

All Saint's Sunday

Meditation Preached at Foundry United Methodist Church

by Rev. Dean Snyder

Sunday, November 3, 2002

Psalm 23

Matthew 5:1-11

Remember, this is our prayer, remember. Remember and inscribe us in the book of life.

It was a retreat and people had come from around the country to attend -- and as often happens on retreat, you have time to think about things that you stayed too busy the rest of the year to think about.

I was talking with a man from another part of the country, one of the two or three dozen most influential people in the state that he happened to come from. We were thinking about things that we usually stayed too busy the rest of the year to think about. He was worrying about his grandchildren and how they would remember him when he had died. He had worked all of his life to be a successful, steady, dependable leader in his particular profession. What occurred to him, he told me, was that most of the people that he remembered from his childhood - long dead and gone now - were people, he said, who had been characters, who in some way or another had been strange or unusual - an uncle whom he remembered because he would always blow a smoke ring from his cigar and a grandmother whom he remembered because no matter how much cake or pie he ate, she always forced more on him until he thought he was about to split. Another uncle told tall stories.

The people, he said, that he remembered from his childhood, now long dead and gone, were people who in some way or another had been characters. His goal, for the rest of his life, he said, was to figure out some way to become a character so that his children and his grandchildren would remember him affectionately and lovingly when he was gone.

There is inside of us, all of us, the desire to be remembered. It's part of the reason some of us work so hard - long hours, long weeks - trying to be unique - outstanding in some way in what we do - trying to make our mark -- so that we will be remembered.

So it is a good thing as the choir reminds us this morning that God remembers us. It is a good thing to hear for these few moments the beatitudes read and to remember what it is about us that is blessed in God's memory.

Blessed in God's memory are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers and the persecuted. It is not necessarily those of us whose names are most likely to be written about in the newspaper. It is not necessarily those of us who have climbed our way to the top of our professions. It's not necessarily those of us who are most talked about and adulated who are at the deepest places of God's memory.

It's when we are willing to be poor in our spirits so that we might receive the spirits of others. It is when we carry the pain of the world and mourn with those who mourn. It's when we're hungry and thirsty for more justice in the world. It's when we show mercy. It's when we strive with a purity of heart for true and faithful life. It's when we make peace. It's when we're willing to be persecuted for what we know is right. Then we are lodged most deeply into the mind of God's memory.

We pray, this morning for all of those who have died and who are precious in our memory. And, we remember that it was not their power, or their riches, or their influence, or their fame that made us love them so much. But, it was their kindness, and their mourning with us, and their meekness, and their hunger and their thirst that made us love them.

So, when we are weak and poor, and when we share the pain of the world and when we are gentle, when we are hungry and thirsty for a better world, when we show mercy, when we make peace, when we are willing to bear the weight of persecution on behalf of the good and the right, God remembers us with a deep love and we will live eternally.