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Title: Lack for Nothing Good

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Text: Psalm 34:1-10

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Stuart Scott was an ESPN anchor who passed away from cancer in 2015 at the all too young age of 49. Scott was a beloved figure who was a pioneer in the field of sports broadcasting. He had countless memorable moments on air, yet Scott saved his best for his last year on the air. At the ESPYS on July 16, 2014, shortly before his 49th

birthday and following another round of cancer surgery, Stuart accepted the Jimmy V Award for Perseverance with strength, humor, grace and these eloquent words: "When you die, it does not mean that you lose to cancer. You beat cancer by how you live, why you live, and in the manner in which you live."

Today is a day in the church universal that is widely known as All Saints Day. You may or may not be familiar with this day, marked on November 1 each year. We remember those in our lives who have passed, who are now in the resurrection. It stems from the belief that there is a powerful bond between those in the resurrection, those who have passed from this life and those here on Earth. It is a day to remember those who have come before us, those who have shaped our lives and our faith. We are going to take a moment now to remember the saints of Geist Christian Church in the past year who have passed from this life and have gone to be with God.

Roma Mullin 12/5

Evelyn Watkins 12/12

Suzy Nierste, 2/9

Judy Blankenship, 2/16

Sharlot Grayson, 2/17

Midolla Wease, 4/3

Martha Davis, 5/4

Bill Barrett, 5/23

Joan Hill, 5/30

Loretta Jabaai, 6/22

Alex Ash, 6/28

Larry Jabaai, 7/20

Joyce Sink, 8/12
Norm Myer, 10/15

Remembrance is powerful. There are and have been people in our lives who have shown us the way to live. There are those who have shown us how to live, why we live, and the manner in which we live. I love what Fredrick Buechner says, *"In God's holy flirtation with the world, God occasionally drops a handkerchief. These handkerchiefs are called saints."*

The Psalms were known as the prayer book of the Hebrew people and are considered now to the prayer book for many Christian people as well. They run the gamut of human emotion, from our most heartfelt praise to our deepest lament. They have connected generation upon generation of people.

Psalm 34 is something of a testimony, specifically the testimony of David. As always seems to be the case with David, he's in the middle of a lot going on in his life, but he gives his intent to praise God in all that he does, so much so that his praise will be joined by a chorus of praise from others. This begins the narrative

"I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
² My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.
³ O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your^[a] faces shall never be ashamed.
⁶ This poor soul cried, and was heard by the Lord,
and was saved from every trouble.
⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.
⁹ O fear the Lord, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing." (*Psalm 34: 1-10*)

I love how Eugene Peterson paraphrases that last verse in *The Message*, God seekers are full of God.

This Psalm reminds us that to live is to write a story. That all of scripture is in some way the story, the testimony of those who have gone before us. The testimony of those whom God has delivered. That all of our stories are in some way connected. This is why remembering those who have gone before us is such a powerful act. We are remembering their story, the story they wrote with their lives. As we see with David, the intent to praise God is not a passive one, rather it is an active intent.

We may know that there is an election coming up on Tuesday. I know that many have already voted through early voting, Mary Michael and I have already voted. I hope you, if of age and registered, will vote. From social media, I've seen the pictures of many of you waiting in line to early vote. It is an important election, as most presidential elections are. I'm also sure you are aware that our nation and many of our communities are deeply divided. You may be feeling this division in your relationships with friends, with family. There are legitimate reasons that this election is keeping many of people up at night. In an already strained time, the politics of division further strains us.

If you watched just a few moments of live television over the past few weeks or even months, you've probably seen a political ad. I was curious just how much money has been spent on federal elections during this cycle. According to the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics, \$10.8 billion dollars has been spent just on advertising for the Presidential, House, and Senate races.

I'm not saying that an election is not important, but what I am saying is that this is a lot of money, a lot of money spent in order to try and write a story.

As we seek to be faithful in writing on our story, we would do well to heed the advice of the Psalmist, *those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.*

Take a moment and think about the Saints in your own lives- those who have shown you the way, those whose lives has been a testimony to faithful living. Think about *how* they lived, *why* they lived, and the *manner* in which they lived.

Take a moment and think about yourself- *how* you live, *why* you live, and the *manner* in which you live.

My guess is that you will see how the testimony of the saints in our lives connect with the testimony of our lives. We also see how the story of God is weaved throughout it all.

Lou Little was the football coach at Columbia University. One year there was a walk on freshman on the team and the coach could tell that this young man didn't quite have the talent, but he had something that could lead him to be an inspiration for others on the team. The kid practiced hard and was encouraging but the Lou Little knew there was no way he could ever put this kid in a game.

The young man's father would visit often, and the coach would see him and his father walking around campus arm in arm. One afternoon, Coach Little got a phone call that the young man's father had passed away. The coach had to tell him and as he asked if there was anything, he could do for him. He said, "you can let me start the next game." The coach thought about it. The next game was the last game, it was for the league championship. The coach thought about it for a moment, thought about it for another moment and then said "sure, you can start the next game." The kid started and was phenomenal. He excelled, making play after play. He was so good that he played the whole game. Lou Little couldn't believe it. After the game, the coach came up to him and asked, "what got into you today? You aren't that good." The kid said, "You remember my father, he would come to campus and walk arm and arm around campus. Well, we never told anyone the reason we did that. You see, my Father was blind and until today he had never seen me play football. But today, for the first time, he saw me play."

The ways in which our stories, stories across generations connect, is powerful.

The eternal promise of the God of love that those who seek the Lord will lack no good thing is powerful.

Here's the thing about the testimony of the saints in our lives, of those who are still here and those who have gone before us. As the great preacher Fred Craddock points out, "when It comes to divine blessing our lives are to be lived "because of" not in "order to" – and that's only possible if we recognize that blessing comes first."

We are indeed blessed not in order to do something, but because of God's love for all of humanity. We come into this world seeking to live into that truth, already lacking no good thing, because God first loved you and me.

The Saints in our lives are living testimonies to that truth. Their lives are testimonies to us about the faithfulness of God and examples of what faithful living looks like.

Their story connects with our story.

Let Us Pray Together.