**SERMON TAKE-HOMES NOTES** — November 2, 2025

Is there a significance to Martin Luther beginning the Reformation on All Saints Eve? I believe there is. The kernel of truth of equality of all the saints, even if it's through the imperfect lens of justification by faith in Christ. He had a phrase in Latin,

"Simul Justus et Peccator," which translates to
"simultaneously saint and sinner."

This means that in the eyes of God, Christians are both righteous and sinful at the same time: they are saints because their righteousness comes from their faith in Jesus Christ, but they are also sinners because they still struggle with sin in their lives.

Last week, we talked about the Protestant overfocus on justification. We need to go beyond justification to see the goal of God's reign to have equality for all of God's children in someday enjoying the full fruits of God's creation, a mutual flourishing of all creatures.

Our journey through Luke's Gospel shows us that anything short of that should *not* be. When we pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we are praying for the reality of equality in heaven to come to earth. The truth of God's reign confronts the shortfall of great inequality in human reigns, especially between rich and poor. This is the heart of Luke's Gospel even more than the other three. We see the goal of equality from beginning to end:

- Mary singing about the might coming down from their thrones and God lifting up the lowly (1:52-53)
- Jesus inaugurating his ministry as Good News to the poor (4:18ff.)
- Focusing Jesus' Beatitudes (different than Matthew; see following chart) on the gap between rich and poor
- A long middle section, Luke 12-19, that features six encounters with rich men, confronting them on the dangers of too much wealth and the great chasm between rich and poor which should not be (ending next Sunday with the story of Zacchaeus)

| Luke's beatitudes: | Matthew's beatitudes: |
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| Blessed are the poor | Blessed are the poor in spirit |
| Blessed are those hungry now | Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness |
| Blessed are those who weep now | Blessed are those who mourn |
| Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you. . . | Blessed are persecuted (and four other beatitudes) |

We can see the disparity between rich and poor especially in the disparity of suffering, one of the concluding insights in our Racine Collective book study of Kate Bowler's No Cure for Being Human. At the end of her five year journey healing came COVID-19. She writes:

> I TURNED FORTY JUST as the unimaginable happened to everyone, all at once. The whole world was overcome by a deadly disease, and we all had to take shelter, the lives we'd imagined suspended in midair. . . . [N]o matter how carefully we schedule our days, master our emotions, and try to wring our best life now from our better selves, we cannot solve the problem of finitude. . . . [During that time I see:] A grandmother has been sheltering without a visitor for months, and a friend's business closed its doors. Doctors, nurses, and frontline workers are acting as levees, feeling each surge of the disease crash against them. My former students [at seminary], now serving as pastors and chaplains, are in hospitals giving last rites in hazmat suits. They volunteer to be the last person to hold his hand. To smooth her hair.
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> The truth of the pandemic is the truth of all suffering: that it is unjustly distributed. Who bears the brunt? The homeless and the prisoners. The elderly and the children. The sick and the uninsured. Immigrants and people needing social services. People of color and LGBTQ people. The burdens of ordinary evils — discrimination, brutality, predatory lending, illegal evictions, and medical exploitation — roll back on the vulnerable like a heavy stone. (pp. 183, 185)

Siblings in Christ, this is what I believe we're called to do as all of us saints in God's reign: we are called to *confront* the unjust distribution of suffering in our world, and to *embrace* the goals of God's reign to equally share in one another's suffering until that day when suffering is ended. In our nation right now, we see the opposite. We see the suspension of programs like SNAP and Obamacare, which work to alleviate suffering. Every day in a myriad of ways we see a rise of greater *in*equality between the rich and poor resulting in an ever increasingly unjust distribution of suffering. Let us instead claim our sainthood in working together to turn the tide from inequality to equality. Let us embrace the work of God's reign to seek a mutual flourishing for all people.