

Memorial Service held for Herbert F. Bentz

December 18, 2020

Chris Hagan (Youth Director at Ellensburg Presbyterian Church):
Good afternoon. Thank you for being here today. We are family, friends, and family friends of Herbert and Wesley Bentz, and we're here to celebrate Herbert's life and to mourn his passing.

I will begin with some Scripture.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy, and peace, and faith, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, Who comforts us in all our sorrows, so that we can comfort others in their sorrow, with the consolation we have received from God. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Let's pray together.

Eternal God, our Help in every time of trouble, send your Holy Spirit to comfort and strengthen us that we may have hope of life eternal and trust in your goodness and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavily burdened and I will give you rest." Father, we pray for our brother, Herbert, that he may rest from his labors and enter into the light of God's eternal rest. Receive, O Lord, your servant, for he returns to You. May he hear your words of welcome, "Come, you blessed of my Father and receive the unfading crown of glory." May the angels surround him and the saints welcome him in peace.

Gracious God, in Who's presence live all who die in the Lord, receive our brother, Herbert, into your merciful arms and the joy of your heavenly home. May he and all the departed rest in Your peace. Amen.

And now I will read two passages of Scripture and give a very brief exposition of one of them. Well, not an exposition -- I will talk a bit.

Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His

name's sake and even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies, You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

And then our New Testament reading is from the book of John. This is the death of Lazarus:

"On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now, Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

"'Lord,' Martha said to Jesus, 'if you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, God will give you whatever you ask.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha answered, 'I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; the one who believes in me will live even though they die, and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'I believe you are the Messiah, the son of God who was to come into the world.'

"After she said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. 'The teacher is here,' she said, 'and is asking for you.' When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met Him. When the others, who had been with Mary in the house comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there. When Mary reached the place where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'

"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the others who had come with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and troubled. 'Where have you laid him?' He asked. 'Come and see,' they replied. Jesus wept. Then some said, 'See how He loved him.' But others of them said, 'Could not He, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man from dying?'"

There are three themes I want to discuss from this passage.

The first theme is the three-time repetition of "Jesus, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." First, it's Martha, and then Mary, and then some of the people watching. In our time of grief, sometimes it feels that God and Jesus are distant and they're not here. We cry out, "God, where are you?" in our sorrow, when death happens.

The second theme comes when in just a week, we'll be celebrating Christmas, the birth of Jesus. One of the names given to Jesus in the Old Testament is Emmanuel, "God with us." That's the promise of Christmas, that even though at times we feel like God is distant, like Jesus isn't here with us, we can have faith that He is with us; His spirit is with us, and we can hold on to that hope.

The third theme from this passage is that in the midst of our questions and sorrow, there's hope. In the middle of the passage, Jesus tells Martha this wonderful promise, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, and whoever dies believing in me will live again." And that is the Christian hope, that even though sorrows and death are in this world, we have a future and a hope to look forward to. One day, everything will be made right.

Today, we are rejoicing in the life of Herbert because he is now with the Lord, but we're also grieving because we miss our friend, brother, son and father.

Now, I'd like to take a brief time if anybody would like to share a memory, or experience they have of Herbert, you are welcome to. I know it's a little bit chilly, so if not, I also understand.

Speaker: I have known Herbert for a few years. Wesley is a very close friend of mine. He'd let me come over to his house, always had open arms, was always a really happy guy. This has been really difficult for me as well. I just want you guys to know I feel for you.

Speaker: Anybody else?

Speaker: I'll share. I met Herbert because I took some sign language classes. He was always gracious because I would see him having coffee every morning when I was in there and all I knew was "How are you?" [signs] [laughter] and "I am fine" [signs]. And he was just always great. We would jot on pieces of paper. It wasn't until later when I knew Wes that I put the two together, and what a joy it was to get to know the whole family.

Your dad was a very gracious, and wonderful man. I wish I would have spent more time talking to him. I'm very sorry for your loss. He was a wonderful human being, and Wes, you have a lot of those qualities in you.

Speaker: I'll share mine. I do youth group with Wesley. [Tears up.] When I see other people cry, I cry. [Laughter in background.] Sorry. I just remember his dad was always really loving whenever I met him, too. It was hard to communicate, but I remember in the summer, we were doing youth group on Zoom, and he would come and wave to all of us kids, and we would wave back. There was that environment of love, support, and kindness. That's what I remember about Herbert, and I'm sorry for your loss, too.

Chris Hagan: Well, thank you all for sharing. You're welcome to stay and gather together, and continue to share in the memory. I will pray a final prayer, and then give the benediction.

Let's pray together.

Almighty God, source of all mercy and giver of comfort, deal graciously with those who mourn, that casting all their sorrow on You, they may know the consolation of Your love. Father, your Holy Spirit, prays for us even when we do not know how to pray. Send your Spirit to comfort us in our need and our loss, and help us to commend Herbert to your merciful care, through and in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

You're free to stay and chat for a bit, to share any memories, and get to know people. And then that will be it. Let me give you a benediction.

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may His face shine upon you and give you His peace, the peace that passes all understanding, to keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Henry Johnston (Johnston & Williams Funeral Home): Ladies and gentlemen, that concludes today's service. On behalf of the family, we thank you for your many kindnesses expressed in both thought and in deed, and for your attendance today. You may retire at your leisure.

[End of service.]

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