

Michael Gehring
“The Communion of Saints”
Hebrews 12: 1–3
Main Street UMC
November 4, 2018

Eric Clapton and Will Jennings were co-writing songs for the movie *Rush*. They had just completed the song *Help Me Up* for the end of the movie. Clapton saw another place in the movie that needed a song and he said to Will, “*I want to write a song about my boy.*” On March 20, 1991, Eric Clapton’s, four-year-old son, Conor, fell from the 53rd-floor of the Manhattan apartment owned by his mother’s friend. Shortly after it happened, Clapton arrived at the place of the terrible scene. After getting past the ensuing days, Clapton isolated himself for a while and then went back to the studio to write.

In the song, you hear the father’s anguish, pathos, and struggle for meaning and comfort.

“Would you know my name if I saw you in heaven? Would it be the same if I saw you in heaven? I must be strong and carry on, ‘cause I know, I don’t belong here in heaven. Would you hold my hand, if I saw you in heaven? Would you help me to stand, if I saw you in heaven? Time can bring you down, time can bend your knees, time can break your heart, having you begging please. Beyond the door, there’s peace I’m sure, and I know there’ll be no more tears in heaven.”

On this All Saint’s Sunday, we robustly proclaim the truth of Scripture (even though we come here with all of our griefs and losses) that a day will come when time itself will fade away and we will live in eternity. We will live in that place where God dwells with God’s people wiping away all tears from our eyes. We will dwell in that place where death itself will be no more, and mourning, crying, and pain will be gone as well. On that day, as we are reunited with loved ones, we will bask in God’s love as we feast at the Messianic Banquet.

Until that day, we labor on surrounded by our community of faith and uplifted by the prayers of the saints. We labor on praying for strength and courage so that we will be bold and resolute witnesses to God’s call and demand for justice, peace, and goodness.

Now none of this means that this is easy or that it comes without a cost. But God knows our pains and carries them in God’s heart, a heart that loves us so deeply that the Father didn’t withhold from us his only Son.

There is a picture of an archangel holding a transparent ball which looks like a tear drop. Imprinted on it are the initials of Christ, and it's crowned with a cross. *"It is through God's tears mingled with ours that we see... God's face."*

The rabbis used to say, *"When the Messiah comes into the world there will be no more suffering."* Christianity says, *"Where there is suffering, there the Messiah will be found."*

We suffer much in this world, but we don't suffer it alone. Immanuel, God is with us. God co-suffers with us, and places a hope within our hearts. As Clapton sings, *"Beyond the door, there's peace I'm sure, and I know, they'll be no more tears in heaven."* When the day comes when we transition from this world to the next, God will indeed be with us making all joy complete.