

## Everyday Saints

On Sunday November 1<sup>st</sup> – All Saints Day – we finished our sermon series on saints by celebrating Everyday Saints that God has sent into our lives to inspired us.

1. Warm-up Question: What's one of your most saintly traits? You can tell the truth or a lie. Once you state your answer, we'll vote to decide if you're telling the truth. 😊
2. We tend to think that, to be a saint, you've got to do something amazing – like St. Francis, Joan of Arc, or Troy Perry. And, yes, some people are saints because of amazing things they did. But others are saints simply because of who they are – simple people with beautiful souls who live quiet, grace-full lives. As I Samuel 16:7 says, “The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Who comes to mind for you? Tell us about an Everyday Saint that you've known.
3. In Sunday's sermon, Jeff identified three traits that often characterize Everyday Saints, starting with **surrender**. Everyday Saints are people who realize that life is much bigger than them. So instead of putting themselves at the center and pretending everything revolves around them, and getting upset when it doesn't, they gracefully accept whatever roles life assigns them. Instead of fighting life, they embrace what is and make the most of it.
  - a. Jeff shared a litany of unexpected disappointments he has encountered this year both at church and in his personal life. How 'bout you? What are some hopes and expectations of yours that got shattered this year?
  - b. When we encounter disappointment, we often ask, “Why me?” By contrast, saints often turn the question around and ask, “Why not me?” Is it wrong to ask, “Why me?” Is it better to ask, “Why not me?” Why or why not?
  - c. When we encounter disappointment, we often say, “I don't understand!” By contrast, saints often turn the statement around and say, “I don't have to understand.” Is it wrong to want to understand? Is it better to say, “I don't have to understand?” Why or why not?
  - d. Jeff said, “You can fight what is and be miserable or you can embrace what is and make the most of it. If you want to have a good life, surrender your expectations.” Name something disappointing happening in your life right now, and tell us whether you're embracing it or fighting it?
  - e. Jesus said, “If you cling to your life you will lose it, but if you let your life go, you will save it.” Luke 17:33 (NLT). What do you think he meant?
  - f. Paul Miller invites us to imagine what Psalm 23 would look like without the Shepherd. What he came up with is reprinted on p. 3. Give it a read. What point is Miller trying to make?

4. Miller's observations lead into a second key trait that characterizes Everyday Saints. Everyday Saints approach their relationship with God in a way that sets them apart from most people, since most people have a transactional relationship with God.
  - a. Describe what a transactional relationship with God looks like? Has there been a time in your life when your relationship with God was transactional? Tell us about it. How did that work out?
  - b. Bruce Goettsche talks about people who "love God for his trust fund." What do you think Goettsche means?
  - c. Psalm 131 calls us to relate to God in a very different way. Read Psalm 131:1-3. What does verse 1 tell us about how we should relate to God? What does verse 2 tell us about how we should relate to God?
  - d. Imagine yourself as an infant and **God as your Mommy holding you on her lap**. Is that a good and accurate description of your own personal relationship with God? Why or why not?
  - e. Jesus uses a different word to make the same point as Psalm 131. Jesus teaches us to call God "Abba," the intimate term that Jewish children used for their fathers. It roughly translates as "Daddy" or "Poppa." Does "Poppa God" capture the essence of your personal relationship with God? Why or why not?
  - f. To illustrate the essence of a **"Papa God" relationship**, Dave Stone tells a story about his 4-year-old daughter Savannah who got into the shallow end of the pool, but was afraid and wanted to be with her Dad, who was at the deep end. He told her to paddle to him. Halfway there, she was terrified, but once she reached him and threw her arms around his neck, she was perfectly content despite the deep waters. The point being: When we truly believe our Loving Abba is with us always, it gives us confidence and contentment even when life disappoints us and throws us in the deep end. Have you ever experienced that kind of contentment amidst terrible circumstances? How does it feel? Where does it come from? What happened to you in that situation?
5. Read Matthew 20:26-28. When we form a personal relationship with God as Abba, trust allows us to be content and confident whatever life brings, which enables us to stop obsessing about ourselves and instead **focus on serving others**.
  - a. What is one of the most sacrificial things someone has ever done for you? How did that feel to you? How do you think it felt to them?
  - b. According to Jesus, living to give is the good life. In your life right now, give an example of how God is calling you to sacrifice for others in ways large or small.

## **Psalm 23 Without the Shepherd**

1 my ... I shall be in want.

2 me ... me

3 my soul ... me

4 I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear ... me ... me.

5 me in the presence of my enemies ... my head ... my cup

6 me all the days of my life ... I will dwell