

Bob Osman ~ May 9, 2014
Pastor Karen Treat

I don't think there is ever just the right time for a loved one to die. We always imagine more time with the one we love. We imagine there is more time to say the things we want to say, like giving thanks for all they have done for you. Or, telling them that their presence brought joy with every room they entered.

We think time is limitless to do all the things we want to do with them, like fishing at the cabin, playing cards in the wee hours of the night and taking drives in the car, turning the radio loud, listening to Elvis singing "Love me tender and love me sweet".

We hope for the occasion of death to happen when life is less stressful, more predictable.

Yet, getting to die at just the right time can't and doesn't happen.

Even when we walk with a loved one with a difficult disease, when they do pass, we want our loved one back. Suddenly, without expecting it, life is dramatically emptier. Our world has changed and there's no getting it back.

Death's timing is almost never perfect.

We certainly experienced this with the death of Bob.

I know that many, if not all of you know that this past week and a half has been far from what we would want when a loved one passes.

After Bob's sudden death, Merlaine, Bob's love and his life partner became very ill and she has been in the hospital, often holding onto her own dear life. At this time, I am happy to say she is doing much better.

This was not a good time for Bob to die.

Merlaine had a chance to pick the Biblical text for this service. We often hear Psalm 23 at funerals. As a child, I imagined this text to an illustration of death. Yet, as I hear the words today, I don't imagine this just for Bob, but for those of us who are grieving his death and for those wishing for a more perfect timing.

Listen to these words:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. ..he leads me beside still waters;... he restores my soul.[b]

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, you are with me;

you prepare a table before me you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

In this Psalm, the author reminds us of the promise that will be fulfilled in the days to come. The Psalter also gives us the hope that come with our shepherd, who is Jesus Christ. Jesus guides us to the place that strengthens us for the journey. A journey ahead that is without Bob.

As Jesus leads us to the quiet pool, we find peace that sets us up to prevail the storms of grief and sadness that come when we lose the one we love. The psalmist doesn't skirt around the pain that comes with this journey, but to trust the promise that even when the timing is not perfect, Christ is with us our whole life long.

Our gospel reading is from the Gospel of John.

The reading we hear is during the last week of Jesus life on earth and it is a time that Jesus is preparing his disciples for his own death.

For Jesus, his death is timed perfectly. The world is in the need of saving.

For the disciples, for his followers, they cannot imagine a life without Jesus. Jesus death is not timed right for them.

Yet, we hear Jesus is telling the disciples what they will need to know and hold onto when he leaves them.

The disciples can't imagine Jesus dying before his work is done. They want to believe their time with Jesus is endless. The disciples like all of us, don't take this time to cherish the last moments they have together.

And, so Jesus gives them a promise they can trust to be fulfilled.

Jesus is leaving. He is going ahead, ascending to be with God. At that place where he is going, Jesus will prepare a place for them, for us. It is a place where we too, will abide with God.

Abiding means to be with God and with Jesus, deeply connected with them and giving us a place of utter completeness. Where Jesus is going, we will go to.

This is Jesus promise.

Important is Jesus message to trust that he is the way, the truth and the life.

As the Psalmist stated in Psalm 23, we can hold onto this message of hope.

Where he is going, we will go too. This is for all of us. In Jesus death and resurrection, we cling to the promise that we will be together, abiding in God's steadfast love.

As I met with the Grant, Bob's son, and with Pam, Merlaine's daughter, I heard about Bob.

From Glen, we hear of a dad that laid the foundation of faith, taking Glen to church, Sunday School and Confirmation. He supported Glen, and he loved his grandchildren Grant and Hannah, modeling strength, commitment and support of their endeavors.

Pam shared the love that Bob had for her mom. Two high school sweethearts reunited to live many happy years together. Bob's love extended to Merlaine's children, Pam and and grandchildren, . His exuberant spirit brought delight to their lives, taking time to play cards, to fish at the cabin and to enjoy food and fun.

As Bob's family talked about his life, smiles would fill Grant and Pam's faces, revealing the joy that Bob brought to the world. And, it still lives on.

The timing for Bob's passing was not perfect. It was not a good time to die. It has been a hard, confusing week.

Yet, we have the Word, the text we heard today that reminds who we can trust, who gives us hope as we move through the dark valleys of life.

We also trust that in Christ, we are given the hope of a resurrected life.

We are not alone and the promises that are placed before us gives us the hope for the world to come.

Let us pray,

Loving and gracious God, You have blessed our lives with Robert Thomas Osman. We thank-you for that abundant gift. Help us to trust your promises to be with us in the dark valleys in life. Let us to cling to the promise that Christ gives to us through his death and resurrection, that with you, we will be one day abiding with Bob and one another. In this we pray, Amen.