

Funeral of Robert Eilers

May 16, 2022

“What the voice of the Good Shepherd says to His sheep”

(John 10:27-28)

By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Resurrection peace be to you Loretta, Ken and Debbie, Connie and all the family and all the friends.

We are gathered here to hear the Good News from our risen Lord, Jesus Christ, to hear what He had done for Bob and for all of you – His great love that He would give His life. How great Thou art! Amen.

Our text for this day, this special day, as we celebrate the life and the blessings given to Bob, the eternal life granted to him by His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, is from our Gospel reading John 10:27-28. It’s on the cover of your bulletin too.

**“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.” (John 10:27-28)**

Here ends our text.

How great Thou art! The God who created us, who created Bob, and on the cover of the bulletin is an area that Bob loved to enjoy with his family, Arroyo City – to view the beauty of God’s creation, then to meditate upon the victory that he has in His Savior, the life that he enjoyed as he walked among us and now as he walks among the saints in heaven. Thanks be to his Savior Jesus Christ. By grace he is saved. By grace we are saved.

“They follow Me.” says our Savior Jesus Christ that He says of the sheep who He claims as His, who He knows so well, and who follow Him.

The Good Shepherd knew Bob well. He knows all of you well. He knew Bob’s struggles. He knew Bob’s sins, his triumphs in life, his joys with his family and friends. And above all He knew him as His son, His sheep – His dear sheep that He

cared for and loved, protected and guided throughout life. And He continues to give eternal life to His sheep, Bob.

It gives me great joy this day to say that among the sheep that Jesus claims as His, there is a sheep whom we know dearly, who heard Jesus' voice, heard His calling, gladly followed His Saviors' calling, and continues to hear His voice in heaven. This sheep is our dear brother, friend in Christ, Bob Eilers.

If there is one blessing that Bob would want for each of you this day, it's that you too would humble yourself to put all your trust in Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and follow Him until He brings you to heavenly rest!

My sheep, Jesus says. My sheep – He's very possessive of His sheep and that's a good thing. He loves His sheep and He protects them. For Jesus to call you, "My sheep" is the greatest joy, gift, honor and privilege that a person could have in one's life. To be a follower of the Good Shepherd indeed has eternal consequences. Good consequences! The best consequences from the Good Shepherd – his eternal future with Him!

When we read about Bob's 94 years of service to the Lord, his time on earth with us that God graciously gave Him on the back of the bulletin, the highlights of his life. It is easy to see that Bob was leader. A strong leader, a strong man. He led his family in many ways - to buy the Borderland Hardware business of which many of you have shared time with him at – to provide for his family, work hard at it, provide for others, provide for his church. It takes a leader to do that.

He served as President of the Mercedes Chamber of Commerce. He chaired the Exhibit hall at the Stock Show for many years. He served a leader in the church as an officer an elder, a trustee – many different positions. Yes, the font size on the back cover gets a little small to fit it all in – to show a little bit about the full life that God gave to Bob – his leadership, and his service to God and to his fellow man, to all of you. We thank you for coming and honoring him and giving strength to his family this day.

As much as Bob was a leader in many ways, thanks be to God, he was a follower - a follower of Jesus, his Good Shepherd. As strong as the strongest of men is and and the strongest woman is, there comes a time when one's strength is no more. But Bob knew, as you fellow believers in Christ know, that there is a stronger One, thanks be to God, who did what no other could do. Him we must follow.

This strong One, the Son of God, became a true Man to overcome and defeat what overcomes us, what we could not ever accomplish. Jesus was born into our world to defeat our greatest enemies of sin, the devil, and death. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, gives His life. He gives it abundantly so that we have life now and eternal life.

Why did Bob follow the voice of Jesus and why would he want you to follow him also? For it is said of the Good Shepherd, **“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16**

Without any merit or worthiness in Bob or any of us, God gave His only Son, out of pure love for us. He gave His innocent, holy Son to be the Lamb of God who was sacrificed on the altar of the cross for us. The Good Holy Shepherd who willingly laid down His life for the sins of the world, who gave His goodness, His innocence, His righteousness for the world so that we would have His righteousness through faith. And He took upon Himself our guilt, our shame, our sins, and removed the sting of death. That’s why we follow Jesus, our Good Shepherd. For He’s done this for all people. He’s done this for Bob.

