

Saints Triumphant
Hebrews 10:11-18
November 15 & 16, 2015

"Triumphant in Jesus"

How many of you here this morning like to play *Angry Birds*? How many of you have no idea what I'm talking about? I like playing *Angry Birds* on my iPad when sitting at home watching TV at night. In the game, players use a slingshot to launch birds at pigs stationed in or around various structures with the goal of destroying all the pigs on the playing field. Why? The birds are attempting to retrieve the eggs that the green pigs have stolen. As players advance through the game new types of birds become available, some with special abilities that can be activated by the player. Over the years, more characters have been added to different games.

In many ways, it is a mindless game. It isn't all that complicated. But it is addictive. I don't really want to go into much more detail of the game. As I play, I need to completely conquer each level before moving on the next level. Even though you can move on without be completely victorious, I want to win. I want to be victorious. I want to beat the game.

Isn't that true in many different aspects of our life? How many here like to lose? We want to win. We want to be the champ. We don't like being the last. We don't like being at the bottom of the pile. We want to be the one who stands on the platform with the gold medal around the neck.

We want the same thing as believers in Christ. We want heaven. Even though we might like a warmer day in November in Wisconsin, we don't want to be spend eternity in that other place that is very hot all the time. We want heaven. But how can we be sure that we will be triumphant? How can we be sure that our loved ones, who have preceded us in death, will be in heaven? The writer to the Hebrews assures us this morning that we can be **Triumphant in Jesus**. Why?
1. It is has been accomplished by Jesus; 2. It has been given to us by Jesus.

We would never think about walking out of the front door of a store without paying for the product in our hands or in our cart. We would not think about leaving a restaurant without paying the bill. When it comes to eternal life, we can't help feeling like there is something we have to do to get a prize like heaven. Yet, we also realize that it is not possible to do enough to get to heaven by ourselves. It is not going to happen!

In some ways, that was the point of the Old Testament sacrifices. Our text says: **"Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins."** All that work for nothing? Then why did God make them do all these sacrifices? It was to teach them that no matter what they did, no matter how often, no matter how carefully they followed every little detail, it did not take away their sin. Sin could not be removed by the sinner.

The same is true for us. Day after day we do the same things, don't we? We use dishes. They need to be washed again. We do the laundry. It will get dirty again. We change our baby's diaper again and again. Yet, no matter what we can do, we can't get rid of that dirt of sin. It is absolutely impossible for us to take away our sins. If we think we can, we are going to be disappointed.

The only one who can remove the guilt of sin is the One who **"sat down at the right of God. Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."** That someone is Jesus. We are triumphant because of Jesus. Did you catch how the writer to the Hebrews describes our standing before God? **"By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."** God **HAS** made you perfect. The word that is translated **"made perfect"** is the same word Jesus shouted from the cross: **"It is finished."** Our forgiveness can only be accomplished by Jesus. It is done. It is finished. There is nothing more that we have to add to it. We have a God who says to us: Our **"sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."**

That is a HUGE promise! This promise is given to us by Jesus through faith. What a comfort those words are to our ears. Why? Sometimes it is hard for us to feel like a winner, isn't it? Christians don't always seem to be winners in the

everyday battle of life. Yet, that Sacrifice that Christ made on that cross says that we are winners. It isn't always easy for us to trust that God has everything under control. We live in a world that seems to be getting more out of control every day. Look at the attacks that happened in Paris a couple of days ago. I can't even imagine the fear that people have gone through. Yet, in the middle of that terror, God has also protected and watched over others as well. That assurance is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God tells us in His Word that Christ sacrificed himself for us. He has declared our sins fully and completely forgiven. He has given us his promise that he will take care of us.

We are the recipients of God's gracious work. We can be sure of it. God has given us an assurance of that that we can taste and feel in the Lord's Supper. As we eat the bread and drink the cup we are also receiving the body and blood of our Lord and Savior as our own personal and visible assurance that Christ's blood was shed for us and for the remission of sins. The body and blood of Christ we receive in, with and under the bread and wine are God's personal and individual message to us that our sins were there when Jesus died on the cross, our forgiveness was won when Jesus paid for the sins of the world, God's peace with us is an accomplished fact that God will not change. God's victory in Christ is our victory in Christ once and for all.

While the victories that we may experience in a video game, in a sporting event, in an academic event, are fun to experience, they are nothing compared to the victory we have in Christ. That is a victory that lasts an eternity. As we celebrate *Saints Triumphant Day* we remember that all who believe in Jesus are triumphant. That is true not because of anything we have done, but because of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross of Calvary. May we give thanks for the Victory that is ours through the Sacrifice of Jesus. For this sacrifice is like no other; It is a sacrifice that was made once and for all.; It is a sacrifice that was sealed with his blood. Amen.