

Sermon at the funeral of Lee Roy E. Veland
June 21st, 2023
John 10:25-27

The words that we meditate upon this day to receive much comfort and strength are from John 10 which we read earlier.

Jesus answered, “ My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.”

This day we celebrate the gift of gifts – the gift which only God can and so graciously gives because of His Son’s death and resurrection – the gift of eternal life. “My sheep”, and Lee Roy confessed Jesus to be his Shepherd in this very church, “follow Me”. They know His voice – the voice of tenderness and love, and are known by the Shepherd. They are His. Mine! Jesus says. He lovingly fought for them, won for them salvation and no one can ever take them away from Him. No one can snatch them out of the Father’s hand! For Jesus and the Father are one. One Lord, one faith, one baptism as we know from Ephesians 4.

And in that gift of baptism which Lee Roy received, he was united with Jesus and received from Jesus the washing of his sins, his salvation, his new white robe of righteousness.

On our bulletin cover you see a verse which an elderly man said when held the baby Jesus in his arms.

**“he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:
29 “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word; (Luke 2:29)**

40 days after the birth of Jesus, His mother Mary and Father Joseph took the Lord to the temple. Candelmas day, February 2nd. A man named Simeon was lead by

the Holy Spirit to also go to the temple to receive a gift. – to see his Savior, hold Him in his arms, and depart in peace. Simeon had lived a long life and yet the best was yet to come -

On the eve of this special day, February 1st – Lee Roy received a gift – the gift of life, entrance into this world – Lee Roy was born. The year was 1946. 9 months earlier on May 8, the world celebrated VE day. Victory in Europe with Germany's unconditional surrender to the allies including the United States ending WWII. The world received the gift of the end of fighting in Europe.

God gave Ernst and Mary Veland a joy to celebrate around the time of VE day. Lee Roy Veland was conceived. As we heard earlier in our devotion from Psalm 139, God skillfully knitted him together.

**“13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb.
14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.”**

**And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me,
When as yet there were none of them.**

17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

Lee Roy was born in 1946 right after the war had ended and there was a temporal peace.

The words that Simeon spoke of lasting spiritual peace:

**29 “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.”**

Simeon saw this gift with His own eyes – Jesus – God in the flesh – who would 30 years later give His life on the cross for the sins of the world. Simeon could depart in peace – spiritual peace – peace for his soul - because through faith in Jesus his

sins were forgiven. It was a beautiful confirmation of his faith before Simeon would leave this world. This was Simeon's V day. Victory day!

God prepared this gift of His salvation with the birth of His Son Jesus into the world. A gift for all peoples. For Lee Roy, and for each of us!

God is the giver of all good gifts. In Luke 11, Jesus taught His disciples and each of us how to pray with the Lord's prayer. In one of the petitions, we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread". God graciously gives – food for the table, food for BBQ's fundraisers, food at the Elks lodge that we will receive shortly.

God gives us families, children, a special father to raise us. God gives us special moments in life to celebrate with our families, camping, fishing, BBQ's, the birth of more grandchildren, the naming of a grandchild after his grandpa, a gift of a job at Payne auto to provide for daily needs, the gift to travel on a BMW across the United States and behold the beauties of this earth – How great Thou art – "when I consider all the works Thy hand hath made!" we just sang!

God gives us friends to enjoy all these blessings in life and share them with others. A long life to enjoy them with others. 77 years.

The giving of these earthly gifts will eventual come to an end for all of us just like it did for Lee Roy. For our earthly lives will fade and we will grow weaker. The strength to lift up a pickup truck would diminish. Cross country trips on a motorcycle will end. The fishing and hunting will cease, the good eating and the seat at the card game will be empty.

And then what? God knew that this day, this funeral day would come. But God prepared for it. He prepared Lee Roy for it. God first of all sent His very best, His sinless Son Jesus into this war torn world to establish peace, lasting eternal peace. On the cross, Jesus received the wrath of God the Father for all our sins. Though He didn't deserve it, Jesus did it out of love, to remove all that separates us from God – our sins- Lee Roy's sins – so that there is nothing that can keep us from entering heaven.

[2 Corinthians 5:19](#)

that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

The world's sins – Lee Roy's sins – he tried hard to be the best father, friend, co-worker, but no one is perfect. We all have said and done things we regret.

The Bible puts it this way in Romans 6.

Romans 6:23

" the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We deserve eternal punishment – eternal death and separation from our Creator because of our sins. But God loved the world so much that He rescued all with His Son's saving work. It's a gift. We could not earn it, buy it, gain it by any of our efforts. Jesus made this gift on the cross for all people when He died and said "It is finished". The gift has been made for Lee Roy and each of you.

**But when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in—
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin;**

To put the final wrapping on this most beautiful gift of life, Jesus rose again three days later. V day! Victory day! For Jesus and the world. Eternal life has been gained for all. Peace has been made. Those were the very first words that the resurrected Jesus spoke to His disciples. "Peace be with you".

Simeon received this peace by faith and could depart in peace. Lee Roy received this peace and departed in peace last Tuesday. Today is also Lee Roy's V day. Victory day in Jesus!

For listen to again to the words of Revelation 7 that we read earlier:

"These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The tribulation of this life ended for Lee Roy last Tuesday. And Jesus' gift of eternal life in heaven was begun. Washed in the blood of the Lamb – God's people, "My sheep", wear white robes for they have no sin. Jesus had washed them clean in their baptism – in Lee Roy's baptism.

The gift of eternal life is perfect bliss. No hunger, no excessive heat warnings, no triple digits heat figures, tornadoes, flooding, no thirst, no sadness, or tears or pain or suffering, for they behold with their very eyes as did Simeon, the Lamb who is in their midst who shepherd's them.

So, Job could say with complete confidence in Job 19, as we sang in our opening hymn, "My Redeemer Lives",

**"Oh, that my words were written!
Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!
24 That they were engraved on a rock
With an iron pen and lead, forever!
25 For I know that my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
26 And after my skin is [destroyed, this I know,
That in my flesh I shall see God,
27 Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another."**

And these words were written and preserved for all coming generations so that Lee Roy could know them and that all of you could know them, believe them and have much joy that you will see God with your own eyes, in a resurrected, perfect, immortal body. And, you will see your loved ones with your own eyes again.

What a gift from God eternal life is!

**When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim: "My God, how great Thou art!" Refrain**

**Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee,**

How great Thou art! How great Thou art!

“even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Blameless! Wow! Without sin! Dressed in the white robe of Jesus’ righteousness! That’s Lee Roy’s final gift from God. And yours also! Oh, how Lee Roy wants you to have it! Oh, Even more so, how God wants you to have it. God promises to be faithful to you! Follow Him. Honor Lee Roy, by believing in the Giver of all good gifts – The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And as His sheep Jesus will also give you eternal life and your final V-day, V for Victory day! Amen.