

Message at the Memorial Service of Don Herbsleb
“In Your Word I Do Hope” (Psalm 130:5)
February 20, 2024
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the dear family and friends of Don Herbsleb, our text for this day as we celebrate his life and victory in Christ, is from Psalm 130:5.

“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope.

So far the text...

God in His great love has created each of us, as He did for Don, with both body and soul. And out of His great love, God has given us the most amazing gift – redemption of our souls through the shed blood of Jesus and the sure hope of an immortal, incorruptible, resurrected glorious body! Like Jesus’ body as God’s Word tells us in Philippians 3.

“20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”

We eagerly wait...Don eagerly waited to see his Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And last Monday, Don’s soul was graciously carried by our Lord into heaven to be with Him for eternity. As I read Psalm 130 to Don, he peacefully was taken to his heavenly citizenship. And Don’s soul needed not wait any more. All praise to God. And in that moment, Pat, Tammy, Tim and I thanked God and said together the words that another elderly man, Simeon, once said.

**“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation
31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.”**

According to Your Word...Don, the Lord’s servant, departed in peace. We also who trust in Jesus, will depart in peace. For God’s word is for all peoples. His salvation which Don saw through the gift of faith that was given him, is seen with your eyes of faith. God’s salvation is a light to bring His revelation of His great love to all people.

A Bible verse that we read was one of Don's favorite verses.

1 John 3:1 "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"

Bestowed on us. It is a gift given, that could not be earned. It is a gift to be called a child of God and that can only be given through water and the Word. In the life giving, regenerating water of baptism, God graciously forgave Don his sins and called him His child. And God does the same for all us who have been baptized. And in this Word Don did hope as we read earlier from Romans 6.

"Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Don knew and confessed that he could not stand before God because of his sins as each of us believers also know and confess.

As I read Psalm 130 to Don, he heard these words one more time:

**"Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord;
2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let Your ears be attentive
To the voice of my supplications.**

**3 If You, Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
4 But there is forgiveness with You,
That You may be feared."**

From the depths of one's soul we admit that we cannot stand if the Lord should mark iniquities. Who could stand? No one. But there is good news for our souls as there was comfort for Don's soul.

"But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared."

Not just a little forgiveness, but Psalm 130 says:

**O Israel, hope in the Lord;
For with the Lord there is mercy,
And with Him is abundant redemption.
8 And He shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.**

And with that great comfort and peace, the Lord carried Don's soul to heaven with His loving hands. For by the loving hands of Jesus, nailed to the cross, Jesus won forgiveness for all people abundant redemption for all iniquities.

There is no greater hope than this for all of us hear this word right now.

**“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
And in His word I do hope.
6 My soul waits for the Lord
More than those who watch for the morning—
Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.”**

And thanks be to God, Don's soul no longer waits. He no longer hopes, but lives in the very presence of the Lord! Each of our souls continues to wait for the Lord... more than those who watch for the morning...until that day comes when the blessed eternity begins where there is no more sorrow, sadness, suffering or sin -only abundant joy!

We give thanks to God that He gave His servant, Don, much joy even as he waited for the Lord's calling him to heaven. God gave Don 65 years of matrimony with Pat, and a family that he loved and cared for, because God loved and cared for him. God gave Don much joy in using his physical talents to build homes, lay brick, and in his later years, make intricate scroll work.

With the loving hands that cared for his family, God blessed Don with the talent to use his hands and eyes to turn wood into artwork. And thanks be to God that he fashioned wood into lasting testimonies of the faith he had in his Savior Jesus. Don made crosses and nativity scroll work. He made little lambs for each child that was baptized here at Immanuel as we have displayed on the board by the piano. I am Jesus little lamb through baptism.

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!"

And as you look at the bulletin cover, you see a Bible verse from 1 Corinthians 13 that Don cut out of wood.

“Now faith, hope and love abide. These three, but the greatest of these is love.”

Through faith in Jesus, Don had the sure hope of eternal life and he knew the Savior's love, the greatest of these. Why? Because in this life we see Jesus with eyes of faith. In this life we have hope in what we physically aren't able to see yet as Hebrews 11:1 says:

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

And this evidence found in God's Word, in which our souls place our hope, becomes unimaginable beauty when the Lord takes one's soul from this world of tribulation into His glorious presence. Faith is no longer needed. Hope is no longer needed. Because a believer stands in the very presence of the God of love through Jesus Christ. Yes, God's love never ends and for that reason it is the greatest.

Don waited in hope as each of us also still does, more than watchman for the morning. But when hope gives way to the very presence of God, then death is swallowed up in victory. And the morning sun is no longer needed for the Lamb, Jesus is its light. So, in God's Word from Revelation 21:23 we do hope.

Revelation 21:23

“The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light.

And again, our Lord promises us His sure word of hope in the next chapter of Revelation:

Revelation 22:3-5

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”

We thank God for His servant Don and all the saints who have been faithful unto death and received the crown of life. Here we live in humbleness, in heaven we will reign forever and ever! Thanks be to God for His plentiful redemption!

What does St. John write in the very next verse? **“These words are faithful and true.”** Amen!

“Come Lord Jesus!”

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.” (Revelation 22:20-21) Amen.

“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)