

Surrender.

I don't know who or what raised the question. I don't know when the question first came into my mind. But one day I said "yes" to Someone or something....from that moment....came the certainty that existence is meaningful, and that my life therefore in surrender has a purpose".

Dan Hammarskjold
"The Markings"

GOODNESS

"Goodness is something so simple: always to live for others, never to seek one's own advantage.

Success - for the glory of God or for your own, for the pace of mankind or for your own".

"REMEMBERING THE SAINTS"

some

INTRODUCTION

Last Sunday morning we spent our time together reflecting upon one of the great historical events in the life of the Christian Church - namely, the Protestant Reformation, and along with it, we considered the great need for reform and renewal within the life of the Church of our time.

Today, we look once again into the treasure chest of Christian heritage and history in order to find a starting point for this Communion meditation. All Saints' Day, today, is being celebrated in many branches of the Christian Church. For 1,129 years Christians have paused on this particular day to remember their dead. We have listed the names of the members and friends of this church family who have died since last November 1st. We remember with love and affection the following: Carrie Boice, Emily Christie, Silas Clark, Andrew Cummings, Blise Johnson, Lila Johnston, Sara Powell, and Robert Shannon. We shall observe a moment of silence in their memory following the meditation.

WHO ARE THE "SAINTS"

I know that many of you, like myself, have been reared in a branch of the church that does not make a great deal of All Saints' Day - in comparison, shall we say, with the Anglican Communion or the Roman Catholic Church. You may have questions regarding it.

To begin with, you may ask - who are the saints of the church. Who do we have in mind? Your Roman Catholic friend speaks of St. Benedict, St. Catherine, St. Ignatius, St. Francis. Do we have in mind only those who have been officially elected to this position when we speak of the saints? No - we are thinking in broader, more general terms.

We have in mind people like yourselves whose lives have been touched in some real way by the life of Christ. We think of those men and women whose lives have been remarkable in terms of Christian stature - not only people of past generation, but also some of the great ones of our own time - Hoover and Hammarckjold, Lincoln and Lee, Wesley and Whitefield, Luther and Calvin, Augustine and Aquinas, Paul and Barnabas - and scores and scores of others, some well known, some not quite so well known - but all of them people whose lives have been touched by the life of Christ.

Theodore Parker Ferris of Boston says the saints of the church are something like the alumni of a school. They are no longer members of the earthly school; they have gone on and out into the world of light. In some parts of the church, the alumni are remembered on two days: November 1st is All Saints' Day and November 2nd is All Souls' Day. All Saints' Day is reserved for those who have graduated with honor, so to speak; those who lived the Christian life with great distinction. November 2nd - All Souls' Day - is for all the others. The reformers in the 16th century dropped All Souls' Day from the calendar of the church, partly, I suppose as a protest against the quite natural human reaction to make judgments on others, when in reality we have no adequate grounds for that judgment.

A COMMON TRAIT

Now I know that if we were to study carefully the lives of those who have graduated with distinction, we would certainly discover that they all shared one common trait - one quality of mind and spirit. And that is this: they all possessed the extraordinary capacity to love and to care for their fellow man.

SIMILAR

Consider two of the finest of our time: Herbert Hoover and Dag Hammarskjold. In recent days we have been made aware of the fact that history will remember Herbert Hoover more for his great humanitarian efforts than for the fact that he was president of this nation for four years. As Time magazine put it this week: "His humanitarian work lasted a lifetime". A new book recently published and reviewed entitled "The Markings" gives us an intimate look into the inner life of another great man of our time - Dag Hammarskjold. I have broused through the book and read two or three reviews of it. Pitt-Van Dusen reviewed it two weeks ago in the Sunday Times and said that it may turn out to be one of the great spiritual devotional books of the 20th century. In it we feel something of this man's great passion for people and for peace among the peoples of the earth. The capacity to love and to care for one's fellow man. Both Hoover and Hammarskjold had it.

Quote - "Goodness"

THIS CAPACITY TO LOVE

Have you ever stopped to consider that this capacity to love is simply the ability to lose one's self in the life of another person? Couldn't you say that? Isn't that the case? The capacity to love is the ability to lose one's self completely in the life of another person. And in passing, perhaps we ought to acknowledge that it is far easier to to lose other things than it is to lose one's life in the life or lives of others. For instance, you can lose your health in the twinkling of an eye. You can lose your money and your savings overnight. You can lose a loved one in the matter of seconds. You can lose your integrity, your virtue, your good name far easier than you think you can. But to lose yourself in the lives of others - this is far more difficult. You know how it is: it's difficult to shake yourself lose from yourself, to get out of yourself, to get away from all those secret ambitions, desires, struggles, conflicts that go on on the battlefield of your soul behind closed doors.

Forget -

HOW DOES ONE DO IT?

Can it be done? How does one do it? Where does one begin? Do these great men of the faith have any thing to say to us. Do their lives provide us with clues?

Their lives remind us of this: the only time people ever lose themselves completely is when they become completely absorbed by something or someone else. Their lives were absorbed by the life of Christ: by the power of his personality, the example of his ways, the style of his life, the activity of his spirit in the world. Their lives became so absorbed that they forget themselves and go out of themselves into the lives of others. And as they experienced this shift of interest and allegiance, things happened in their own lives. They lost their fears, their pride, their hollowness, their vanity; they found real purpose and meaning to life. They discovered a freedom to move at ease in the world, with confidence, trust, noise and power - because they were no longer concerned with themselves. Hammarskjold said: "in our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action".

Quote :

AN APPEAL

The world cries out for more "saints" - pleading for people to lose themselves in some cause greater than themselves - namely the love of God in Christ - so that they can bring that renewing and healing touch into the poisoned areas of life where person is often pitted against person, race against race, nation against nation.

And so as the 1st day of November comes around year after year - remember this is the day when we honor those whose lives have been touched by the life of Christ. They have gone from our midst, but their influence we still feel. They say to us: I have fought the good fight - I have finished the course - I have kept the faith.

Remember them - how they witnessed to the reality of God and the love of Christ. Yes remember them and then take up your fight and go on - in faith ~~and~~ trust in the ways of God.

ING

Let us now stand and together observe a moment of silence in memory of those our loved ones, our friends and fellow members who this past year have gone on to the world of light:

We thank Thee, Our Father, for the lives of those whom we call to mind in these moments.... of those who have loved thee so much very much that through them thou hast been able to speak to us.

We remember with love and gratitude their Christian spirit - their many contributions to the upbuilding of life - of their efforts on behalf of others. We remember their many good works.

Help us, O God, to be true to their memory - to accept the responsibilities that come to us in our time to live in accordance with thy Holy will.... that through us something of thy light and love may shine forth in the dark corners of our world.

We ask this in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen

Carrie Boice
Emily Christie
Silas Clark
Andrew Cummings

Bliss Johnson
Lila Johnston
Sara Powell
Robert Shannon