



The Rev. Alan Sutherland, Rector

November 4, 2007

Sunday after All Saints - Children's Sermon

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (The song)

What is happiness?

Believe that God wants us to be happy.

In the story of creation God puts man and woman in a beautiful place surrounding them with every opportunity to love life and to the fullest.

What did the serpent do?

It said, "God does not want you to live life to the fullest so come with me and I will show you a better way."

This story is repeated through the pages of the bible and repeated often today. People looking for a better way, believing that God does not want us to be happy.

C.S. Lewis wrote about a school boy who said God is like the principal of our school. He walks around with a scowl on his face and if he finds anyone having fun he puts a stop to it.

And that is the story of many people. Unbelief. People cannot believe that God wants them to be happy. So they leave God and look for happiness somewhere else.

We all want to be happy and we all seek it in different ways but I believe that true happiness has to do with our relationship with God.

This morning we read the beatitudes. They all begin with the word blessed. I think we kept that because it sounds more holy. But the translation should really read happy. Oh the happiness, oh the joy, oh the bliss. What Jesus is saying is that in a true relationship with God this is a picture of happiness in that relationship.

Unfortunately we have taught that the beatitudes are conditions rather than gifts. They are promises, not requirements. The promise is that God will make us into that kind of person if we let him. It is like Jesus is holding up a picture and saying, "I can make you like this if you will let me."

Every year on the day of all saints and the Sunday after-shows how important it is. We read this gospel. Saints are not some people who did extraordinary things, saints are ordinary people doing ordinary things but allow the happiness of God to live through them.

The song should say; if you're happy AND GOD KNOWS IT.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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