

"God's Word is Forever!"

1 Peter 1:24-25

13 May Anno Domini 1985

Sermon for the Funeral of

Clara Pook

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Emmett, Idaho

Pastor Michael L. McCoy

The loss of a loved one is never an easy thing to endure. It seems that we are never ready for that to happen and yet, it does happen. For you here today -- Bill, family members and friends -- It is especially trying that Clara was called by her lord so very close to Mother's Day. No doubt that yesterday was a Mother's Day that you will not forget as husband, sons, brothers, sister and all close relatives remembered your loved one who was not there.

And so, on this day as you seek a word of comfort and hope, I will direct you to the Word of God -- which is the only thing that can give comfort which can be trusted and which can live forever. Listen now to the words of the Holy Spirit as written by Peter in his first epistle:

You have been born anew, not of perishable seed of imperishable, through the living and abiding Word of God; for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the Word of the Lord abides forever." That Word is the good news which was preached to you.

Here ends the reading.

All flesh is like grass -- it withers and the flower falls. Indeed, all of our earthly life is like the grass which eventually dies. And on this day, we do not have to think very hard, nor look very far to be convinced of this -- the mortal remains of one who was with us just a few days ago is all the evidence we need.

Sometimes it is frightening to be reminded that the way all flesh is as is before us today. And yet, we do not view death as a spectator who observes all of this from a distance. No, we are not a spectator at all -- we are participants! And knowing that we can bring terror to the heart and a lump to the throat.

People go through their lives trying to ignore the reality of death by going about the business of the day. Then comes a day like today when we are confronted with it. We can try to escape it by living a good life, but it is not to be put off.

The other day I was talking with one of the close family members of Clara and this person had made he remark that there was not much age difference between Clara and that person. That person realized that each of us is only a heartbeat away from the grave.

In the midst of such a condition, God, in His infinite mercy intervened. Just as we are not merely

spectators, but participants; so also God Himself did not remain a spectator. That is where the Christmas scene of the Babe in Bethlehem comes in. The Lord knew that no man could save himself because all people were corrupt. Only God Himself could be the Savior -- and that is just what He did when He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man. His life and His death and His Resurrection were done for all people -- they were done for you! -- in order that you might be claimed as one of His children.

That is what God's Word is. It is the promise that for those who trust in Jesus their loving and personal Savior death will have no dominion over them. On the last day -- at the sound of the trumpet -- the Resurrection of the dead will take place. The faithful will be brought before the very Throne of God and will behold the Lamb of God and will eat from the Tree of Life and will drink water from the river which flows from the Throne. Peter's words are true: The grass withers, and the flower fades, but the Word of God abides forever.

Is there such a word of comfort and consolation for Clara which I can give to you today? Oh yes indeed, in many ways there is. Clara was first brought to the living waters of Baptism on May 1, 1913 at the congregation in New Plymouth. And knowing that baptism is the beginning of her relationship with the Lord, she remained faithful in her worship and her confession of Jesus as her Lord and Savior. Her faith was not allowed to be weakened or turn to unbelief as she and Bill continued throughout their 49 years of marriage to come to the Lord's House and to be strengthened by the Holy Communion.

In fact, it was just one week ago that Bill and Clara stood before the communion rail to receive the Lord's Supper. and now, Bill, as you begin to realize the full meaning of your vow made so many years ago on your wedding day -- til death do us part; I speak to you word of assurance that Clara is with her Lord. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of God abides forever!

And what do we say of those now left behind? What about you? Is your life one of worship and praise unto the Redeemer. If it is, thank God and continue to stay close to your Lord and do not let anything nor anyone get between you and your God. However, if you have slowly drifted away, or, slipped into the habit of forgetting about the Lord, or, have never known Him, don't let another Sunday go by without worshiping Him -- don't let another day pass without trusting in Jesus -- don't allow another hour to fade without a prayer for God to renew your life -- don't let your life slip away from what the Lord wants you to have through His Son Jesus Christ.

For just as surely as we know why we are here today, so also will a group of people be gathered as they will remember each one of us, individually, as we will be called to present ourselves before God Almighty. When Clara was called, she had Jesus with her and she was received into the bosom of her Lord. Don't enter into eternity without confessing and trusting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Jesus once stated with great seriousness: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by me!