuary, we enter into the presence of God and the company of heaven. No, this is not heaven. But here we encounter heaven like nowhere else. Here the Word is spoken... It's a heavenly, life-giving Word. Here, the means of grace for the forgiveness of sins are shared... It's a heavenly gift that unites us with our Lord.

The Book of Psalms has been called the hymnal of the Old Testament. With their poetic structures along with a wide variety of situations they could be sung in, it's no wonder why. There are songs of great praise and rejoicing, and then also songs of great woe and lament. Moses and the children of Israel sang a song after crossing the Red Sea on dry ground. Miriam sang as well. King David played his instrument and who can forget men like Zachariah who spoke that song when he got his voice back and Mary's blessed, "My soul magnifies the Lord..." in the Magnificat sung by the church today.

And then we have that great multitude that no one could number standing before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands... they were crying, shouting, screaming with a loud voice (Were they singing?), "*Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!*" If they didn't sing it, we certainly can – and do. We sing with the saints. On this All Saints Day celebration God's people are the gathered guest standing before the throne – shouting with a loud voice. We shout and sing with the saints. And that is what we will do today. We will sing with the saints.

Beloved, you are children of God and you are a part of that great multitude singing praises to God gathered around the throne. You are robed in white – yes the sinner who is washed clean. And we have no alternative, we have no other recourse than to sing out – shout out in liturgical song. Turn to hymn 950 in your hymnal. Let's sing "Splendor and Honor" with the saints in that heavenly gathering around the throne.

*"... and they fell on their faces before the throne and worship God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen!'"* You see, words like this are written to remind us that

we are not alone in praise and adoration. The singing and shouting saints are in good voice alongside of us. Today we remember those who have gone before us and have been transferred from Christ Lutheran Church to the Church-triumphant. They are our loved ones. They are the pillars of our congregation. They are people we have greeted in the place many times. They are the ones who have raised us, lived with us, and were always there for us. They are the ones who sang with us and worshiped with us. And they still sing. They still gather with us when we come into the presence of the Lord.

It's hard to imagine this heavenly picture with a multitude no one can count singing praises to God. There seem to be fewer and fewer – not more – who are doing so. In this very discouraging world we live in today we see what sin has done. It has turned God's loved children into deceivers, into excuse makers, into a people with terrible priorities, into liars, into cheaters, into adulterers, and into murderers. In other words, we have seen sin turn our world into what we are all like today. We have seen sin turn this world into a place of pain, hurt and anguish. We have seen our hopes dashed and joy turn to despair. These times are too numerous to count and they persist. So what do we do?

We bend our knee and realize that we are not alone. The saints in heaven have run the same race and their goal has been realized. Yours will be too. This world and all its grief will pass away. But the throne will not. The white-robe won for us will not. The promise of salvation to those who believe on Him will not. The singing of the saints will not stop. We won't stop. Let's sing again with the saints. Hymn 822, Alleluia! Let Praises Ring vv. 1 and 4.

*“Then one of the elders addressed me, saying ‘Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?’ I said to him, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said to me, ‘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...’”*

Making robes white with blood. That's something only Jesus could do. And that is what He did. It's a paradox. Blood doesn't make things white. Oh yes it does. It does when it is the blood of Jesus. The Lord has made us whiter than snow. And in this vale of tears we live in today – with all its sin and imperfection – with all our sins and iniquities – the Lord keeps on pouring out the blood of the Lamb. The Lamb who was slain for the sins of the world. No, He is no ordinary lamb. He is the Lamb who is the Son. He is the Lamb who is the one true God – who came to be sacrificed – because we needed that perfect sacrifice. Who came to be raised to life to show us that new life. Who came to ascend to heaven – crowned in glory – who pours out His life giving blood to the saints even today? We have reason to sing beloved in the Lord. We have reason for the saints to sing gazing upon the glorious sight of our “Crowned King” who washes us with blood – His blood. We crown Him because He is the Lord.

To conclude, let's stand and sing hymn 495 – Look, Ye Saints, the Sight is Glorious. We will sing vv. 1 and 4.

Amen. The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.