

The Funeral Celebration of Charles Rolf Caylor (1933-2015)

"Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." *Ps. 124:8*

Opening Prayer

Almighty and gracious God, our Father in heaven, you are our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Lead us, we pray, to put our trust entirely in you. We come to you in the name of your only begotten and well-beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, who died for our sins and rose from the dead. Grant us, we beseech you, through his precious blood, peace and pardon, and joy in the Holy Spirit. And seeing that we have in him an high priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, may we come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in this time of our need.

We thank you for the precious promises of your Word. We praise you for the light of the gospel. We acknowledge your sovereign will and your infinite compassion. Be pleased, therefore, to look upon our sorrow, and for the sake of your dear Son to grant us the consolation of your Holy Spirit. And we pray that you will enable us to hear your holy Word, so that through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope. Grant to us, too, that we may hold fast our confidence in your forgiving mercy and the blessed assurance of eternal life. We ask these blessings of you, our Father, through him who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, who rose from the dead, and who is exalted at your right hand, even Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who taught us to pray, "Our Father..."

Psalm 116 "I Love the LORD"

Old Testament Lesson Lamentations 3:19-26, 31-33, 37-38; Job 2:10; 1:21; 19:25-27.

(Jay) I remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord....For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men.

Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?...Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?...Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

Psalm 23 (sung by the "Spiritual grandchildren")

Epistle Lesson: 1 Pet 1:3-9; Rom 8:31-39; 1 Cor 15:12-23; 1 Thess 4:13-18

(Mark) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Jon) Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Gospel Lesson:**John 14:1-6; John 5:19-29; John 11:25-26**

(Joel) "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if 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 to 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 except through me.

So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Jesus said..., "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Revelation

(Blair) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place^[a] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,^[b] and God himself will be with them as their God.^[c] ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”... And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. *Rev. 21:1-4, 22-27*

Then the angel^[f] showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life^[g] with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants^[h] will worship him.⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. *Rev. 22:1-5*

Homily “Why Life?” A Homily for the Funeral of Charles Rolf Caylor **(Peter)**

In his papers, Rolf left the following comment:

“My mother’s uncle’s last words were, ‘I was cheated.’”

He didn’t explain the story behind the quote.

But I think that we all know something of what lies behind that idea.

I suspect that Rolf remembered that phrase

because of how close he had come to saying the same thing.

He had always wanted to get married and have a family –

but it never worked out.

It would be easy to become bitter – to think that he was cheated.

Rolf always had more questions than answers.

A few years ago, he prepared a meditation on Job 3 for an elders meeting.

The elders wanted the whole congregation to hear it,

so we asked him to present it to the congregation at a fast day.

Let me read a part of that to you:

I have selected Job 3:20 as the text for my devotion, which I will read shortly, but first I need to make some preliminary remarks. I am an old man, and for the greater part of my life Job has not been one of my favorite books of the Bible. I did find the subject intriguing, it was clearly stated, the positions were well defined, and interest built through out, but then I came to God’s answer. And God’s answer was always a disappointment, an anticlimax, a let down, an aggravation. Frankly I found the answer to be unworthy of God, it did not inspire in me the reverence that it did in Job.

Then recently as I was reading Job my reaction was somewhat different. When I came to God’s answer I heard my own voice inside my head shouting in frustration and anger, “Would somebody please repeat the question? I didn’t hear the question, what was the question?” Which brought me up short, is it possible that God is answering some other question than the one that I’m asking? So I went back to the beginning, this time looking for the question, which now brings us to our text, for here in the third chapter, Job does ask a question.

Job 3:20 Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul?

And it is a question somewhat different from the one I was asking. It’s not, why do the righteous suffer? It’s not even, why suffering? No, the question is why life? Why is light given, why breath, why life? And to this question God’s answer suddenly makes sense, in fact it is a wonderful answer. The reason for life is that we might enjoy the privilege of being in the presence of God, of seeing His glory. Suddenly the answer is far from a let down. It is an answer

that creates wonder and awe and amazement. We are filled with the same reverence that overwhelmed Job...

But by now I am sure that we are all beginning to feel that this all seems very familiar. Where have I heard that question before? Why, of course, it is the very first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Why is life given, what is the chief end of man? Slightly different words, but the same question. And should we be surprised, the answer is also the same in both, in the WSC and in Job. The WSC says, 'Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.'

Only after he had reached his 70s, did Rolf Caylor realize
that he had been asking the wrong question.

"Why is life given to the bitter in soul?"

Rolf, after all, had been "the bitter in soul."

Bitterness and anger could have consumed him!

He was well on his way to saying, "I was cheated!"

If you are asking the wrong question, then you will always be frustrated by the answer.

If you ask me "how old are you?"

and I answer, "Strawberry ice cream,"

then you might get a little frustrated with me!

But so often we do this to God!

We persist in asking the wrong question,

and God persists in giving the right answer –

and we get frustrated at God!

When the problem is that we are not paying attention to the question!

But now Rolf was paying attention to the question: why has God given me life?

Why has God given life to the bitter in soul?

And *now* Rolf was ready to listen to *God's answer* to Job:

"The reason for life is that we might enjoy the privilege of being in the presence of God,
of seeing his glory."

