

**11/05/17 BUCYRUS UMC - ALL SAINTS SUNDAY**

**"PASTOR'S COMMENTS ON ALL SAINTS' DAY"**

**Pastor Mike Corwin**

**Text: 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20**

**I-TEXT:**

Let me share with you these words by the Apostle Paul to the church at Thessalonica:

**1 Thessalonians 2:17-20 (NLT)**

*17 Dear brothers and sisters, after we were separated from you for a little while (though our hearts never left you), we tried very hard to come back because of our intense longing to see you again. 18 We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but Satan prevented us. 19 After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! 20 Yes, you are our pride and joy.*

Paul had been with the people there some time ago. He started the church there. He considers the people there to be his brothers and sisters in Christ. If it weren't for the need to tell others of the Gospel he would have stayed and still been with them. And you can tell by his writings that he misses them and wants to be back with them again. He has deep longing to see them again. His heart is breaking to see them again. He uses words like "intense longing" and lets them know he has tried numerous times to return but keeps getting blocked from doing so.

He chalks it up to an evil influence because only the sworn enemy of Jesus could possibly prevent him from seeing them again. The enemy is the only one who could possibly keep **Irim** from the hope and joy of seeing them again!

And yet, he really can't steal that away from them. Even if Paul never gets to see them again in this life, he will certainly celebrate them in the next. Their having become members of the Kingdom of God, having formed a relationship through Jesus to their heavenly Father because of Paul's preaching and others, will be Paul's and his fellow workers crowning glory and victory as they give their testimony before the heavenly throne of God and Savior in heaven.

And it won't even wait that long! Paul says they bring him pride and joy even now. He...s not waiting until he passes on, but is celebrating their Salvation in this life as well.

## **II-ALL SAINTS DAY STORY:**

Isn't that the story we are telling this day? The pride and joy and love we have for those who have passed on.

We read the names, tolled-the bell, and placed flowers in honor and memory of those who have passed. We did it because, like Paul, we miss them. We did it because we have fond memories of them and like Paul our hearts have never left them. When they died, a piece of us died.

We-would have liked nothing better than to have never left them but, because of the influence of the evil one in the Garden of Eden, sin and death entered in and God's plan changed. We do separate for a while, but, because of the love and grace God gave us through his Son Jesus the Christ, we will not be separated for eternity... just for a while.

Someday we will join them in the Church triumphant, in heaven where our hope and joy will be restored by our presence together with them before our God and Savior in a place that death shall never touch again because the evil influences of this world have been defeated by the work of that love on the cross. We will stand victorious and proclaim our victory and wear the crown of eternal life together with those who have gone on before us.

## **ID - UNTIL THEN:**

Until then we have work to do! We claim pride and joy for our departed loved ones and call them Saints because of our belief that they were members of the Kingdom of God. That someone... somewhere ... somehow exposed them to the Gospel message of God's love and of Jesus' work on the cross. It was their belief in that message and their relationship to that Savior who opened the door to heaven for them.

So our first job, if we truly long to see them again.. .if our hearts broke when they left and we look forward to the hope and joy we will have in being reunited, is to make sure we know the Gospel message and claim it for ourselves. To make sure we enter the eternity of Salvation and Sainthood.

The second Job is to make sure those who come after us will join us too. That those coming after us will have their broken hearts soothed by knowing we have gone on to victory like those who have gone on before us. And that when it's their time they will join us too. (They too will be God)"s Saints. Someone... somewhere... somehow must give them that Gospel message.

On this day I'm not going to give you a long winded message. I'm going to tell you simply to celebrate the Sainthood of those who have already died knowing Jesus. I'm going to tell you to claim your own Sainthood by believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And then I'm going to tell you to share it with others so they can be Saints too.

Amen