

**The Christian Funeral of Lois Seehusen**  
**St. Matthew's Lutheran Church - Danube, MN**

**Thursday, October 26, 2017**

**Pastor Mike Kuschel**

***Lamentations 3:25-26. <sup>25</sup> The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; <sup>26</sup> it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.***

For about a month the busyness of life was paired with quiet moments of being with mom, caring for her needs, sitting next to her in bed, car rides and appointments, text messages and phone calls, waiting to hear the reports, waiting for the updates, waiting for a day that you all knew and felt was coming. And yet the whole while, even though your mom knew what was coming too, she seemed to wait so patiently, so quietly. She was at peace, for she was waiting for the salvation of the Lord. She knew that her Savior Jesus had paid for her sins, she knew that he had lived a perfect life in her place, died the death that she deserved, and was raised to life to assure us of the sure hope of eternal life. Lois - saved by grace through God's gift of faith in Jesus Christ - waited for the day of her final salvation. With a quiet confidence that came from faith in Jesus she lay in peace waiting for her Lord to bring her to her eternal home.

The scene was just about the same each time I came to visit. Laying comfortably with family near, she was at peace. As I spoke God's Word to her, as she received the Lord's Supper, there was a quiet gratitude. She gently said thank you to those that assisted her, she gratefully received the Sacrament, and with that same polite voice she said thank you to me. The next week it was about the same but this time she stayed in bed, and the week after that as we prayed, as we heard God's truths proclaimed in word and song, she was grateful, eternally grateful not just for the messenger, but for the message.

The Lord Jesus was her indeed her shepherd and he would guide her through the valley of the shadow of death, for her LORD Jesus was with her, guarding and protecting her, leading her to the greenest of pastures, to the quietest of waters. She would fear no evil for soon enough she would dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Yes, ***The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; <sup>26</sup> it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.***

Death, however, is not by any stretch of the imagination an easy thing to face. Death is not an easy thing for any of us to wrap our minds around. Even though it is this inevitability for us all, even though it is this final destination that we all must eventually face, death is simply put, scary. It is an unnatural consequence of sin. Mankind was not made to die, but death came as that unwelcomed consequence of sin. Scripture puts together the horrible cause and effect that we know and feel all too well. The wages of sin is death. Death comes to all because all sinned.

Veiled in darkness, death waits in the shadows, it vexes and troubles, it haunts and terrifies us as human beings, as it comes for us all, young and old alike. At this time of year, skeletons and tomb stones are used as playful lawn decorations, but deep down we all know that death is truly terrifying. Death is this terrible enemy that makes the bravest of men

tremble, it makes the fiercest of women to shudder. How is it then, that this rather gentle woman of 79 years, could face death with a demeanor that was so calm and composed?

The simple answer, the only answer is: Jesus. Our sure and certain and eternal hope is in the LORD Jesus. Our Lord came to a world broken by sin and he came with the hope of eternal life. The perfection of the garden of Eden was soon shattered by sin and death. Mankind fled from God in fear and shame. Death was the consequence that would be passed down from our first parents to every generation that follows. But the LORD responded by promising a Savior who bring life to this world terrorized by sin and death. To a world now cursed with pain and anguish, sin and death, trouble and strife, God gave hope.

This was the hope that Lois had as a believer in Jesus, as a child of God. Hers was a life that most certainly was touched by sin and sorrow. The imperfections of life lived as a sinner, the tragedy of the loss of loved ones, the daily struggles of sickness, the limitations of failing health and other ailments all left their mark, but in the end her hope was in the Lord. Her hope was found not in herself and her efforts, but her hope was in Jesus. She knew that God had kept his promise. God had sent us a Savior in Jesus to save sinners from sin and death, the immortal God himself took on mortal flesh. The child born in Bethlehem would be our Savior. His perfect life would provide the righteousness we needed to stand before a holy God. Jesus would give his life on the cross to pay for our sin. He would take on death and the grave and rise victorious on the third day so that death would no longer have any mastery over us, so that all those who believe in him would share in his glory; so that you and I and Lois might share in his brilliant splendor.

