

The Funeral of +Dorothy Jo Kope+
St. John 10:27-29
April 13th, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I Give unto Them Eternal Life

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand.”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty and Most Merciful God, Who hast appointed us to endure sufferings and death with our Lord Jesus Christ before we enter with Him into glory: Grant us grace at all times to submit ourselves to Thy holy will, to continue steadfast in the true faith unto the end, and to find peace and joy in the blessed hope of the resurrection of the dead, and the glory of the world to come; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hallelujah! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! And because the Christ is risen indeed, we do not mourn as the world mourns. For by His resurrection from the dead, our Lord + Jesus has conquered death and the grave. All those who have been baptized into the Christ, like Jo Kope was, have been buried with Him in His death. If we are buried with the Christ through the waters of Holy Baptism, we are also joined to Him in His resurrection from the dead. If the Christ, our Lord + Jesus, rose again from the dead, we too will rise again from the dead.

This is why we do not mourn as the world mourns, for we know that Jo is alive in Heaven with her, and our Lord, + Jesus, the Christ. The world mourns because they have no such hope. They do not have the hope that we possess of an eternal life in Heaven. They do not have the hope of joining their loved ones in Heaven for all eternity. The world—the unbeliever—only sees the futility of the grave. They see the finality of the grave; their own mortality is placed before them. Therefore, they weep without hope and despair that the person that they loved is forever gone.

But, my dearly beloved, we do not mourn and weep as the world weeps. We are certainly filled with sorrow. We miss our dearly departed sister in Christ. We miss our wife, our mother, our friend, and our fellow Christian. Yet, even though we weep that our dear sister in Christ is no longer living with us, our tears are also filled with the hope of eternal life. Our tears are met with the hope that we will join Jo in Heaven when our life in this vale of tears is over. Therefore, we look forward on this day to the time when we who have been baptized into the Christ; who have shared in the death and burial of the Christ, will be translated with Him in eternal life.

There we will be reunited with Jo for all eternity. There we will join her who is now singing with the choir of Heaven. We will join our voices with all the saints and angels in Heaven and sing the eternal liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom which has no end. Indeed, whenever we gather together in this place around the Word of God and in the Name of the Lord + Jesus, we are united to them who have gone before us into Heaven. We raise our voices in song on this side of life, while our dear sister, and all the saints, join their voices to ours on the eternal side of life. When we gather around this altar and share with one another the meal that our Lord gave us, we are joining together with angels, archangels, and all the company of Heaven to celebrate the feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom.

This is why we do not weep as the world weeps. For our tears are met with the hope of a blessed reunion in Heaven. We will see our dear sister in Christ once again in Heaven. We will see Jo alive and well in Heaven. She will be given a new and glorious body, just as we will.

And this is one more reason we do not weep as the world weeps. For we know that this life is filled with sin, sickness, and life is full of trouble on account of sin in this world. Dorothy Jo Kope was no stranger to the troubles of this life. She lived with disability, the consequences of sin in the world, during her life. The ravages of sin in this life and world caused her dementia. We felt the pain of watching her deterioration as she became a shell of her former self. It was a vivid reminder to us that sin, death, and the devil rule in this world, and constantly seek our destruction.

The world would look at death and say that these have gained the victory through death. But death is only the gateway into eternal life. For we have heard the voice of our loving Shepherd. He has claimed us as His own dear sheep. We have been called by His holy Word to cling to Him in faith. We have been washed with water and the Word, and been claimed by Him to be free from sin and the power of death. He has fed us with His precious Body and Blood in bread and wine, through which we remember and proclaim His death; His death which destroyed death, and won for us an eternal life with Him. By His Word He has given unto us all an eternal life. By His Word He has given an eternal life to Jo.

Having heard the voice of our Shepherd, we cling to the promise of this gift in faith. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. For our heavenly Father is greater than all of our enemies in this life. He is greater than sin; greater than death; He is greater than the devil. He is greater than all those who would destroy our faith, and lead us to despair at the death of a loved one as the world does. Therefore, none of them can pluck us out of our Shepherd's hand. He Who is the Stronger Man guards and keeps us in the one true faith even though the tempests of sin and disease in this life rage against us.

For our Lord + Jesus has suffered and died for us on the tree of the holy cross. He has defeated our enemies once and for all by His death. He has soundly destroyed the power of death over all of His dearly beloved sheep. Death no longer holds any more power over us. For even though He died, yet He still lives. For on the third day, He rose again from the dead. Now we too will rise again from the dead. Dorothy Jo Kope is not dead, but lives with our Lord + Jesus wearing the white robes of Heaven, and carrying a palm branch in her hand, and joining her voice to the heavenly choir, singing, "All glory, laud, and honor" now and forever.

No longer is she in any suffering or pain. No longer is she plagued, as we continue to be, by sin and trespass. No longer is her body ravaged by the consequences of sin, but she now lives alive and well with a new and glorious body in Heaven.

Therefore, my dearly beloved, let us not weep as the world weeps; with no hope and in despair. Let us rejoice that our dear sister in Christ is no longer in suffering; the suffering of this life, but lives with her Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ for all eternity. Let us also rejoice that even though we may be parted from her for a time, we will one day join her in Heaven. We will have a blessed reunion

with our dearly departed sister in Christ. There we will join her in the heavenly choir, and we will sing forever and ever the good news that our Lord and Savior has defeated sin, death, and the devil. We will sing that we have been freed from the bonds that entrap us now in this life. For our Lord and Savior has entered into the grave, and burst open the tomb, so that we may have life eternal with Him.

For our Lord + Jesus has risen from the dead. We who have been baptized with Him in His death, will surely rise again with Him in His resurrection. This is why we do not weep as the world weeps for the Christ has indeed risen from the dead, and destroyed the power of death once and for all. Hallelujah! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!