

The Holy Funeral of our Dear Brother in Christ, Sidney Weir

In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear Brenda, Dave, Mark, Paul, Pamela and the rest of the family and friends of Sid, Peace to you and Grace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, bring you peace during this difficult time.

Unfortunately, I only knew Sid on his deathbed. I received only a flash of the great wit that Sid possessed. It has been my pleasure to get to know some of you during this sad time. It is obvious that Sid was well loved by all of you.

Sid has gone through what we all must face, namely, death. Death is God's judgement on sin. God's judgement first fell on Adam and Eve who rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden. Being born in their image, all of us also rebel against God from our conception. We see it in how we live our lives.

No matter how hard we try, we fall short in being good sons, daughters, spouses, and friends. Have we always honored our parents? Even when we technically obey them, have we ever grumbled against our parents? Have we honored our spouse as the God-given gift they are? Or have we, at times, acted selfishly? Have we always been there for our friends? If you are honest with yourself, you know that you haven't always been the best child, spouse, or friend. God describes us well in Isaiah, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way (Isaiah 53:6a)."

So, we too, are under the same judgement. Death. And we all must come face to face with that judgement.

Death is the great enemy of man.

But death has been defeated! Isaiah continues, "and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6b)." Jesus didn't come to earth to be a great moral teacher, although every word He spoke was true. Jesus came to take our judgement. Jesus says that "God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him (John 3:17)."

God the Father laid on Jesus Christ the condemnation of all our sins at the cross. Jesus was condemned in our place so that you and I may not be condemned. The debt you owe God for your sin, every petty little sin and every major sin, was paid on the cross.

How do we know that every sin is covered?

Because Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. The most well attested to event of the ancient world is the resurrection of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. He was seen by over 500 people in His resurrected flesh. The Gospel accounts are reliable witnesses to Jesus' birth, death and resurrection. Saint Paul tells us that "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins (1 Corinthians 15:17)." But Christ is raised from the dead and the sin of the whole world is covered.

How do you know that your sin is covered?

Imagine if you had a million dollars in the bank but couldn't access it? It's great that the sin of the whole world is covered, but if your sin isn't covered, there's a big problem.

Saint Peter was asked the question of what we should do to be saved (Acts 2). He answered, "Repent [of your sin] and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise [of forgiveness of sins] is for you and for your children (Acts 2:38-39a)."

Jesus describes us as sheep. Sheep are not the smartest of creatures and they love to stray. Jesus, though, describes Himself as the Good Shepherd.

One thing I do know about Sid is that he was baptized. Hear what Saint Paul says about baptism: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His (Romans 6:3-5)."

I believe it is fair to say that Sid strayed from His Lord. But the Good Shepherd did not stray. Jesus says in our Gospel reading, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd

lays down His life for the sheep... I know my own and my own know me... and they will listen to my voice (John 10:11, 14, 16)."

Sid heard his Lord's voice. Sid heard the good news that his sin is covered. Sid heard His Lord absolve him of all his sins. Sid heard His Lord as he was fed the Lord's very own body and blood for the forgiveness of sins.

Sid died in the arms of His Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd sought Sid and brought him back into the flock of the Christian church.

We grieve for our loss today. We grieve that Sid is no longer with us. Your grief is a testament of how much Sid impacted your lives. But we do not grieve as those with no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). We grieve, and at the same time, we have hope in the resurrection of the dead.

Our Good Shepherd came to us 2,000 years ago to pay for our sin.

Our Good Shepherd comes to us today in the church. He baptizes us to wash us clean from all our sin. He pronounces Good News and forgiveness of sins in His name. He feeds us His very own body and blood to forgive us our sins and strengthen our faith. He promises to hear us when we call upon His name. He shepherds us with under-shepherds, so we might remain in the Faith given to us in Baptism.

A few verses before our Gospel reading, Jesus says, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture (John 10:9)."

Our Good Shepherd will come again in glory. He will bring all His sheep into the pasture of a new creation. We will be reunited with Sid and all who have died in the Faith.

We will have glorified bodies just like our Good Shepherd and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.