

The Christian Funeral of Doug Reck

March 23, 2020

“The Quiet Confidence of a Christian”

Lamentations 3:22-26

²² Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. ²³ They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. ²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." ²⁵ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; ²⁶ it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

There is a feeling of quietness that comes to a day like today. There is a certain silence, which confronts us as we face the grim reality of death which is the terrible consequence of sin. Confronted by that reality the death of a loved one is often a time where we are not always sure what to say. This silence might cause us to shudder, to be uncomfortable, even to be afraid.

But in silence, we can also find tremendous comfort. In quiet ways we comfort each other and that silence often speaks volumes. A quiet smile as we look at pictures together remembering times spent and enjoyed with Doug. Our lips turned ever so slightly in the kind of grin that would remind us of Doug. The kind of smile that he subtly carried when he would make a clever comment at a council meeting or laugh at a joke. With a quiet glance and a nod, we can still comfort one another as we gather together on a day where words may not come.

There is another silence for Christians who gather together on a day like today. It is a quiet confidence that comes with knowing that through Christ we are peace with God. It is the quiet confidence that is sure and certain for it comes with knowing that our Savior Jesus has accomplished our salvation, has paid for our sins in full and is preparing a place for us in his heaven. It is the silence of peace that comes knowing that Jesus has received another dearly loved child of God to himself and we can quietly and confidently wait for our turn.

It is that peace, that quiet confidence, which I saw displayed in Doug when I went and visited him. As he sat in his room all beat up from surgery and a fall, there was that same quiet smile, that pleasant thankfulness for the visit, the quiet confidence and peace that he displayed as he sat in his spot in the back of church, every Sunday that he was able.

As believers, God has given us calm and confidence even as death draws near. Because of Jesus, we can look past death to the joy that awaits on the other side of this life and we know that Christ our Savior has done everything necessary to get us there. It is a quiet trust in our God who has saved us and knows what is best for his dearly loved children. This quiet confidence is the same type of confidence that the Old Testament believer Jeremiah expressed in the book of Lamentations.

The entire book of Lamentations encourages believers to cling to the Lord even during disasters. Most of the book is recounting the loss the people felt. Babylon had taken control and had taken over Jerusalem leaving it in ruins. The people were in despair mourning their loss including the writer of the book of Lamentations who begins this book by saying, ***“How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations!”*** He goes on to recount the hardships that he and the nation have endured. But in a moment of quiet clarity, the writer of Lamentations takes a step back and realizes that even in suffering the believer is blessed for God could have dealt with them as they truly deserved sending them off to die in hell to pay the penalty of sin. So even in suffering and uncertainty, even at a time of losing someone so dear and special to you, the Lord remains your portion, your dearest treasure, and he will bring deliverance, of that you can be sure. You can confidently wait for the salvation that you know will come. ²² ***Because of the LORD’s great love, we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.***

Whatever hardships we shall meet we will not be overwhelmed nor consumed for God is with us. Daily we are dealt with according to God’s mercies and compassions instead of getting what our sins deserved. In his faithful mercy, the underserved love of God bubbles up new every day like a spring of living water. ***For his compassions never fail.*** ²³ ***They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*** We have peace, for the Lord is with us through our ups and downs even using difficulties in our life to bring us closer to him. The goodness of God, his compassions, and mercies are as regular as seedtime and harvest, and as certain as the morning sunrise. Therefore, we put our hope in our reliable and steadfast God of love, and we are blessed as those who reap his gifts of forgiveness and eternal life and peace, for we are his children.

As a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus, Doug knew that whatever happened to him, heaven was his home and he was an heir of eternal life. Whether it was a good year out in the field, a not so good year, or a downright tough year, Doug knew that he was held safely in the hands of God and that showed in his quiet confidence in the Lord. God tells us through the apostle Paul, ***The Spirit himself testifies that we are God’s children. Now we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his suffering order that we may also share in his glory I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.***

Heaven is open and waiting and is ours because of that Savior which God had promised. During this season of Lent as we travel along with our Savior to his cross, we also have the privilege of witnessing the quiet determination of our Savior. In quiet reverence, we listen as we hear of his love. How in his silence as he stands before the guards, the soldiers, those that ridiculed and mocked him not saying a word, silently bearing his cross he goes obediently to his death for us.

As Christians with the knowledge of Christ’s crucifixion and with the blessed joy of Easter we also wait with a God-given certainty for the incomparable joy of heaven waits for us. We wait with a hope that is sure for heaven has been opened to us and Christ has done everything necessary to get us there. We confess and believe with all our hearts that Jesus is the

Son of God, he is our good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep, and he will lead us to the rich pastures of heaven.

There is a certain quietness as we face the grim reality of sin, the grim reality of death. But for a Christian, it is not to be a silence of fear. For Christ with his perfect life and innocent death has silenced sin's accusations against us. Sin, death, and the devil have been silenced in Christ's victory and now Doug is experiencing the fullness of that victory. The pains and the temptations and trouble that cried out to Doug have been silenced and the sins and sorrows and the temptations and the turmoil of this life that try to deafen us to God's love will one day be taken away from all of us as well. But before we can experience for ourselves that rejoicing today we calmly and quietly give a silent nod to the grace and the mercy that God has shown to Doug, how he called him to faith, led him through life, and has rescued him through death.

Doug loved farming. I can imagine him on a typical day quietly going about the work that God had given him, sitting in the tractor, riding through the field, quietly taking in the beauty and work of God's hands. From sunset to sundown faithfully going about his tasks and then after the day was done, he would fall asleep in the peace and satisfaction that God had given him. Trusting in his faithful Lord. Thankful for the mercies of God that are new every morning.

It is truly good to wait quietly for the Lord Jesus Christ. We marvel at the work of his hands as Jesus has accomplished our salvation and one day will take us to be with him just as he has done for Doug. Therefore, we will lie down and sleep in peace, even tonight, because we have the same quiet confidence that comes from faith in Jesus,

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*²⁵ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;*

²⁶ it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. Amen.