



Sermon
Rev. Lang Yang

“Marked with a Seal”

All Saint’s Day
St. Michael’s Lutheran Church - Richville, MI
11-5-14

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Revelation 7:3 *“Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”* (ESV) This is the world of God. (Cross reference – Exodus 12:23, Ezekiel 9:4, 6, John 3:33, Revelation 6:6; 7-2; 9:4’ 13:16-17; 14:1, 9; 20:4; 22:4)

Illustration: “Sign of the cross” (Show sign of the cross)



“Receive the sign of the holy cross, both upon your forehead and upon your breast, to mark you as one redeemed by Christ, the crucified.” So says the pastor as he holds the baby in his arms, just before he pours water on his head, calls him by name, and says, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” The sign of the holy cross is no empty gesture! It causes the powers of evil to quake and shudder. The crucifixion of Jesus is the decisive event of all human history.

When God joins the crucifixion of his dear Son to us, when he marks us as his own, when he puts his divine seal upon us, he guarantees us eternal life. (Show Baptism)



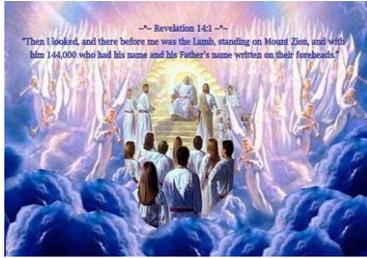
Simple water poured on the head or covering the whole body means nothing more than a bath. But when that water is joined to the command and promise of God’s Word it becomes a cleansing that gives everlasting life. It guards and protects every single individual Christian with the mark that God had sealed you.

I. The church is symbolized in the Revelation of St. John as 144,000 people from the 12 tribes of Israel. (Show 12 tribes of Israel)



They are all sealed. They are all baptized. There is no doubt that this 144,000 is a symbolic number referring to all the Christians living in the world. The list of the tribes of Israel given here in our text is unlike any other list in the entire Bible. It begins with Judah because Jesus is the head of the church and Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It leaves out the tribe of Dan because of the idolatry that tribe fell into. As we know, the church of Christ is separated

from all idolatry and the baptized renounce it when they are sealed.
(Show the 144,000)



This vast gathering of 144,000 who are sealed here below correspond to the “*great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues,*” (Revelation 7:9) gathered around the throne in heaven. Indeed, it is the same people here on earth they are pictured as the 144,000 who have the sign of the cross on their foreheads. In heaven they are pictured as those wearing white robes that they

washed in the blood of the Lamb. The **washing** that sealed them here on earth from the **power** of the evil one is the same washing that brings them to heaven **spotlessly** arrayed in the white garments of perfect purity and innocence.

(Show Free Mason white apron)



In this world, others pretend to be innocent and they love to use the color white to promote their pretense. For example, the Freemasons, who teach that a man is saved by his good religious character, in their Masonic ritual wear a lamb’s apron that is pure white. According to their teaching, that white apron “symbolizes that purity of heart and rectitude of conduct so essentially necessary in gaining admission to the celestial lodge above where the Supreme Architect of the

universe presides.” The white apron is a symbol of the Mason’s pure heart, and so he relies on the purity of his heart to gain admission to heaven. (Show Acts 1:8)

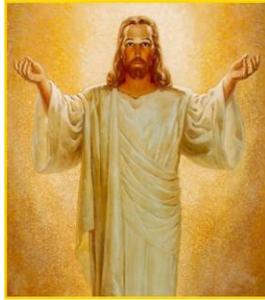


Not so, for the Christian. The Christian has washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Brothers and sisters in Christ, the world still full of people that haven’t been marked with the seal of God. We need to follow Christ’s Command “...*you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8) “...*go and make disciples of all nations...*” (Mt. 28:18) The world is lost and will be condemned if they don’t have

Christ as their Lord and Savior. Due to this sinful world that we live, we cannot be marked by His seal except by Christ alone. We Christian live in a land that was richly blessed by God’s grace. But what about our co-worker, our friends, our relative, our love one, our neighbor, and other third world countries that haven’t heard of the Gospel. How can they be marked with God Seal and or be saved if they do not hear the Word of God. St. Paul said, “*Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*” (Romans 10:17) How can they hear the message of Christ if Christ Word is not proclaimed? Brothers and sisters in Christ, He is calling each one of us, regardless of age, ability, education, experience, talents, or energy to get involved in doing the Great

Commission work to the world. So, don't offer God your excuses. Offer Him your obedience and proclaim God's Word to the world.

- II. Consider the benefits or blessings of being a Christian. Just look at the beatitudes that St. Matthew records for us in today's Gospel reading. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those persecuted for righteousness' sake. **(Show Jesus)**



Is this a description of the church of Christ here on earth? Yes! it is. But more than that, this is a description of Jesus Christ himself, is it not? Who was so pure in spirit that he was willing to toss aside his rightful claim to the riches of heaven to become poor for our sakes? **Jesus.** Who mourned in deepest sorrow and commiseration for the sinners whose sins he came into this world to bear? **Jesus.** Who meekly bowed his head before those that tormented him and mocked him and crucified him? **Jesus.** Who hungered and thirsted to

make us righteous to deeply and so completely that he submitted to every rule and law and obligation we faced and did so without complaint? **Jesus.** Who was so filled with mercy that he cried out to heaven that those murdering him should be forgiven? **Jesus.** Who was so pure in heart that he was incapable of any sinful thought? **Jesus.** Who made peace between God and this sinful world by becoming the sacrifice to bear God's wrath against all sinners? **Jesus.** Who willingly bore persecution for doing what was right? **Jesus.** Now who is it, then, who has procured for us the benefits of being a Christian? Whose poverty, sorrow, meekness, hunger for righteousness, mercy, purity, and peaceful intentions have been given to us? Whose name do we bear? Whose sign is on our minds and hearts? Whose death for us has made us holy? **Jesus'!**

