

All Saints 2015
Psalm 149

Praise the LORD!
Sing to the LORD a new song,
 his praise in the assembly of the godly!
Let Israel be glad in his Maker;
 let the children of Zion rejoice in their King!
Let them praise his name with dancing,
 making melody to him with tambourine and lyre!
For the LORD takes pleasure in his people;
 he adorns the humble with salvation.

Behold a host arrayed in white. Take a good look at them. They come from every nation tribe, people, and language. They are too numerous to count. They wear the white robe of Christ's righteousness and, in their hands, they hold palm branches of victory. Take a good look at them, because you know many of them by name -- Abraham, Moses, Isaac, Jacob, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Peter, Paul, Martin & Katie Luther, CFW Walther, and all our Lutheran Fathers,

And, do you know who else is standing there with them? My loved ones. Your loved ones. Your neighbor, all those who have died holding to the one, true faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. They stand there in their white robes, holding palm branches in their hands, to rejoice in their Maker and they stand together to sing to the Lord a new song. A song that goes like this,

“Salvation [is due] to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

Behold a host arrayed in white. They are the assembly of the godly. They are the saints of God.

Behold a host arrayed in ... blue jeans, boots, hoodies, a necktie or two, and a few nice dresses. You come from every tribe, every nation, every language, every corner of Mercer [Morton] County, and probably even a few other counties. Take a look at yourself. You don't have palm branches in your hands. In fact, your hands may bear a scratch or scar or two from your labors in a world cursed by sin. Take a look around you. You know many of these people by name. And you should -- they are your children, your parents, your friends. You come together to assemble, to be glad in your Maker, to rejoice in your King, to join your voices together to sing a new song to the Lord. A song that goes, "This is the feast of victory for our God," a song that is based off the very song that those arrayed in white are singing before the throne of God in heaven.

But, unfortunately, sadly, that is not the only song that you sing. You sing songs like, "I did it my way." "Let's Get Physical." "You never hear me repeatin' gossip, I'm not one to go around spreadin' rumors, so you better be sure and listen close the first time." "I'm going to get drunk and be somebody."

Songs that put you first. Songs that allow you to rejoice in your debauchery. Songs that celebrate your own sinfulness. Those are the songs you all-too-often sing.

And yet, behold the host of the assembly in blue jeans, hoodies, dresses -- this is the assembly of God. These are the saints of God. You might be wondering about that, but the reality is you heard it right -- you are the assembly of the godly, you are still the holy ones; even though you have all those sins, you are still the saints of God.

That is because being a saint of God has nothing to do with you, what you do or do not do. It has everything to do with God. He is the one who takes pleasure in His people and adorns the humble with salvation.

You are God's people. He is your Maker, who knit you together in your mother's womb. But you were born marked by the sin of your parents Adam and Eve, which means you are a sinner, which is why you sin and sing of your sin. And for that, the Bible is very clear -- you deserve death and the eternal condemnation of hell.

But, rejoice and be glad -- that won't happen to you because God takes pleasure in His people and adorns the humble with salvation, which is a beautiful way of saying that He sent His only-begotten son, Jesus Christ, to live, to die, and to rise again for you.

Behold the man Christ Jesus, arrayed in your human flesh and bone to do for you what you could not do -- live a life of perfect obedience to God and to do that as your substitute, for you, in your place. He is like you in every way except for one thing -- He doesn't sin, in thought, word, or deed. Never. Not once.

For you and for your salvation, Jesus sings a new song.

In the wilderness, it goes like this, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God' ... 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve'" (Mt 4).

In the Garden, He sang, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Mt 26).

Behold the man Christ Jesus arrayed in a crown of thorns, blood, and sweat. Behold the Son of God arrayed in your sin -- there He is hanging on the cross, giving His life as payment and sacrifice for your sin, take the punishment for sin that you deserve. And as He hangs upon that cross He

sings, He sings for you, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And He ends with the words, "It is finished," meaning your sins are finished, the punishment you deserved for your sins is finished, your death is finished, your hell is finished; it is all done because Christ has died for you.

And He rises again the 3rd day. Behold the man arrayed in resurrection glory. Behold His hands, His feet, and His side, behold them as He comes to you to give you forgiveness, life, and salvation.

And He gives you that forgiveness, life, and salvation in the waters of holy baptism. There, He joins you to Himself, so that you died with Him and you rise with Him. There, He clothes you with His perfection. There, in those waters, He did for you what He did for those arrayed in white -- He marked you with sign of the holy cross both upon your forehead and your heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified. There, in that water and that Word, you become one with the godly, you became a holy one, you became a saint of God.

And that means that when you look and see that host arrayed in white, you are seeing your future. The day is coming when Jesus will take you to stand among that multitude, to clothe you in a white robe, put the palm branch in your hand, and you will take your place among the saints assembled in heaven, before the throne of God and the Lamb Christ.

By virtue of your baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus, you are already part of the assembly of the godly; you are already a saint. And as a saint, you join your voice with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven to sing:

Salvation [is due] to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!

Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.

Be glad in your Maker, Rejoice in your King, for He is the One who
“takes pleasure in His people [and] adorns the humble with salvation.