

"To Whom Shall You Go?" -- John 6:66-69

Funeral Sermon for

K*** (a young woman who was murdered and who left behind a toddler-aged boy)

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Dear family members, friends, and neighbors of K***,

There are days and times when the going gets tough. Of that you are well aware. One of the ways that people cope with the death of a loved one is to tell stories about that person ... times and incidents that make you smile and bring back fond memories. At a Christian funeral such as we have, the emphasis is to be on what the Lord God Almighty has done through His Son Jesus. So, today I am going to tell you of two times when God was active in K***'s life.

As mentioned, this last week has been a difficult one for you. It has been tough. Where did you go in order to endure? Whom did you seek the last few days? I am certain that the places you went and the people you saw varied for each of you. All of that, of course, is history. It has taken place and you are only able to tell where you did go and those people you did see.

There is an even more important question along this line and it deals with the future. In the future, when you face difficult days or encounter another tragedy or when you are burdened with fear, to whom will you go? To whom will you go when the days are difficult and the times are tough?

The Scripture text for this sermon on the occasion of the funeral for K*** is from a time when Jesus was teaching the people how vitally important it was to believe in Him and to follow Him. Many people would not accept what Jesus said, others were offended, and only a few remained with Him. Please listen to the Gospel of St. John, chapter 6, verses 66-69, and in doing so, please consider your individual answer to the question ...

... *"To Whom Shall You Go?"*

After this many of His (Jesus') disciples drew back and no longer went about with Him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God."

That is the text.

In order to answer the question, "To whom shall you go?", you might point out that it depends on the problem. If it is a medical problem, you would probably go to a doctor. If it is financial, perhaps you

would go to an accountant. If you have a legal difficulty, you might be wise to consult a lawyer. But what about the issues of life and death, or, heaven and hell? To whom shall you go?

Another aspect of your choices would have to do with getting the best treatment or service or advice. You want the best doctor, the wisest counselor, or the smartest attorney. If that is true with the temporary things that we face everyday, then whom do we seek concerning the realities of everlasting life and eternal death? The best one to consult is, of course, God. In the days of our sermon text, people were able to walk up to Jesus and ask Him the questions that they had. That is just what they did and He answered them.

Today, we are able go to God too, by reading His Word. In the Bible we find out that each one of us is a sinner and, indeed, sin much everyday in thought, word, and deed. We find out that the Son of God became man and died on the cross to pay the price of everyone's sins your sins, K***'s sins, my sins, the sins of all thieves, children, murderers, Sunday School teachers, rapists, grandparents, addicts, pastors ... all sins of all people of all time. Three days later, Jesus rose from the dead and lives forever. He has paid for our sin, conquered death, and defeated the devil. Forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation belongs to anyone who believes this good news and trusts in Christ Jesus.

Parents and grandparents want this blessing not only for themselves, but for their children and grandchildren. Consequently, years ago, K*** was baptized. In her baptism God worked faith in K***'s heart to believe the promises of God. God gave her hope, peace, salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life. In addition, the Lord also gave her the ability, power and strength to lead a God-pleasing life -- to grow up and do God's will. All of that was K***'s on the day she was baptized and she was surely blessed on that day.

Getting back to our theme of "To Whom Shall You Go?", there is a natural, human tendency that often kicks-in at times of seeking out others. It happened in Jesus' day when the events of John 6 took place and it happens today. People came to Jesus and He told them that He was the source of eternal life and that they needed Him. The Son of God told them that He was the Bread of Life, come down from heaven for them and for all. But this was difficult for some people to accept and the Bible tells us that *after this many of His (Jesus') disciples drew back and no longer went about with Him.*

The same thing happens today ... both with spiritual issues concerning God and physical issues which concern others. Sometimes we go to the doctor, the tests are run, the results are received and we are told the truth. But the truth is not what we always want to hear. As a result we might go out and attempt to find a physician who will tell us what we want to hear. The Apostle Paul wrote it like this: *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables (2 Timothy 4:3-4).*

We are told to continue hearing the Word of God and making applications to our lives. That means being involved with Church. That brings me to the second incident concerning K*** that I wanted to relate to you. A few years ago, there were a number of Sundays when she came to the worship services at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Emmett. While there she was able to hear of God's great love for her ... a love that was born in Bethlehem when our Redeemer had His first bed in a manger ... a love that was demonstrated thirty years later when Jesus stretched out His all-embracing arms and was crucified in our place ... a love that caused the Holy One of God to rise again on that

first Easter morning. K*** stood with the congregation to confess the creed of the day and to join in the prayers of the church. K*** was there when the great hymns of Christendom were sung. The benediction was pronounced over all the people before they left ... *The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.*

So the Lord told the people, some of them His disciples, the truth. Some of them did not want to hear it and *after this many of His (Jesus') disciples drew back and no longer went about with Him.* So many of them left. It was not God's will that they leave, but they left. The Lord our God turned to those twelve who remained with Him. He looked at them and asked, *Do you also wish to go away?*

What a question for God to ask His people! Do you also wish to go away? There must have been total silence for a moment as each one thought about staying or going. Finally, Simon Peter answered for those who remained: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God."*

Peter declares his belief. "Jesus, where else is there to go. You, O Lord have the words which lead beyond this life and into eternal life. And hearing Your words and understanding Your doctrines, Jesus, we have come to believe that You are the Holy One of God. There is no one else we'd rather be with; there is no one else who will lead us through the valley of the shadow of death." If that is true on the good days, then it is especially true on days like this one.

Peter confessed what he believed to be true and declared it in a creed ... Lord Jesus, *we have come to believe that You are the Holy One of God.* Are you able to say the same thing?

It has been said that a funeral service is for the living and not the dead. That is most certainly true. Therefore also the funeral sermon is one for you, the living, and the applications must be made to you. For each one of us here, ... well, there will come a time when no doctor will be able to help ... when no accountant will be able to give you a few extra days ... when no lawyer will be able to bail you out. Your death and mine, are coming. And so, the question for each of us to consider is the one Jesus asked, *Do you also wish to go away?* And the answer ... the only answer that prevails is our original question, *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*

And the question needs to be answered today ... not tomorrow. None of us knows if we will even be alive at the end of this day. Yesterday a kid slays his parents, goes to school and slaughters a schoolmate. We don't have any guarantees. You or I might be killed in an auto accident on the way home from this service. This is not scare tactics, people. This is reality. Let the suddenness of K***'s death be a sobering reminder for us to get our lives in order, our priorities straight and to say to God, *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*

This night as you are in bed and it is dark and quiet, think about Jesus' question and Peter's answer that are in our text for this funeral sermon. Permit me to read it to you one last time. *After this many of His (Jesus') disciples drew back and no longer went about with Him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God."* Amen.