

## READY AND CONFIDENT TO MEET HIS MAKER

Our sermon for this day the Church in this place has chosen to remember the Faith that God gave to His servant Walter Frederick Zum Mallen, is drawn from the readings God guided him to hold onto. They gave him comfort as they were read in November 2010 in memory of the gift of the Faith given to his beloved Betty. Hear Jesus again declare:

*Let not the heart of all of you continue to be troubled:  
continue to believe in God,  
continue to believe also in Me.<sup>1</sup>*

Cindy, Barry, Aaron, family and friends of Walter Zum Mallen,

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

Today, through selections from the Word of God chosen with care by Walter's sainted wife, Betty, you are being called not to mourn your genuine earthly loss as people who have no hope. In the midst of human sorrow, the Word of God is being proclaimed in order to remind you of the sure and certain hope we are given in Christ Jesus. That Word declares God's gift of the Savior, Jesus. His death has conquered death, for you. His resurrection opened the gates of heaven so that you might enter the Presence of the Living God.

True enduring hope comes from hearing and believing in the reality of Jesus' death in our sins, and His bodily resurrection to new life. That new life, eternal life in bliss without any taint of sin, now belongs to the man whose faith we remember today. His faith came from the Faith of Jesus. In Him alone, God has fully delivered our brother from life into death into life. The resurrected and ascended Jesus still says:

*God so loved the world, that He gave the only-begotten Son,  
that each one continually believing in Him may not be destroyed  
but may have life eternal.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> John 14:1.

<sup>2</sup> John 3:16.

By God's grace, Walter fell asleep in the Lord in full confidence of the truths of those words. That which his wife of over 60 years received almost five years ago is now his. Over the past few years, he treasured the confession of the Word of God that you are hearing today. He desired that it would be proclaimed to you today. He continued to believe, by God's grace, in the Son of God, Jesus. Though Walter Zum Mallen's mortal body has been turned back to the dust from which the first man was formed, he has life eternal.

The blessed eternal life which God has given to him actually began in front of human witnesses. That happened when God baptized Walter into the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. From a human vantage point peering into heavenly realities revealed on earth, on July 27, 1924 our brother was empowered to have part in eternal life. This came to him not on account of any good work or merit in him – he was an infant after all. God gave him to participate in blessed eternal life through God's mercy and lovingkindness. Before God's grace was given to him with the water and the Word, your father only had to live 20 days without the full and complete assurance of the forgiveness of all his sins and the promise of an eternity with our Lord. God sealed him into the Faith with the Water and Word of Holy Baptism. Walter then began his mortal life of living in the Faith that is attached to eternal life realities. Throughout his years, he learned from God's Word to daily drown his old nature with all its wicked desires, and to let his new nature in Christ rise up to live before God in justness and purity.

For more than 91 years now, God has remained faithful to His promises which He had given to Walter. Throughout the years of his mortal life, he was given repeated reminders that, in Jesus, he was ready and confident to meet his Maker. For example, through the teaching of family and pastors, according to Church records, Walter was prepared to make the good confession of the Faith in April 1939. Then he would have declared that he intended, by the grace of God,

*to conform all [his] life to the rule of the divine Word, to be diligent in the use of the means of grace, to walk as it becometh the Gospel of Christ, and in faith, word, and deed to remain true to the Triune God, even unto death.*<sup>3</sup>

God worked a life of the good confession of the Faith out of His grace which He had given in good measure to Walter Zum Mallen. To the end of his mortal days, God held him firmly in the Faith. He did that through simple earthly means. As Walter heard the Word of God, as He received Jesus' Body and Blood, God gave him His strength to bear all things that came to him in this fallen world. As he confessed his sins, often with the very words you used today, God granted him forgiveness. Because of that which God has done for our dear brother, you and I are free to hear, believe, and live in the promises of these words in our time of loss:

*Do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not gaze about with anxiety, for I am your Elohe<sup>o</sup>;  
I will strengthen you, I will help you,  
I will uphold you with My just Hand.*<sup>4</sup>

Throughout his life, Walter had times when temptation to succumb to fear at what was happening around and to him pressed in on him. Those who know well the life events which presented those opportunities to fear – heading on a troopship to Korea; the accident which led to the loss of his arm; the death of the flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Betty – you can tell those stories. The fellows who attended our OWLS Thursday lunches (Older Wiser Lutherans) have a few recollections, I am sure.

When one was able to get him to recount such times in his life, one could sense the assurance and calmness he found in knowing that God was with him. That he could face his own end of life trials with peace and gentleness is a testimony to the gift of the Faith which God sustained in him. He knew then in part as he knows fully now, that it was not God's will that he should perish, but that he should have eternal life.

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<sup>3</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. *The Lutheran Agenda*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House,

<sup>o</sup> This a transliteration of the Hebrew plural form of the word we translate, "God."

<sup>4</sup> *Isaiah* 41:10.

With that in your ears, hearts and minds, hear again that which Jesus says specifically to you who are in this place today:

*Let not the heart of all of you continue to be troubled:  
continue to believe in God,  
continue to believe also in Me.<sup>5</sup>*

Those words are not mere spiritual platitudes. In the history of the world, Jesus spoke them to His closest followers right after He had indicated to them that He was going to die for them. They did not understand Him. One of them even boasted that he would never leave Jesus.