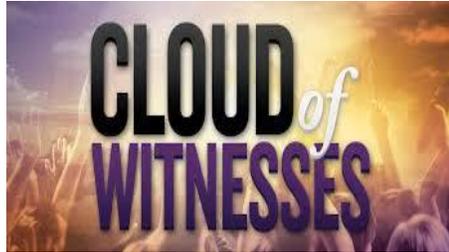
Jesus has suffered for us. He died and redeemed us and marked us as his own. Good things don't just happen. In some other countries, blood, sweat, and tears are needed to make for success. **(Show blood, sweat, and tears)**



In similar way people know by experience that you cannot have the good without the bad. The Christian faith doesn't teach the contrary. In fact, the Bible makes it crystal clear that the road to glory is going to be marked by pain. Jesus says in **Matthew 24:9** "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me." He says in **John 16:33** "...In the world you will have trouble....." Likewise, the

apostles teach us in **Acts 14:22** "...We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God" But Jesus endured blood, sweats and tears for us that wins salvation for us the glory of heaven.

Nevertheless, the church and every member of her does indeed go through suffering or affliction or tribulation in this world. As our text makes clear in describing the saints in heaven: *“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation.”* (Revelation 7:14) (Show cloud of witnesses)



Today is All Saint’s Day, we give thanks to those whom had went before us now cheering for us to get to heaven also. In the book of **Hebrew 12:1** *“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, ...”* Just imagine for a second that you see a crowd cheering on a person in a

stadium for her/him to win the race. In a similar way, the saint - “cloud of witness” that has gone before you and those living here on earth and around you are cheering you on. “Go! You can do it! You will remain faithful, your faith and trust in Jesus forever and ever.”

III. But we’re not in heaven yet. Two things still mark the joy of being a Christian. Two things still exist that cause us to suffer. I am talking about the sin **out** there and the sin **in** here. The sin out there is the sin that others do that hurts us. The sin in here is the sin we do that hurts us. The sin out there often takes the form of persecution. People like to put down Christians. They tell lies about you because you confess Jesus. They make life difficult for you because you confess Christ’s truth. You take a stand on the pure teaching of God’s word and they call you a bigot. You refuse to join in false worship or false witness and they accuse you of being arrogant or holier than they. You insist on placing the pure gospel – learning it, confessing it, and teaching it to your children – above any other loyalty, and they condemn you for it. That’s tribulation. And it will get far, far worse than it has been.

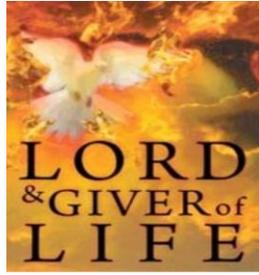
(Show sinful inside and doubt)



But that’s not as bad as the sin in here. The sin inside is the source of all our **doubts** about God and his word. It leads us to deny what God teaches us and to think that our baptism is just a silly gesture and the cross of Jesus just a symbol. The **sin** inside is **unbelief**. It tells us that there is no heaven, there is no victory,

there is nothing ahead but what we earn while we are living. It tells us to put our trust in this world that is heading for destruction. Should we do that, we will surely be destroyed with this world and condemned forever. That is a frightening thought!

But that will not happen because you are already mark with God sealed. The same power that brought you to the faith is the power that will keep you in the faith and that is the power of the Holy Spirit who came into your hearts and made his home with you when you were baptized. (Show Lord and giver of life)



He is the **Lord** and giver of **life** who proceeds from the Father and the Son. He **lives** within you and gives you **courage** to confess the true faith to those who ask you why you believe as you do. He is the One who seals you. He is the One who is with the preachers and teachers and ordinary Christians all over this world that bear witness to the truth that sets sinners free. He is the One who gives you courage when you doubt. He is the One who gives you comfort when you are sad as you

remember Christian loved ones who are not with us anymore. He gave the Revelation to St. John and he reveals Christ to our hearts today. He is the Spirit of truth who will keep proclaiming and defending the truth until the Church militant becomes the Church triumphant and the vision of heaven becomes blessed reality.

Brother and sister in Christ, you are the living saints here on earth that are living with all nations, tribes, people and language today that are waiting for God to call to his heavenly kingdom. (Show Gifts of the Spirit)



While we still waiting, God **give** each one of us a gift that given to you by God the Holy Spirit. It may be smiling, sharing, and greeting, it may be teaching children, it may be different thing in our walk of life. (1 Corinthians 12:1-10) There are many different ways represented in this room to work in the body of Christ. Even if you can't go, and proclaim God's word to the nations that they too can be save in His name. You can still help either through prayer or sending

your funding gift to those that can go and proclaim the Word that others may come to have God mark of seal on them that they too may have eternal life with you and I. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding keep our heart and mind in Christ Jesus. All God children say: Amen.