

SLD08.30.15 22nd Ordinary Saints Summary
Emory Presbyterian Church
James 1: 17-25
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“Who Am I? – A Summary of Our Summer Saints”

James 1: 17-25

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Creator of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfillment of God’s own purpose God gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of God’s creatures.

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God’s righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness *the implanted word* that has the power to save your souls.

But *be doers of the word*, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

Be *doers* of the word, says the writer of James, not just hearers. For those who persevere in being not merely hearers who forget, but *doers* who act – they will be blessed, and a blessing, in their doing.

Once again we’ve spent a summer exploring a whole series of blessed *doers* of the word, folks who didn’t just stop at just hearing about the word, but went on to do something about it, and with it, and for it. Folks we call ‘saints’ not because they’re so great, but because God chose, and continues to choose, to work through them to call light out of darkness, and fulfill God’s own purposes. There’s eleven of these folks, or groups of folks, we’ve hung out with, and wondered about, and learned from. And today we get to see who’s been paying attention. Today is preachers’ payback, which will go like this:

Tom and I will alternate giving you hints about a particular personage and you get to guess who it is. Once we've established who it is, we'll sing a verse or two of a song for them, and then move on to the next one. Got it?

We tell you about a person, and you tell us who it is. How? Either raise your hand and we'll call on you. Or either just shout it out so we can hear you. Or, if you're shy, tell the answer to somebody nearby and let them shout it out. The list of the summer saints is in your bulletins, and you can read along with the hints with the papers in the pews. Ready?

Mystery Saint #1 Liliuokalani

In the latter part of the 19th century I was born a princess, and became the last queen of the exquisite Kingdom of Hawaii. Unfortunately, however, in this time of "monarchs and "mission boys," of royalists, republicans and revolutionaries," some scheming business men and U.S. government representatives illegally deposed me and, against its wishes, annexed my island country. Me they kept under house arrest for 8 months so I could not intervene. But all the locks and keys of power and greed could not keep me from expressing through music and poetry the beauty and traditions of my people. Who am I?

Hymn 386 O For a World, vs. 1, 3

O for a world where everyone
Respects each other's ways,
Where love is lived and all is done
With justice and with praise.

We welcome one world family
And struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity
And gives our vision voice.

Mystery Saint #2 Eric Liddell

I was born in China, but am a Scotsman by heritage – my parents were Scottish Presbyterian missionaries to China. I was always committed to following in my parents' footsteps and becoming a missionary myself, but felt that the Lord also made me *fast*, and that when I run, I feel God's pleasure. I ran in multiple events at the 1924 Olympic games in Paris and won gold medals for King and Country, but soon after began studying for the ministry. My life after the Olympics in the mission field was full of hardships, but I resolved that once I started that race, I would see it through to the end. Who am I?

Song Choir And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time?

Jerusalem

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

Mystery Saint #3 Thich Naht Hanh

I am from Vietnam and am a monk in the Zen Buddhist tradition. Rare for people born into my circumstances, I had the opportunity to study in the United States and soon became heavily involved in work for peace and justice. I was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King. Since the 1970's, I have been based in France at the Plum Village Monastery and have spread my ideas through my many books and meditation retreats. Who am I? [Thich Nhat Hanh]

Hymn 527

Near to the Heart of God McAfee
There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God.
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.

O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us who wait before Thee
Near to the heart of God.

Mystery Saint #4 Iqbal Masih

I was just a Pakistani kid who knew right from wrong and wasn't afraid to speak up about it. And making me weave for fourteen hours a day and beating me if I didn't meet my quota and hanging me upside down when I misbehaved, well, that was wrong. And I let people all over the world know about it. I even got to visit the United States and tell kids there about my life; they could hardly believe it. When I returned to Pakistan I was only 12. One day I was riding my bike and somebody shot me. Nobody knows for sure who did it, or why, but there were plenty of businessmen who thought I was a trouble maker. Who am I?

Hymn 864 Fight the Good Fight vs.1
Fight the good fight with all thy might.
Christ is thy strength and Christ thy right.
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
thy joy and crown eternally.

Mystery Saint #5 Hypatia of Alexandria

Beauty and brains, I had them both, in spades. Everybody said so. And beauty in a woman, why, that was just as valued in 5th century Alexandria as it is today, but exceptional intelligence, not so much. Nevertheless, people came from all over the world to study philosophy, mathematics and astronomy with me. Though I welcomed those from other nations and faiths, I personally was a pagan. And a pagan with power and political influence made certain ambitious Christian really uncomfortable. So they proceeded to humiliate, violate, and murder me in a most inelegant manner. They've since apologized, of course, but me, I'm still working on the forgiveness part. Who am I?