But they all did. Jesus, the only Man out of all the people of the Faith Who have ever died or will die, truly died alone. No one stood by to take away the pain of death and the agony of bearing the whole world's sins. No one saved Jesus. Not even the eternal Heavenly Father willed to hear and answer His pleas as He died in all the wickedness and evil every human has ever thought, said or done. It is to those who would abandon Him in His hours of passion, that Jesus gave these words of hope:

*Let not the heart of all of you continue to be troubled:  
continue to believe in God,  
continue to believe also in Me.<sup>6</sup>*

Later, when Jesus had been raised from the dead, had appeared to multitudes of eye-witnesses in various places, had ascended into the heavens, and, with the Father, had sent the Holy Spirit, later would 11 of the 12 closest to him begin to live by and in those words. Jesus gave His encouragement to those men, not as individuals, but as one. His words are recorded to teach that they all really had one heart – one center of being – in God.

In time, today, those words are appropriate for all of you too. God has gathered you here, on the occasion of Saint Walter's funeral, that the heart of all of you may not be troubled. He desires that you would know that you who believe in the Father and

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<sup>5</sup> John 14:1.

<sup>6</sup> John 14:1.

the Son, through the power of the Holy Spirit, He joins into One Body. He puts, through His Word and Sacraments, into that One Body, a living heart. That heart is at peace with God and your fellow Christians as God nourishes it in Christ. As you remain held together in the one True Faith, through the Word of God in a united confession, Jesus' next words for today bring genuine earthly and eternal comfort and consolation:

*"In My Father's house remain many dwelling places.  
For if (it were) not, (would) I have said to all of you,  
'I (am) going to prepare place for all of you?'"<sup>7</sup>*

To the faithful, such as Walter in this life, those words were also a promise of a unity in God's eternal heavenly home. To the faithful like Walter who have passed from this life fully into the Father's house, there is a perfect unity. They are said to dwell in one house, with many rooms.

You are free to think of it as the biggest farmhouse in all of creation and all God's faithful children have a place in it. Think of it as situated amidst fields that the faithful tend – without weeds, nasty bugs, blight, drought, hail, dust devils to rip up the metal barn, or any of the elements of this world which plague farms and farmers here. As was Paradise – the Garden of Eden before Adam's fall into sin – so it appears Paradise is for the blessed. Ahh... to have joy in work, and none of the drudgery, pains or trials... Remember, Jesus says:

*And when I may have gone, then I may have prepared place for all of you,  
again I continue to come and will take all of you with Me,  
that where I AM I also all of you may continue to be.<sup>8</sup>*

Those Words of Jesus are given to calm the troubled heart of His people on earth. They are particularly beneficial to us when we experience the fullness of the reality that Paradise is gone from earth. We have a real reminder of that truth in the ashes which lie under the white pall reserved for those who fall asleep in the Faith. We look

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<sup>7</sup> John 14:2.

<sup>8</sup> John 14:3.

to the image of death covered over, resting beside the still waters of the Baptismal Font.

In seeing that, we are free to remember that Jesus once lay in death's strong bands. His lifeless body was laid in the earth. It was sealed in a tomb. He tasted death fully for us, for Walter, for you.

Then, Jesus did as He promised. He returned from where He had gone. He burst death's bonds. He descended into the depths of the place of the dead. He freed the prisoners of the Faith. He rose in the Body to walk on earth. He bodily ascended into the heavens and rules there until the time He will return again.

Because Jesus ascended into the heavens, He fulfilled His promise as sent the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. That means that you are free to know that all of His Words are true. Today, our sainted brother reclines in the Father's House. He, with all those who have died in the Faith, waits in peace for the Day that Jesus will return on the clouds in power and glory.

Until then, you may know that where Jesus is, so are all the saints. You may have comfort in the truth that when you are given Jesus on earth, you are joined with the holy ones in the heavenly realms. Jesus has come now with His Word, and soon He will come with His very Body and Blood from His table. To those who so believe and are joined in the unity of the good confession of the Faith, Jesus gives forgiveness and strengthening to life everlasting.

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

Trinity IX, Saturday

Funeral Service: Walter Frederick Zum Mallen

Isaiah 41:10; John 3:16; John 14:1-3

August 8, 2015

*Pastor Michael A. Morehouse*

*Solī Deo Gloria*

Translations: Third drafts

*For thus He loved, God, the cosmos, just so the Son the only-begotten He gave,  
in order that each one continually believing in Him  
not may be destroyed but may have life eternal.<sup>9</sup>*

*Let it not continually be troubled of all of you the heart;  
all of you continue to believe in God,  
also in Me all of you continue to believe.*

*In the house of the Father of Me abodes many remain;  
for if not, I said whichever to all of you,  
“I going to prepare place for all of you?”*

*And when I may have gone also I may have prepared place for all of you,  
again I continue to come and will take with all of you with Myself,  
that where I AM I also all of you may continue to be.<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> *John 3:16.*

<sup>10</sup> *John 14:1-3.*