

Winnie Elizabeth George 10/18/1939 - 11/04/2020
Luginbuel Funeral Home in Prairie Grove, AR
Graveside Bethesda Cemetery in Morrow, Arkansas.
Reverend Andy Newbill

I would like to begin the celebration of the life of Winnie with some personal comments. Winnie was our piano player at the Sunday morning worship service of Cincinnati United Methodist Church. She also shared the piano playing duties with several others at our Sunday evening interdenominational singing. John and Winnie hosted a music evening at their home occasionally with musicians around the perimeter of their den. You would have to have attended one of those evenings to know how special they were. DeNese and I would go visit, and experienced the love shared by John and Winnie.

We come together today for three reasons. First, we come to pay tribute in friendship and love to Winnie Elizabeth George who was dear to all of us. This is not the last tribute, for the most beautiful memorial left by anyone is not carved on stone, not even in a service such as this. It is the memorial left in the hearts of those who knew and loved Winnie. Then, we come to offer our sympathy to those loved ones who are in sorrow this day. Finally we come to find words of comfort and strength from the Word of God.

Let us bow our heads.

Lord, we thank you for your presence here with us this morning. We thank you for the love you give each one of us to share one to the other. Sometimes we fuss with each other but in the end your love overcomes our differences. As Paul said in Romans, **I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow-not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.** Jesus said I will send you a comforter, the Holy Spirit that will be with you forever. Lord, we ask for the comfort and peace that only you can give. Be with us and guide us. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Psalm 91

**A Conquered Enemy
I Corinthians 15:26**

Christianity is a realistic faith. It does not seek to gloss over the difficult or even tragic aspects of life. While it teaches the goodness and the love of God, it admits the evil which is part of human experience. It confronts man's sin with a Savior nailed to a cross and then points triumphantly to an empty tomb. It even looks courageously at this final experience that we call death, without becoming sentimental or denying the reality of the event. Death is an enemy, and the Christian recognizes the pain, the loss, and the sorrow that it brings. However, the Christian is sustained by the promise of the ultimate defeat of this enemy, for he knows that the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Some doctrines of the Christian faith may be difficult for us to understand, but we have no such problem with this view of death. We have seen the face of the enemy too frequently. We have known death as the great destroyer, silencing the pen of the poet and the voice orator. Death has

taken away our national leaders at times when their wisdom seemed mostly needed by their country. Our most brilliant intellects have been taken on the eve of their most significant contributions. Artists have dropped their brushes and musicians their instruments at the call of death. How much more could they have accomplished but for the sudden death which overtook them!

We have seen the sorrow that death can bring to our loved ones and to ourselves. Parents have had their hopes and dreams destroyed when a little child was taken from them. Young people have been forced to grow to maturity without the love and guidance of father or mother.

Husband has been separated from wife, brother from sister, friend from friend by the power of death. Eventually death of this life triumphs over all of us. Of all the enemies that confront mankind, death must surely be the greatest. Jesus Christ conquered this enemy of death by ascending into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. This victory is demonstrated to us by the witness of Winnie with her last words.

The family was gathered around Winnie as she was saying some understandable words. Then Winnie was trying to get her feet out of the bed and Janet asked, "Where are you going?" Winnie replied, "Probably heaven." And Janet asked, "Right now?" Winnie exclaimed, "Oh, heavens no, not right now!"

This is the Holy Spirit talking to us through Winnie, a voice heard by some of you.

While death is the last enemy to be destroyed, that death begins with the resurrection of our Lord. He was the "firstfruits" of those who are to be raised from the grave. As human beings, the descendants of Adam, we are all to die, but in Christ we are all to be made alive. (I Cor. 15:22-23.) Our Lord was victorious in a battle fought two thousand years ago when it proved impossible for death to hold him. (Acts 2:24.) Now he lives and reigns; death has no dominion over him. (Rom. 6:9.) We live in the joyous reality of that victory.

Where death is the great destroyer, bringing an end to life, our Lord is the supreme life giver. He spoke of himself as the bread of life. (John 6:35), and as the source of living water. (John 4:14.) He offered himself to his followers, you and me, as the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6.) His very purpose in coming was that we might have life and have it more abundantly. (John 10:10.)

Where death brings separation, Christ reunites. "I am the resurrection, and the life." (11:25.) He taught us that he has gone to prepare a place for us. We all anticipate the day when we will be with him, reunited with our loved ones in the Father's house. (John 14:3.)

Where death brings sorrow, Christ brings joy. He enables us to look beyond the pain and suffering of this life to the wonderful existence that will be ours in eternity. Death is no longer our enemy.

"Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 15:57)

Let us pray:

God, we give thanks for the rest that you have provided for our physical bodies. Help us to understand death as the sleep that translates us and renews us, and reunites us with those we love and with you. Give us a foretaste even now of the new life you have in store for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray: "Our Father.... Amen.

Benediction

May the Lord bless you, and keep you: may the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: and may the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.