As we mourn the loss of your mother, of your grandmother, of this woman that was so special to you, that idea of brilliant splendor is one that I want you to hold onto right now. I don't think it was secret at all that Lois liked jewelry, she loved "her bling" - as I heard some of the daughters call it. She would come to church even on Tuesday nights and she would be very neatly dressed, even when I would visit her in her home she had that jewelry on. There are more than a few pictures of her in a lovely gown and matching jewels on display today in the entryway, and so today I can't think of a more fitting description of the glory that awaits those who believe in Jesus than the one given to us in Revelation chapter 21. The apostle speaks of heaven in these terms: ***then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed.*** John goes on to speak of this city, this people of God, adorned with brilliant gemstones, shining forth with the very glory of God.

Although this is a day of loss and sorrow, this is a day that we rejoice in the brilliant glory given to those who believe. Like a bride adorned with the finest of jewels, the Church of God, is clothed in white with the righteousness of Christ. This is the brilliant picture of glory that God gives to us; this is the sure and certain hope that believers have been given. Yes, today we know horribly well how ***the wages of sin is death***, but let us not forget the rest. ***The wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.*** I'm told that Lois was also a big fan of gifts and of course there is no greater gift God has given to us than the gift of eternal life. In his amazing grace, he gives this brilliant glory, this amazing gift to all those who believe in him. A gift of greater worth than any earthly treasure is the gift that God gives to each and every one of us who believes in Jesus: the gift of eternal life.

And so it is, that a day like today once filled only with dread has been made into a day of victory, of peace, and joy. For a time, we sinners may have to endure pain and suffering, sorrow and heartache in this world so broken by sin, but none of that compares with the eternal joy and the brilliant glory that awaits those who believe in Jesus. And so as believers we put our trust in Jesus and our hope is in him as we wait patiently for the day that Lord will call us home, trusting in our Lord, relying on his unfailing mercy and grace. Yes, ***The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; <sup>26</sup> it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.***

The emotions of this day, and the days that follow can be difficult to handle. A mom who treasured her daughters, who was in turn held so dear by friends and family, is no longer here. This is a difficult blow that you must bear, but this is the faithful assurance the God's Word gives you today in his word: the Lord is there to sustain and uphold you, to give you hope and comfort and strength. We give thanks that the Lord in his grace has sought us out and found us; that the good news of Jesus has been shared with us, through a Christian mother, father, friends, and neighbors. We give thanks for the Word of God that he gives us today, Lord has sought us out and brought to us his saving word and he desires that we would continue to seek him as well. He desires that you seek comfort and strength in his saving word today in the days that follow. Seek out the Lord, be in his word, find strength and support in the fellowship of the church, be encouraged and strengthened by his precious promises. ***The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him;***

If we back up just a few verses prior to these, the prophet writes about how the love of God sustained him and his people during difficult times and how the love of God has that power to sustain us all in days and nights, minutes and months, that might seem overwhelming. He writes: ***Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. <sup>23</sup> They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. <sup>24</sup> I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him."*** Especially on a day like today, sin and death trouble us greatly, emotions pile up, sorrow and sadness will come like a tidal wave today and in the days to come but because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, we are not swept away. Instead by God's grace we are able to stand firm, sustained and strengthened by the LORD's great faithfulness. God's promise to defeat death and to grant eternal life through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis of your hope, the source of your peace, and the foundation of your faith.

And this is the faith that we are brought into through Holy Baptism, this is the faith that nurtured by the word sustains us in difficult times, and this is the faith in Jesus Christ that gave Lois, your dear mother, your dear grandmother, peace even in the face of death itself. ***<sup>25</sup> The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; <sup>26</sup> it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.*** Praise be to God for the comfort and the power of his Word. Amen!