Indeed, many of you were there, singing around his bed at Hospice House,

when he suddenly announced that he had seen God,

that all his questions were answered.

And everyone could see the peace and the joy

that radiated from him in his last days.

Rolf had come to understand from the heart what Psalm 84 says,

"How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD;

my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God."

"The reason for life is that we might enjoy the privilege of being in the presence of God,
of seeing his glory."

Indeed, this is why John says,

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,
and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth.” (1:14)
The glory of God shines in the face of Jesus.

As Hebrews 2 says,

“At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.
But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels,
namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor
because of the suffering of death,
so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” (2:9)

We *see* Jesus.

By faith – not yet by sight!

Over and over again in his final weeks,

Rolf kept encouraging you that here in the worship of God
is where you see the glory of Jesus in this life.

I think that sometimes we hear the language of “being in the presence of God”

or “seeing Jesus” by faith,

and what we *really hear* is “feeling good about being with each other.”

And the result is that we tend to think of the church more as a social club –

and less as a place where we come into the presence of our Creator and Redeemer

After all, we live in an economy that drives families apart.

I have siblings in southern California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.

My wife has siblings in Virginia, Florida, Montana, and the Virgin Islands.

Rolf has siblings in Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio

(that’s pretty close together in these days!).

One result is that more and more people are living and dying alone.

A doctor friend of mine told me of countless patients seeking anti-depressants
who had *no* family or friends in the area.

When he asked one woman about her family and friends, she said,

“I have one friend – but she lives in New York...”

Jesus came in order to establish a new family –

a family that is organized around *him*.

This is why Rolf’s point is so important:

“The reason for life is that we might enjoy the privilege of being in the presence of God,
of seeing his glory.”

The eternal Son of God entered history.

The Creator of the universe became a creature.

He humbled himself and joined himself to our humanity,
so that he might bear the wrath of God due to us for sin.

He passed through death – he died the death that we deserved –
so that all who believe in him might have everlasting life.

And he was raised from the dead – and now sits at the Father’s right hand –
until all things are subjected under his feet.

If the church just tries to be a social club, we might help a few people,
but we will not see the glory of Jesus!

After all, Jesus said that our purpose is to *make disciples* of the nations –
to baptize them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
and to teach them to *observe* all that Jesus commanded.

I say that at every baptism.

I say that now at Rolf’s funeral –

because from the day of your baptism until the day of your funeral,
my calling is to teach you to *observe* all that Jesus commanded.

The church does not get to decide what parts of Jesus’ teaching to observe.
Jesus is *God*.

So he is the one who decides what we ought to teach and observe.

And Jesus’ faithful servant, Rolf, said it well, when he told us that:

“The reason for life is that we might enjoy the privilege of being in the presence of God,
of seeing his glory.”

TH 539 “Jerusalem the Golden”

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, who by the death of your Son has destroyed sin and death, and by his resurrection has restored innocence and everlasting life, in order that we might be delivered from the dominion of the devil, and our mortal bodies be raised up from the dead: grant that with our whole heart we may confidently believe this, and maintain our hope in Christ, steadfast until the end.

We give thanks to you for your grace which you bestowed upon your servant, Rolf, who having finished her course in faith, now rests from her labors; and we ask that as you have appointed us to endure sufferings and death with our Lord Jesus Christ, that you would grant us the grace to submit to your holy will, rejoicing that even as we share in his sufferings, so also will we share in his glory.

Heavenly Father, the consolation of the sorrowful, and the strength of the weak, may the prayers of those that suffer come before you, so that in all their sorrow, they may find the

comfort of the gospel of Jesus Christ. May your Spirit dwell in our hearts by faith, so that we may behold the glory of our Savior even in the midst of our trials.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who will come again to judge the living and the dead, and who will call forth all who sleep in the grave, either to the resurrection of life or the resurrection of condemnation: we ask that you would be gracious to us, and that you would raise us up to everlasting life, that we may abide with you forever—you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

PHSS 157 “Now May Your Servant, Lord”

The Graveside (at the door – since the burial is in Ohio)

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection, and the life, he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." *John 11:25-26*

b. Committal

UNTO Almighty God we commend the soul of our *brother* departed, and we commit *his* body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in the sure and certain hope of the Resurrection unto eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the mortal bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed, and made like unto his own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

c. Affirmation

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from now on: Yes, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." *Rev. 14:13*

d. Prayer

O MERCIFUL God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life; in whom whosoever believes, shall live, though he die; and whoso-ever lives, and believes in him, shall not die eternally; who also has taught us, by his holy Apostle Saint Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for those who sleep in him; We humbly beseech you, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him; and that, at the Resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in your sight; and receive that blessing, which your well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear you, saying, Come, you blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.

And as you have been pleased to take to yourself the soul of this your servant, grant to us who are still in our pilgrimage, and who walk as yet by faith, that having served you with constancy on earth, we may be joined hereafter with your blessed saints in glory everlasting.

O LORD Jesus Christ, who by your death did take away the sting of death; Grant unto us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you, and awake up after your likeness; through your mercy, who lives with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

THE God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*