Bob could not keep God’s law perfectly and neither can we. But there was One who did this for all of us, the Good Shepherd, Jesus. And that’s why He is called Good. For there is no other one who is good in this world except for Jesus. The Good Shepherd in an act of amazing love exchanged His goodness for our sinfulness, for our wretchedness, Bob’s and mine. And that’s why Bob gladly followed His voice and I invite you to do the same.

The Good Shepherd gives His sheep personally this gift of salvation. For He knows them well. He calls them by name. And gives them this gift of salvation, when and how? By hearing His word and through the waters of baptism, where He claims His child in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, washes him or her of his sins, washed Bob of his sins. And as Bob continued to grow in his faith, God continued to shower His gifts through His Word and Sacrament to him, so that Bob would come often to God’s house here. In this house, he would receive the gift of Jesus’ very body and blood, given and shed on the cross, to eat and to drink for the remission of sins. To hear His voice again and again, “Bob, your sins are forgiven. Go now in peace”. Given and shed for you – the Good Shepherd gives these gifts personally to you to believe how beautiful it is that that the Good Shepherd cares for His sheep.

Yes, Bob guided his family to know of these good gifts that were so important to him, to guide his children, his grandchildren, to let you all know who the Good Shepherd is. And this Bible verse that we are meditating upon, is special to Loretta. It was her confirmation verse. And also to his grandson, Kyle. One's confirmation is the moment that one professes one's faith in the Good Shepherd and receives the Lord's Supper, as you know. It is a beautiful testament that Bob and Loretta would raise their family in the faith. This is the greatest legacy – to guide them to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and to pass on His many blessings to them.

Bob knew the way to eternal life as we heard last night at the funeral home, as we read from another chapter in John. John 14 where Jesus the Shepherd says,

**“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**

What amazing words! And there were some that didn't understand what Jesus was saying.

**4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”**

So Jesus gladly clarified – clarified for Bob, for you for me.

**6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”** And He graciously wants you to come to the Father through Him. For He is the one way. He offered Himself, the Good Shepherd for all people that you would be His sheep and enjoy the blessings of eternal life.

Bob was pretty good at helping people build and repair their earthly homes, helping them fix things. Like we heard last night, he was an engineer without a degree. He could figure things out, problem solve. Help many people with their earthly homes through Borderland Hardware. But he knew he could never build a heavenly home, an eternal home, much less an eternal mansion! But he knew who could. He trusted in Jesus who built the eternal mansion in heaven for Bob, and for all who would trust Him and follow Him.

But Bob relied on his Good Shepherd to lead the way and followed Him – followed the Way, the Truth and the Life – who prepared the heavenly mansions by His death on the cross. That’s how Jesus did it. He did by taking away the world’s sins, laying down His life for the sheep. He invited Bob to follow Him and by the power of the Holy Spirit, Bob indeed said “yes”. I follow You to eternal life. He invites all of you to do the same, trust in the Good Shepherd for He is the only Way to the Father.

I never had a conversation with Bob about whether he had a Twitter account or Instagram. I highly doubt that he did. That’s not something his generation was really in tune with – with having many, many followers or following someone. But, there is one person that he did follow, the One that he wants all of you to follow. And He is for all generations. Jesus the Good Shepherd! Thanks be to God that Bob followed Him all the days of his life and now into heaven and his eternal mansion.

The tender voice of the Good Shepherd tells His sheep that all is well. All is well. He restores our souls of His sheep with His forgiveness. He protects them from evil and guides them to green pastures of His Word and Sacraments. And the good, tender voice of the Good Shepherd promises His sheep as we heard in Psalm 23 that they will dwell in His house forever!

Yes, no one can snatch them from His hand. What great, grand promises God gives to us through His Word. And so we look forward to the day when all the sheep are gathered at His right hand, that day of the resurrection. And our Lord Jesus invites His sheep to join together, those on earth and those who have followed Him and are now in heaven, to enter into the eternal kingdom prepared for them and reunite all loved ones again. Oh, that day is coming! Thanks be to Jesus! All glory to God the Father who created us, who created Bob. All glory to God the Son who redeemed him and all of us. All glory to the Holy Spirit who gives us this faith and confidence to trust His Word and follow Him. Amen.

**The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**