

Sermon for All Saints
Ross Meikle

Note: this sermon is an imagined conversation with God on the phone, but with only one side of the conversation. Every “...” is a pause left for God to speak.

Hello oh hi Mary. It's Ross. Ross Meikle. Is he there, please? That's fine, I'll wait.

...

Abba! Father! Yeah, it's me. Well, nothing's wrong, and I don't want this to seem like a complaint or anything. It's just that I'm supposed to be preaching this morning and, well, your Holy Spirit hasn't been very forthcoming with inspiration this week. As I say, not a complaint. It's just that I'm running very close to the mark now.

...

It's All Saints Day.

...

Well, no, there weren't any Trick or Treaters or anything last night. It's 2020...

...

Yeah, it's been a tough year for everyone.

...

Thank you, that means a lot.

So the Gospel reading - you know how I tend to preach straight off the Gospel - it's the beatitudes from Matthew's Gospel. Blessed are the meek, the peace-makers, etc..

...

Yeah, I do have my Beatitude Fairy Tales. Too bad I can't preach for an hour and half! Only ten minutes.

...

I know, right!

...

So, yeah, I know the beatitudes very well. It's nearly ten years since I wrote them, and one of the wonderful things about sitting and studying and praying the beatitudes for as long a span as a decade is that I feel like I know you better because of them. I know I'm not always especially meek, and that I don't hunger and thirst enough after righteousness. But the beatitudes are a true reflection of who you are, right. It speaks into Jesus' purity of heart and mercy. You mourn for the world when we can but mourn that which we can see.

...

Thank you. It's just that I can't just preach on the beatitudes, I don't think. It's All Saints Day, and - well - that feels significant this year. With so much death because of this Coronavirus, I really want to speak into that - I want to preach on the fact that we are not alone. That we are surrounded by that cloud of witnesses, as written in Hebrews. They are here.

...

Well, some years ago I preached on All Saints - and I don't want to re-use old sermons, but I talked about Schrodinger. Oh you remember. Of course. But do you mind? It might just help me to get the juices flowing. So, Schrodinger said that when a cat is in a box it is both dead and alive. But when you open the box again, it is but one of them. It's deep philosophy that I think I half understand, but I think the same can be said of the saints who have died. Because it's like they're both dead and alive until Judgment Day when the lid is lifted and we are all most certainly alive because of all that Jesus accomplished for us.

...

No, I guess it's not really like that but I am only guessing, and it's not easy when it's like looking in a dirty mirror.

...

Yes, you would know.

...

Oh that you would come quickly, Lord. Maranatha!

...

I don't think it's as easy as just asking what we want or need from you. The world is such a mess. I won't preach politics but that feels to be an absolute - no, no, I'll try to keep my language clean with you.

...

I know I don't have to, but - Anyway! Then there's the environmental stuff and the global pandemic stuff, and we were all looking forward to being back at home in our church buildings. And then we're mindful of elections abroad, and violence in Nigeria, and the war in Armenia... That's not to mention that everyone has such personal stuff that they are carrying too, and you say Blessed are those who Mourn for they shall be comforted. What comfort can we take?

...

No, I'm not angry. I don't think I am, anyway. I just think... I just think we're all very afraid. And I don't like being driven by fear. Fear is the enemy of love. When people are driven by fear, it makes us act in ways that are not kind or merciful. It makes us fall out with neighbours, and believe lies that make us feel better, or turn to acts and substances that we think will make us feel better but they never do. But if Love is what drives us, then that breaks down all those things that make us afraid. We are at peace.

...

Well, your angels have said it best all throughout Scripture. "Fear not". And Jesus too. Among the scared disciples after his resurrection he said "Peace be with you". Oh won't you give us that peace, God? Have mercy on us, O Christ.

...

I suppose ultimately you are that love. You hold everything together. Love binds us all together. And not just us but those who are with you already.

...

You know, it's a shame that we can't celebrate the Eucharist with each other this morning. I was chatting to a friend - you know who - and they were saying that they always remember that when we are celebrating and praying the Eucharist as a congregation, then we are surrounded by all the saints. They are feasting with us. They are so close but just on the other side of that dirty mirror that Paul writes about.

...

No, that's helpful. Honestly it is. I don't know what my sermon will look like yet.

...

Well, I suppose in a nutshell. I would want the congregation to hear that they are among your saints; that you bless us; and that beatitudes reveal to us your agenda and priorities for the world; and we may not see it now or in our lifetime; but we will. Because we believe that one day, you will reign supreme - Love will win - and Love never ends. And that is our comfort.

...

Thanks, this has been great. No, nothing else. Well, actually, would you pass on a message for me?

...

Just tell her that I miss her, that I've felt her close to me this week, and I look forward to seeing her again one day. I'm sure she knows but it'll be good for it to come from you. Cheers.

...

Love you too, Lord. Bye.