Hymn 174 vs.3 from Glory to God
Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom Regent Square
Sister Wisdom, come, assist us;
nurture all who seek rebirth.
Spirit-guide and close companion,
bring to light our sacred worth.
Free us to become your people,
holy friends of God and earth.

Mystery Saint #6 Malala Yousafzai

Much like Esther from the Old Testament, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, I was a young woman when I was called to step out in faith and challenge the cultural norms of my time. Born and raised in the Swat Valley of northwest Pakistan, I became an outspoken critic of the Taliban's imposed ban on girls attending school. When the Taliban couldn't silence me with threats, they tried with violence, shooting me in the face as I was riding the bus home from school. But if the Taliban thought that they could silence me with a bullet, they were wrong. Way wrong. Rather than being silenced, I was empowered to tell my story to more people and keep fighting for access to education for girls and young women, and to encourage others to stand up for human rights throughout the world. Who am I?

Hymn 726 vs 1,2 from Glory to God
The Summons Kelvingrove
Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Mystery Saint #7 Robin Williams

You know, you're only given a little spark of madness, and you mustn't lose it. What I mostly enjoyed doing with my spark of madness was make people laugh. Because of my quick wit, acting skills, and rapid fire mind, this wasn't not that difficult for me to do. Only you know how a healthy spirituality keeps us energized but also glued together? Well, between my rapid fire mind, my debilitating depression, and the drugs I used to manage both, I couldn't keep myself glued together. Still, I hope you'll remember me for my gifts. Who am I?

Hymn 387 Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us vs. 1,2
Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use Thy folds prepare.
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus! Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus! Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

Mystery Saint #8 Meister Eckhart

I was born about 750 years ago in Germany and grew up to join the Dominican order as a monk. But even though I was a monk, I attracted quite a following of people who were moved by my ideas on the birth of God in the human soul. Unfortunately, I also attracted the attention of the Inquisition who eventually found 28 portions of my collected writings to be heretical. I died of natural causes before they could come along and handle my demise themselves. Who am I? [Meister Eckhart].

Hymn: 44 O Little Town of Bethlehem vs. 4
O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
o come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

Mystery Saint #9 Aung San Suu Kyi

You may have heard me called a variety of paradoxical names - Gracious Warrior,' 'Steel Orchid,' the Female Mandela - because I am a slight, older, seemingly frail woman with a determination for justice and a disdain for fear that simply will not be derailed. One wacky Presbyterian minister even went so far as to call me a 'Christian Buddha!' But here's the thing: you can lock me up, put me down, separate me from my family, and outlaw my running for office, but like a bad penny to the Myanmar government, I keep turning up with flowers in my hair and hope for my people. Who am I?

Hymn 361 How Firm a Foundation v.3
When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of woe shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

Mystery Saint #10 Johnny Cash

I was born into poverty in Arkansas in 1932, but rose to fame in the mid-1950's as a "rockabilly" performer with a rebellious image. Fame took its toll, and I turned to drugs to help soothe the pressure and the pain. I almost gave up completely, but then re-discovered God's amazing grace through Jesus Christ and started on the long road to recovery. You may know me as "The Man in Black". Who am I? [Johnny Cash].

Hymn 280 Amazing Grace v.1,2
Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Mystery Saint #11 EPC members

We're just ordinary people hanging out in a not-so-ordinary community of seekers and stumblers that values *being* who you are as much as you can, and *growing* who you are as much as you can, and *sharing* who you are as much as you can. In case you're still wondering, we are **the** small, pretty, peculiar church located on the corner of Westminster and N. Decatur that carries in its heart the secret of the Dragon Scroll. Who are we?

364 Saint Song vs. 3
They lived not only in ages past;
there are hundreds of thousands still.
The world is bright with the joyous saints

who love to do Jesus' will.

You can meet them in school, on the street, in the store,
in church, by the sea, in the house next door;
they are saints of God, whether rich or poor,
and I mean to be one too.

And there you have it: this summer's doers of the word, including me and thee.

Doers who act. Doers who are both blessed, and a blessing, in their doing. Doers who
prove what we long to believe: that the gospel can, indeed, be lived.

To the glory of God. Amen.