

DANCING IN HEAVENLY JOY

Christ is Risen! (And the people say, He is risen indeed! Alleluia!)

Hear again the Word of God for this Saturday in the season of the Resurrection of our Lord, as Jesus says:

“Truly, truly I say to all of you that you all will cry and mourn, but the cosmos will rejoice; all of you will be sad, but your sadness into joy will become.”¹

Jackie, Billy, Eddy, Neil, and Crystal:

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

God has delivered your father, grandfather, uncle, great, great uncle from this veil of tears. It is fitting that God received Gene into his bosom in the week that was named centuries ago, *Jubilate*, which means, Rejoice! Today we are free to rejoice that a man whose life was full, and long. We may remember that a gentleman who found reason for rejoicing in God’s gifts and grace through times of trial as well as times of plenty has received the fullness of God’s grace.

All of that and more means that this day is given to us that we might learn anew that the jubilation that comes from the Faith is promised and given by Jesus even during the times His followers experience hardship, sorrow and earthly loss. This is a special Saturday of comfort given to God’s people, as we are given God’s peace in the proclamation of His Word. The Good News of

¹ John 16:20

Jesus, proclaimed by St. John, is given to take our thoughts from this day of reflection back to another day.

That day included the night in which Jesus was betrayed. This is fitting, for we are living in the Season of Easter. This is the time given to us each year that we might celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead. In hearing of that, we are reminded this day, through our sorrow, that all of us are creatures of time, and also have lives that are eternal.

For some people, the life they had is remembered only by humans. When the last person who remembers them dies, their memory dies. We might say they have eternal lives built upon memories.

Then are the others, those whose eternal lives are built not upon human remembrances, but upon God's remembering them in His mercy. For Eugene, God remembers him, for He named him with His Divine Name with the water and Word of Holy Baptism. In Christ, Gene lives forever. Those who are in Christ, who fall asleep in the Faith of Jesus, will behold him. That will be when time ends, when we, with Gene, will be raised from the dust of death with glorified bodies. Then we will live, as the old spiritual sings out, "in glory land, that outshines the sun!"

Now, in this time, each of us has memories of Eugene. Those we shall treasure - and perhaps pass on to future generations. Yet, Uncle Gene will not live on in those memories. For, with in the Name which he has born since

the day he was baptized – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – Eugene G. Barnes remains alive in the mind of His Eternal Father. Hear again the Word of the Lord:

“Truly, truly I say to all of you that you all will cry and mourn, but the cosmos will rejoice; all of you will be sad, but your sadness into joy will become.”²

Because God in Christ Jesus remembered, and fulfilled those words of promise, we are free to rejoice today in the midst of genuine sorrow. We who have received the gift of the Faith, not from any good work of ours, but from the free grace of God in Jesus, know that God’s people can, and do, have joy, even in grief. For, we believe, and know, that in Jesus’ death, death itself has been conquered. Death has no power to hold those who are name with His Name, and who cling in the Faith to Him until the end of our days.

When Jesus declared to His closest followers, in an upper room, at the Last Supper, that they would mourn and cry, and that the world would rejoice, His words became true in a matter of hours. From the evening in which He was betrayed, until His lifeless Body was laid in the Garden Tomb, Jesus’ disciples learned about true grief. They feared greatly in their sorrow. The Author of Life had breathed His last – in their sins, Gene’s sins, your sins, the sins of the whole world. Even the sun failed its light, and the earth quaked.

² John 16:20

From the day we call Good Friday until the early hours of the first Sunday of the New Covenant, Jesus' followers mourned. Their grief, if you can imagine it, was greater than ours. They had seen Jesus raise the dead, heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf. They had believed that He was the One sent to save Israel. And, He was dead, wrapped in burial cloths, His body sealed in a tomb and guarded by soldiers.

The fallen world, and the ruler of this world, the Devil, Satan Himself, rejoiced greatly. Without the Faith of Jesus, they could only perceive their victory. Jesus, Who called Himself by the Name of God, I Am, was dead and buried.

Yet, the night on which that all occurred, Holy Thursday or Maundy-Thursday, was followed, as was stated earlier, by Good Friday. That day was the day which is good for you. It is an eternal truth, bound fast in the memory of God, that death was destroyed in Jesus' death, the price for sin was paid. All that was needed before God to declare us ever right with Him, and to give us blessed eternal life, was accomplished over a time of just three days.

For our Good News reading for today, our Gospel, also declared to Jesus' followers that *your sadness into joy will become*. Because Jesus died, He would be raised from the dead. That is true whether you believe it or not.

