

FUNERAL SERMON – BOB BURGESS

Arlene, Holly and Kristen, last Sunday, as I began thinking about your husband and your father, and specifically upon what Scriptures I would read in his funeral and preach upon, these words immediately came to mind: ***“I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me.”*** (2 Tim. 1:12) They are words of certainty, of confidence; and, if he had been able, they are a confession that I can hear Bob confidently stating before he died.

Your husband... your father... your grandfather... and our brother here in this congregation was a proud guy. I don't mean arrogant and boastful; Bob was not that. He knew and believed that we were all sinners, himself included. But, even though he knew, and confessed, that he was a sinner, Bob was proud... confidently certain.

- He was proud of his knowledge of German, and so often sprinkled his speech with German words and phrases. He probably thought that this is what we'll be speaking in heaven!
- He was proud of his fitness and his health. I remember one time, a number of weeks after he had had knee surgery, he jumped up and down and ran in place to demonstrate to me his recovery.
- He was proud of his pilot's license. I think he thought of himself as a Sully Sullenberger, able to safely land his plane on the Hudson River. Did you know that he once met Charles Lindbergh? Did you ever hear that story?
- He was proud of his engineering degree and his long work career, and the places that it took him.
- He was proud of his family: of his 60 years of marriage with you, Arlene; of each of his girls and your careers; and of his grandchildren. He, and Arlene, spoke of you often on my visits.

Of course, if you knew Bob you knew all of these things. Bob was not afraid to speak his mind and tell you about these things, of which he was so proud!

What was the most wonderful was his pride in his faith... his confident certainty in his God and His salvation in Jesus. This was most wonderful because this is especially where Bob was a blessing to us. His certainty and pride came from his knowledge of the Bible. He believed it truly to be God's words... words through which the Holy Spirit speaks and fills our minds and hearts with Christ. This belief prompted him to read it and study it and learn it – as we all should. ***“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it,”*** Jesus promised; and we see an example of this in the old man Simeon – a guy who just shows up and starts talking and telling you what's on his mind. Who does that sound like? ***“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation...”*** This was true for Bob, and is true for everyone who hears God's words and takes them to heart. Confidence in God, and so peace: peace regarding what you have from God and where you are going when you die – this is what God gives you through His Word.

Because he was confident of this – confident of his Lord and Savior – Bob (and you, Arlene) raised you, Holly and Kristen, in this Word of God and shared it with your children. He wanted you to have God's peace. This is not a lack of conflict or trouble. After all, Jesus tells us that the world rejects Him and His teaching, and so following Him will bring trouble. But, you will also be confident of His presence with you, His help, and His blessing. You will be confident as you face death, which we all will. You will have God's peace in Christ, a peace which the world cannot give. This is what matters above everything else.

Bob also shared the Word of God with fellow parishioners, and even with Pastors. He wasn't shy about telling pastors what he thought, and confronting them if he disagreed with them! I thank God for this, for pastors, too, need to hear God's Word. I've been proud to be a Bob with him. *"Ok, the Bobs are here!"* I'd say now and then in the Thursday morning Bible class after Bob Burgess and Bob Van Orsdel and I were seated. *"We're ready, so the rest of you can be ready!"* As a proud Christian Bob blessed us with his leadership in this congregation: first, in hearing and studying the Word of God with us, and then in serving in various roles and positions to help in the work of sharing God's Word with others. One of us, he was one for us. He was very much a blessing.

It's easy to forget these things when a person gets old and frailties bring about changes. So, it's good to look back and remember. It's even better to look ahead and see how proud God will make us.

"I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me." These are words of one who is confidently looking ahead... to *"that day,"* the day when we leave this life to stand before God. He is an all-mighty and all-knowing Lord who knows your every sin and fault, including things which you would be embarrassed to have revealed. But, this Lord is Jesus, who bore every single sin of yours and the punishment you deserve. He laid down His life to save you from their condemnation. Bob, like you and me, was baptized into His death for his sins and His resurrection. He was joined to this Lord Jesus and firmly believed in Him, and so did not fear death. He knew that he would not be ashamed, for Jesus had borne his shame. He looked forward to being raised from sin and death to stand before him and jump up and down to show how fit he was, how fully he had been healed!

"I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me."... "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God!" Because God in His love has given us His Son, this is what we can confidently say. This is the faith – the Savior – of which we can be proud. And in this faith we confidently entrust Bob, God's servant, to His care; to depart here, and live forever in His peace! Amen.