

All Saints baptism sermon

Mark 12.28-34: One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Today we welcome Lucius to be baptised, which is very joyful as he is joining the family of God. But today in the church we are also celebrating something called the Feast of All Saints.

Now, who here knows what a saint is? Does anyone know what it means when we talk about someone being a saint?... Can anyone give me an idea?...

So, when we talk about a saint, we mean someone who has lived a very good life. Someone who loves God completely, so that their whole lives are dedicated to to God. Saints are usually people who are inspiring, and prayerful, and they don't worry

about themselves, but everything they do is for God. These people are quite rare, and so they are recognised as being special.

And you might not realise it, but you probably know the names of a few saints, because churches are very often named after a saint. Like this church is named after Saint Thomas.

But, All Saints Day, today, is not just about remembering these few extra-holy people, it's also about all those many men, women, children and young people, who don't have the official label of 'saint', and don't have any churches named after them, but who were people who loved God, and tried to live their lives following Jesus - being patient, kind, and compassionate.

Saints are actually all around us.

And the way you can spot a saint is in the gospel reading we just heard. Someone asked Jesus, out of all the commandments we are supposed to follow, which one is the most important? And the answer Jesus gave is, to love God with the whole of your being, and to love your neighbour, which means anyone you encounter, as much as you love yourself.

And anyone who does this is a saint!

Maybe you're thinking, 'but I'm just a normal person, surely this doesn't apply to me'. But actually, all of us have the potential to make a great impact on the people around us, by the way we live. All of us have the potential to be saints!

And today Lucius is joining the family of God, and part of being a Christian is to try and live following the most important commandment - to love God and to love others. So Lucius, too, is being called to be a saint. And Lucius' parents, godparents, friends and family are here today, as well as the church family, to support him and care for him, and help him become who God has called him to be, through our love and example.

That's one of the joys and one of the purposes of being part of the family of God - that we can all help, encourage, and even inspire, each other along the way.

And maybe we won't have churches named after us, but each one of us, children of the family of God, has the potential to be truly saintly.

Amen.