

Sermon Note: Who Told You?

All Saints Sunday

Introduction

On All Saints Sunday, we give thanks for the saints who have nurtured our faith throughout our lives. Through their words and actions, they helped us learn about our faith. As we remember them, we can consider how we learned to trust in what we were taught, and how we can encourage others to learn and grow. The apostle Paul writes about this relationship between believers and those who taught them in 1 Thessalonians, recalling his work among them and encouraging them to live a life worthy of God.

Illustration Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iq6fn-mP-jg>

In this clip from *Lilo & Stitch* (2002), Nani searches for her sister, Lilo, while two aliens take Stitch into custody...

Why This Video?

Stitch and Nani speak about family as a responsibility to care for one another. They include Lilo, who needs their help, and they can work together even after disagreement. We learn what it means to belong from how people treat us and how they teach us to treat others. We can remember those people by practicing the care we learned from them.

Video Discussion Questions

1. Stitch and Nani say, “nobody gets left behind.” What do you think being family means to them? Who helped you learn what being family means?
2. Nani calls Stitch “that thing,” and his ears droop. What do you notice about his response? What do you think it could feel like to hear someone talk that way about you?
3. Pleakley says bringing Lilo back would be “a misuse of Galactic resources.” What do you think he considers his responsibility? How do we decide who we’re responsible for helping?
4. Nani falls to her knees in tears, and Stitch returns to her. What do you notice about her response to him? When has someone helped you feel less alone?
5. Stitch adds, “Or forgotten.” How do you remember someone who helped you learn to care for others? What do you do because of what they taught you?
6. Jumba agrees to help Stitch despite their disagreement. What do you think made that possible? What have you learned about helping someone you’re frustrated with?

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13 (NRSVue)

⁹You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. ¹⁰You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. ¹¹As you know, we

dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, ¹²urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

¹³We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers.

Scripture Study Questions

1. In verse 9, Paul recalls his "labor and toil" while proclaiming the gospel. What do you think the Thessalonians would have understood about his ministry from seeing him work?
2. Paul writes that he worked so he "might not burden any of you" (v9). Why do you think he wanted the Thessalonians to remember this? What might they have learned from his example?
3. In verse 10, Paul calls the Thessalonians witnesses to his conduct. How do you think a person's conduct affects whether others trust what they say about God?
4. Paul describes treating each believer "like a father with his children" (v11-12). What do you notice about the ways he describes encouraging them? How might they have experienced that care?
5. In verse 13, Paul thanks God for what the Thessalonians received through human speakers. How do you understand God working through someone's words?
6. Paul writes that God's word is "also at work in you believers" (v13). What do you think he means by "also"?
7. In verse 12, Paul urges the believers to "lead a life worthy of God." How do you think this relates to God calling them into "his own kingdom and glory"?

Weekly Action

Think of a person who helped you grow in your faith. Spend a few minutes thanking God for that person, and write down something they said or did that helped you. Choose a way to honor them. Maybe it's a note describing what you learned from them, maybe it's a story about someone who has passed. Talk with a trusted spiritual partner about how that person helped to shape your faith. Then think about who you could encourage through a conversation or a shared prayer.

Prayer

Faithful and loving God, we thank you for the people who taught us to pray together and showed us how to care for our neighbors. You call us into your kingdom and glory. Comfort us as we remember those who have died, and help us encourage others as we have been encouraged. Through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

This content was developed by Rev. Bob Rhodes using source materials from Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church, his own original writing, and AI tools in alignment with La Jolla UMC AI Usage Guidelines. AI assisted with drafting and iterative refinement. All final text was reviewed and approved by Rev. Rhodes.