There are too many eye-witnesses, on so many occasions over a period of forty days, to discount the bodily resurrection of Jesus the Christ from

the dead. While fools in each age, led by the spirit of the deceiver who is the prince of the power of this air, Lucifer, while such human fools may try to denounce or decry Jesus' resurrection from the dead, the Truth remains. Jesus is alive!

This Eugene knows, and believes, and in Christ, now sees fully. Because Jesus actually rose from the dead, Gene too will rise. The Word by which the Creation came into being will sound forth. The dead will rise as Christ Jesus returns on the clouds. This fallen heavens and earth will pass away in a rush of cleansing fire. From its ashes, God will create a New Heavens and New Earth, a glory land that outshines the sun!

In the meantime, the devil remains bound on earth. He works His deceptions and executes his wily plans among us – especially in us who are the Church. He knows that, while we who are named with Jesus' Holy Name are new creatures for blessed eternity, that we are also creatures of the “now.”

We need to be aware that the devil knows that there is a *human tendency to get used to any situation, whether thrilling or painful, in a way that dulls [one's] initial impression of it.*³ He likes us to believe the adage: “Time heals all wounds.” Or, as it was stated way back in time in the fourth century BC, “Healing is a matter of time, but it is sometimes also a matter of opportunity.”⁴

³ Solomon, Micah. “Millennial Customers: The Experts In ‘What Have You Done For Me Lately?’ Internet. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2014/02/13/millennial-customers-and-the-what-have-you-done-for-me-lately-syndrome/> accessed April 25, 2015.

⁴ Hippocrates. The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 5th edition, 2001, 377.

The devil takes every opportunity to work his will to draw people away from the Faith, from Jesus, from blessed eternal life. His lies are sometimes bold and direct, but, in our age, often very subtle. One of the deceiver's lies is to twist the meaning that funeral services like this are just for the living.

Please hear and understand, and receive a reason for rejoicing in your grief that this service is for all the living. That means it is God's service to those who are alive in Him. It is another absolute truth that where the Word of God is proclaimed among God's people, Jesus is present. Where Jesus is present, so is the whole company of heaven.

In one very old Lord's service which remains in use among God's people today, we say, chant, or sing, "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your Thy Holy Name and say, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; heaven and earth are full of Your Thy glory.'" This is declared that we might ever be aware, generation - to - generation until this world passes away, that God is with His people, in His Word. He comes and brings joy, even in the midst of sorrow.

That is one reason why, today, this sermon began with the chant, "He is risen! He is risen, indeed, Alleluia!" It was heralded to remind you, and to introduce to some of you, that Jesus' resurrection, declared on Easter, is for us. Easter is not over. You are free to keep that in mind when the human tendency to get used to our new situation - life on earth without Uncle Gene's smile, His

joy of dancing, cars, and family. Remember, that on account of God's promises in Jesus, Eugene G. Barnes may be rightly called now: Saint Gene.

His sins were washed away. God is faithful. God remembers His promises. God will raise him from the dead, in a new and glorified body, and in Christ he will reign in the glory land that outshines the sun! Jesus is here, fulfilling His promises for you. Christ is Risen!

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Funeral Sermon for Eugene G. Barnes, (*Jubilate*, Historic One-year series)

Lamentations 3:22-33; Psalm 23; John 16:16-22

May 9, 2015

Pastor Michael A. Morehouse

SOLI DEO GLORIA

“(A) little while and no longer will all of you see Me; then again, (a) little while, then all of you will see Me.”⁵

Then some from the disciples of Him said, “What is this thing He says to us, ‘(A) little while and not all of you will see Me; then again, (a) little while, then all of you will see Me’; and, ‘Because I go to the Father?’”⁶

Then, they said, “What is this [which He says], ‘the little while?’” We do not continue to know that which He says.⁷

Knowing, Jesus, that they came to Him to ask, then He said to them, “Concerning this, you all seek with one another because I said, ‘(A) little while and not all of you will see Me; then again, (a) little while, then all of you will see Me?’”⁸

“Truly, truly I say to all of you that you all will cry and mourn all of you, but the cosmos will rejoice; you all will be sad, but the sadness of you all into joy will become.”⁹

“The woman, when she births, sadness she has because it comes the hour of her; but when she may have birthed the child, no longer she remembers the tribulation on account of the joy because she has birthed (a) man into the cosmos.”¹⁰

Therefore, now all of you have sadness; but again I will see all of you and your heart will rejoice, and no one takes your joy from you.¹¹

Sense translation:

A little while and then all of you all not continue to view Me as spectators in a show. Then again, a little while and you all will see Me for Who I AM.¹²

⁵ John 16:16

⁶ John 16:17

⁷ John 16:18

⁸ John 16:19.

⁹ John 16:20

¹⁰ John 16:21.

¹¹ John 16:22.

¹² John 16:16.