

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Good morning. Welcome to morning prayers at the Memorial Church. I invite you please to rise for our responsorial Psalm, which is number 133. How good and pleasant it is that brothers dwell together.

Congregation:

It is like fine oil on the head running down onto the beard, the beard of Aaron, that comes down over the collar of his robe.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Like the dew of Hermon that falls upon the mountains of Zion.

Congregation:

There the Lord ordained blessing, everlasting life.

Choir:

(singing)

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

This is a reading from the 15th chapter of The Gospel, according to St. John beginning at the 17th verse. Jesus said, "I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. Remember the word that I said to you, servants are not greater than their master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also, but they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me, hates my father also. If I had not done among them, the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now that they have seen and hated both me and my father, it was to fulfill the word that is written in the law. They hated me without cause."

"When the advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the father, the spirit of truth, who comes from the father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. Here endeth the lesson."

I've been visiting you on these mornings and speaking to you about the saints, and in our commemorations in my church, there are two sorts of commemorations. There are what are called principle feasts and fasts, and there are lesser feasts and fasts. And most of the saints I've been sharing with you are lesser feasts. Tomorrow, however, is a principle feast. Principle feasts are special days, All Saints day is a principle feast. Christmas is a principle feast. And when we remember the apostles, the 12, those also are principle feasts. And tomorrow is the feast of Simon and Judas. Two saints, mostly remembered for who they are not rather than for who they are.

Simon is not Simon Peter. This is Simon the Zealot, who's only mentioned in the New Testament is in the list of the 12. And Judas is not that Judas. This is the other Judas, he's not even listed in the gospel of

Matthew. He's called Thaddeus in Matthew, which may have been a nickname for Judas that they wanted to use for maybe obvious reasons, rather than call him Judas. And in the tradition, he's often referred to as Jude, rather than Judas, to avoid mistaken identity.

We celebrate them together tomorrow because tradition has it that they traveled to what is today Lebanon and were murdered in Beirut. The truth is we don't really have any good historical evidence for that. As I said, Simon is mentioned only in the list of the 12 disciples. Jude is mentioned only one other time besides those lists, at the last supper in the Gospel of John, the chapter before the passage I just read. This Judas asks Jesus, why he revealed himself only to them. Why not to everyone else? To which Jesus replies, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my father will love him, and we together will come to him and make our home with him."

Jude is also known as the patron of lost causes. People prayed you when they have no other recourse. Tradition has it that after his martyrdom, people went to the place of his martyrdom and received miraculous answer to his prayer. But the likely reason that he's the patron of lost causes is that nobody wanted to pray to him because his name was Judas and they thought the prayer might go to the wrong person. Bridget, the Swedish Saint, I mentioned a few weeks ago, she had a vision of this Jude as the patron of lost causes, and the tradition of praying to him took off when she said, "Pray to Judas when all else is lost."

As I said, these two apostles are known mostly for who they are not, which means that they are mostly forgotten. Next week, on Monday, is All Saints day, another principle feast. Traditionally we've remembered, on All Saints, the whole pantheon of those folks who have been consecrated, sanctified in the Roman Catholic tradition, but in Protestantism and in my tradition in particular, All Saints day has become a celebration of the church itself, of all of us who are made holy not by our own merits, but by God's love for us. Remembered, misremembered, dis-remembered, in fact, because our accomplishments may be quite workaday and forgettable, but God's love for us is eternal and unending.

The truth is, the church is built upon and by and for saints like us, and saints like Jude and Simon. It is among people like us where God makes God's home. And the reward is not human memory, it's to be at home with God. In this, Simon and Jude are an example to us, to us workaday saints who do our best and remain largely forgotten by the generations to come. But upon which, the ministry and mission of Christ's church depends, and for whom the angels in heaven shout with praise. Even if all here below fail to remember.

I invite you please to rise for the prayers. The Lord be with you. [crosstalk 00:14:39]. Let us pray. Oh God, we thank you for the glorious company of the apostles, and especially on this day for Simon and Jude, and we pray that as they were faithful and zealous in their mission., so we may with ardent devotion make known the love and mercy of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen. [crosstalk 00:15:04].

Let us pray now together the words Jesus taught us saying, our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses; as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us, not into

temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen. Please join in singing our closing hymn number 351.

Congregation:

(singing)

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

In the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be among you all and remain with you always. Amen. Let us bless the Lord.