

Sermon for the Funeral of Marlin James Deppermann



Text: 2 Corinthians 5:17 - 21

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Free to be Pablo

Grace be to you dear family from Christ our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Donna; Kristin, Matt, and Malin; Megan and Tim; Josh and Kyle and Katie; Gary and Peggy; Dennis and Anne; and to dear parents Rube and Dalphrine.

First of all I would like to read some of the last writings of Marlin. It was about his funeral and this gathering today. He

wrote “All about those Living – not me. Coming to know Jesus and salvation 2 Corinthians 5.”

I respect a man’s last words and writings and I respected Marlin very much. I will not go against his wishes. I will center on those living, coming to know Jesus and Salvation. However, Marlin never said about not mentioning his little whimsical blue friend next to him named Pablo.

Pablo was an extension of Marlin in a fun sort of way. In Marlin’s suffering and pain Pablo brought the expression of laughter and amusing antics expressed by Marlin and brought the same laughter and joy to this dear family in their pain. Pablo is more than an irrelevant creature that brought temporary relief to all. It was an extension and transference of Marlin’s love and joy amidst the pain and harsh physical affects of his cancer.

How could one be so thoughtful and loving, caring for others, not putting his own needs first, and put on a positive attitude that gave assurance to us all?

Marlin was free in Christ to be Marlin, father and husband that you dear family and friends so cherished. It all was about Jesus and faith that is expressed so well in 2 Corinthians 5. It was all about living as a new Creation in Christ.

He was free in Christ to be the redeemed child of God that God had called Marlin to be. “If any man be in Christ he is a new Creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Marlin did not enter eternity last Sunday morning but 55 years ago right here at Port Hudson – Ebenezer Lutheran Church.

As you know Marlin and I spent much time together these past months. Not really talking about anything but Marlin's great gift of being a new creation. "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (Romans 6:4)

In the midst of stomach cancer we were receiving God's renewing gift of life through word and Christ's true presence in His Body and Blood. It was Marlin's faith that Christ did it all through His suffering and death on Calvary that this horrible cancer was paid for in full.

Each day Christ gave Marlin strength to live not unto himself but to love one another as Christ loved Him. With the confidence of Christ, "that He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised" (v. 15).

With the confidence of Christ's forgiveness ". . .we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Christ has done it all for Marlin. He believed it and more than that he lived it. Christ Jesus took the obstacles of living away. If your sins are taken away, the earthly tent that was being destroyed and a new building built by God and renewed each day then you can live not unto yourself but unto Christ and to all others.

“So we are always of good courage.” (v. 6) This is the courage we witnessed these months. That enabled Marlin to live the life to the fullest. His life was the witness to Christ his Savior and Redeemer.

Marlin was not living in a fairyland of make belief nor was he living a life of denial of his cancer. As in all things Marlin was focused. In the last months He was focused on his Savior. “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)

His whole being was fixed on Jesus the one “God made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (verse 21) The cancer, the finiteness of Marlin’s life was affixed on Jesus. Through Christ Marlin was free to be because “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

With Baptism’s new life Marlin was new everyday. He knew it, he lived it, and he proclaimed joy.

Equipped in power through the living Word, Marlin’s life was totally in Christ, which the prayer of St. Patrick speaks:

Christ be with me
Christ before me
Christ behind me
Christ in me
Christ beneath me
Christ above me
Christ on my right
Christ on my left
Christ where I lie

Christ where I sit
Christ where I arise
Christ in the heart of every man
who thinks of me
Christ in the mouth of every man
who speaks of me
Christ in every eye that sees me
Christ in every ear that hears me
Salvation is of the Lord.

As with St. Patrick this was Marlin's breastplate – his coat of arms, and his living confession.

There was no restlessness, uncertainty and we prayed with St. Augustine: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."

Marlin's rest is with Jesus and you dear family "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."
(John 14:1) God's grace was sufficient for Marlin and it is sufficient for you to get through this and live. (2 Corinthians 10)

Marlin would point to Christ and not to himself. Marlin is taken care of in the perfect rest of Christ. Christ tells us, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)

That brings us back to this little purple friend named Pablo a symbol of Marlin's whimsical, smiling self. Marlin was set free by Christ's grace to be:

1. A loving Husband
2. A loving Son

3. A loving brother
4. A loving father
5. A loving grandpa
6. A loving friend

Marlin was set free by Christ by the Spirit of life who set Marlin free from the law of sin and death. To put it all in a nutshell:

Free to be Pablo

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