

"In the Father's House"

John 14:1-6

29 January Anno Domini 1987

Sermon for the Funeral of

Clara Baucke

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Emmett, Idaho

Pastor Michael L. McCoy

Dear family and friends of Clara. The solemn moments when Christians are gathered around the remains of a dear sister in the faith are moments when heaven and earth seem to meet. All the thoughts of a Christian funeral worship service center around heavenly themes: the place of heaven itself, the victorious and exalted Jesus, and glory of the Almighty.

The body of the departed forms a connection between the saints here below and those above. The saints of God stand on both sides of the river of Death. From the House of the Lord on this side you and I sing hymns of victory because another soul redeemed by Jesus has conquered the last foe, Our songs receive a jubilant echo on the other side where the saints in heaven have made a song of welcome to the arrived member in the Father's House.

It is particularly appropriate that we have gathered into this House of the Lord today where our beloved sister in Christ had spent so many hours and years of her life -- worshipping and serving the Lord. As a tribute to the memory of our departed sister, in whom God's grace had resided, and for our own comfort, let me now speak to you of one who was and who is...

"In the Father's House"

Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's House are many mansions; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the Way, and the truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me."

There was work to be done. It was a mission that no one could accomplish except God Himself. And as such, the Lord Jesus, truly human born of the virgin named Mary and truly God -- the Son of God left His Father's House and came to give mankind hope in the face of what you see before you in this casket today.

The river of Death, flowing with its source of sin, separated mankind from eternal Life with God -- it has kept us from being in our Father's House in Paradise. No one could make it there by himself or herself -- you and I included. For those who attempted (and who are still trying) to get to the other side apart from Christ they will be swept away into the lake of fire. In Jesus only is there hope -- not in the strength of our bodies, not in power of positive thinking not in wealth, not with good deeds, not with influence and honor among men. All these are but empty attempts which end in bitter end

everlasting defeat.

It is the cross of Jesus that served as a payment for all of the sins of the entire world -- that cross has spanned the river of Death to take those who trust in Jesus to the other side where the Father's House is. The empty tomb where the dead body of Jesus Christ had once been placed demonstrated that death could no longer hold Christ and if no longer Him, then no longer those whom He calls His own. Thus, Jesus told His followers: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me.

This is where Clara's hope was placed. It was in our Father's House -- in St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Elk Creek, Nebraska on Feb 20, 1910 when the Holy Spirit worked faith in her heart through the blessed Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Indeed, it is the same faith that kept her as an infant, when she grew up, when she was asleep and in the last few weeks and days and hours of her life.

What a great and tremendous comfort it is to know that it was the Lord Who was holding her during all the times of her life. You who have been baptized and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior have the same hope and confidence. So, whether you as a believer or a member of your family who is a Christian; whether infant or aged; whether awake, asleep, unconscious, in a coma, suffering from Alzheimer's disease or a stroke victim, take comfort in the truth that the Lord is the One Who sustains and keeps in the faith. Therefore, let not your hearts be troubled.

It was in our Father's House where, in 1924 before the same throne of God, she was confirmed -- restating the vows which had been spoken on her behalf during her baptism. She pledged that by the grace of God she would conform her life to the Word, to be diligent in the use of the means of grace, to walk as a child of God and in faith, word and deed to remain true to the Triune God, even unto death.

And so she has done just that by the grace of God. So faithful and so accustomed was she in her attendance and worship that it was just last Thursday evening when she told her family she was feeling good enough to go to church on Sunday. Consider your own attitude towards the worship of the Lord. Is it such a part of your life that you long to go to the House of the Lord? For family members and friends, as well as for member of the congregation who have drifted away from the worship of the Lord or who are irregular in attendance, I would encourage you to let both the life and death of Clara serve as a reminder of what is really important and necessary.

It was in our Father's House that our sister in Christ served the Lord faithfully with her labors and efforts. You -- the family -- are to be commended for allowing us to have this worship service in the church which she had cleaned for many, many years.

The Lord Jesus gave His disciples a promise. "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

God prepared a place in His heavenly home for Clara and He has called her to be with Him forever. She is now in glory with Orville in a heavenly reunion where there is no pain, no suffering, no sorrow, and no tears. Indeed, the only tears being shed now are ours. They are the ones which we have as we grieve at Clara's passing, mixed with the tears of joy as we rejoice at her victory.

Thus, with heaven receiving the soul of Clara, everyone now moves closer. With Clara's passing, another generation of the Baucke Family has moved into eternity. Those who are left move one step closer. Now the children of Orville and Clara become those who are members of the oldest living generation in the Baucke Family. Grandchildren move up to take their place. Most members of Our Redeemer congregation now have one less older member of the church -- as we too, find that there are getting to be less older members than us.

In addition to the sobriety of that thought, we are confronted with the truth that death is not limited to the elderly. Who knows which one of us in those room will be the next one to enter eternity? Who knows when it will be? I don't and you don't either!

So, to those in attendance those afternoon who are Christians and who have remained faithful in their worship of and their service to God, the Lord Jesus reminds: "Let not your hearts be troubled. . . Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the Crown of Life."

To those of you here who have never known Christ as your Savior, or who have dropped out, have drifted away or have wandered from Him, the Lord Jesus states as a fact: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but by Me."

Do you belong to Christ? Do you confess Him as your Salvation? Are you a child of the Heavenly Father? It is my prayer that when tat great and glorious day comes, everyone in this room will, along with Clara, Orville and all the saints in heaven, hear the voice of the Son of God welcome us

"In the Father's House!"