

The Anchor Holds

1 John 3:1-3

“See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.”

We need anchors in our lives to keep us grounded and safe and secure. There is a song called, The Anchor Holds, which is available to hear on youtube.

A few years ago, my wife and I heard that song sung by the Rankin Brothers in Branson. It was the first time we had heard that song. Listening to that song is so powerful. I want to share the words here. It seems so fitting for the world we live in today. It’s a time when we need an anchor more than ever.

The Anchor Holds by Ray Boltz

I have journeyed through the long dark night

Out on the open sea, by faith alone Sight unknown; and yet His eyes were watching me

The anchor holds Though the ship is battered The anchor holds Though the sails are torn.

I have fallen on my knees as I face the raging seas The anchor holds in spite of the storm

I've had visions, I've had dreams I've even held them in my hand But I never knew they would slip right through Like they were only grains of sand.

The anchor holds Though the ship is battered The anchor holds Though the sails are torn I have fallen on my knees as I face the raging seas The anchor holds in spite of the storm

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This is called, All Saints Sunday in our church. It's a day when we are reminded of the Saints who have gone before us.

In the book of Hebrews we read, "therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

It is like a group of spectators observing a race.

They surround us, cheering us on. We can't see them but they are anchors for our lives.

My son whom we adopted when he was a few months old has just recently had the exciting experience of connecting with biological family members through 23 and me ancestry history.

Most of his biological family live in Milwaukee one sister lives in Des Moines and several cousins live in Minneapolis. He was able to zoom with several of them last Sunday.

What a great experience to make that connection and find out your genetic and medical history, etc.

Again, they are anchors for our lives. Let us be reminded today that God provides anchors for our faith.

God didn't leave us alone. We are anchored in God's love which never lets go of us.

In 1 John, we read these wonderful words, "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

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There is a sign outside a church in Cedar Rapids, Iowa that reads, "Don't worry about tomorrow, God is already there."

God and loved ones have gone on ahead.

Today we think of those members of our church family who have gone on ahead since the last All Saints Day, the first Sunday of last November.

At the same time, we think of others we have lost before that. In fact going way back in biblical history. Going back to Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Jacob and of course Joseph and Mary and Jesus and the first disciples, the list goes on and on.

They are the anchors of our faith that God gave to us.

Though storms come and our sails are shattered, the anchor holds in spite of the storm.

Through Christ, God has adopted us as God's beloved children and we are marked with the cross of Christ forever.

In one of his books, Tom Long mentions a friend who serves as a hospital chaplain somewhere.

One Ash Wednesday he slipped away from the hospital long enough to attend a mid-day service and so he returned to work a bit later with a cross-shaped smudge of ash on his forehead.

At one point as he entered the room of an older woman who was a patient that day, she immediately grabbed a Kleenex and said, "Come over here, dear, you seem to have gotten into something" and was clearly getting ready to clean up his dirty forehead.

"No, no" the chaplain said. "You see, this smudge of ash is from an Ash Wednesday service where I was reminded that I am weak and frail,

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sinful and vulnerable and that soon enough my own life will return to the dust. But it also reminds me that on his cross, Jesus took all that away and has made me new and alive again.”

The woman thought for a moment and then said “I think I want some of that too.” And so borrowing from his own smudge, the chaplain made the sign of the cross also on her forehead.

We want the good news to spread so that others will want it to.

Recently I mentioned what Jesus said when he repeated what God said to Moses in the book of Exodus.

Jesus said, “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is God not of the dead but of the living.” He is not saying, “I used to be the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. I am now.” This implies that though they have died in an earthly sense, they are still alive in the presence of God.

Our diseased relatives are alive with God.

Though our lives may be shattered at times, God our anchor holds us and that’s what we need to know.

THANKS BE TO GOD!