

Graveside Service for Dragoş Saucui
Isaiah 55:6-11 (Romans 6:3-11; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58)
Nampa Cemetery – Nampa, Idaho
December 13th, Anno Domini 2006

In the +Name of Jesus

Charlie and Dana, Frusina and Bradley, relatives and friends: grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Hear once again the Word of God through the prophet Isaiah, chapter 55:

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Thus far the Word of our Lord.

The sudden death of a loved one, without fail, triggers every emotion in the human existence in very short order. For people of faith, the question also arises concerning the eternal welfare of the departed. And too often, our thinking becomes fretting in light of what we knew or thought we knew. It is difficult for us, in such a time as this, to reflect and focus our concerns with what God knows.

Our Lord spoke to his people through Isaiah the prophet and had to remind them that he operates in ways that we cannot always understand, and he points out the arrogance of man in presuming to know all things. We don't like to admit it when we don't know the answer. It pesters us to no end when we are confronted with things that are beyond our limited human comprehension. We find it difficult to place the knowledge of all things with God alone and leave it in his hands.

But there is much we do know, from which our Lord would have us receive strength and comfort. We know, according to the Scriptures, that it is the Lord alone who searches the heart and the Lord alone who has the power to save. And he has promised you that his Word does not go out into the ears of his hearers in vain.

The free gift of eternal salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus is just that—a free gift. And the Lord has told us in his Word how it is that he gives us this saving faith. He tells us in Titus, chapter 3, that he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This washing he granted to Dragoş when he was baptized, for our Lord declares that as many of us as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. This blessed gift our Lord gave to Dragoş and buried him in the death of his Savior Jesus. He was buried in the death of Christ with the promise that he would raise him again.

Our Lord never forgot or reneged on his promise to Dragoş, and Dragoş was brought up in the Faith that was once delivered to the saints. He confessed his Christian Faith publicly in the words of the historic Nicene Creed, in which he stated his belief in God the Father Almighty, in Jesus Christ his Lord, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life. He further acknowledged God's gift to him in one Baptism for the remission of sins.

God's Word does not return to him empty, even when we can't measure the results with our limited human minds and sinful human hearts. Dragoş had a faithful Christian family in those present here today. Dana, I know that you in particular were constant in your proclamation of your Lord's word to your father. And your Lord's Word is never in vain and it never returns to him empty. Your peace and your comfort must come from the certain and the eternal, and that is the precious truth that Christ Jesus died to save sinners.

The Lord Jesus, true God, begotten of the Father from all eternity, and also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary, is the Word made flesh who dwelt among us. He came to his people to redeem them. Our heavenly Father sent Jesus, his only Son, and through his passion, crucifixion, and glorious resurrection, he reconciled the whole world, Dragoş included, to himself. He bought him back from sin and the power of the grave not with gold or silver, but with his own precious blood and his innocent suffering and death. Through the power of his death, he has forever destroyed death, and all the dead will be raised on the final day.

Our Lord Jesus was crucified and died for Dragoş' sins, as well as the sins of every person here. Though the wages of sin is death, as the body before us here reminds us, the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. He died for you, he died for me, and he died for Dragoş. He paid the price for all of our transgressions, and gives us the promise of everlasting life to all who would believe in him. May our Lord impart this to you, and to Dragoş, according to his great love and mercy, which are far above our ways and beyond all comprehension—in the Name of our crucified and risen Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.