

## **MOVED ANEW TO THE GOOD CONFESSION OF THE FAITH**

Christ is risen! Our sermon for this day in which the Church remembers the Faith God gave to Kenneth George Bowker is taken from our readings. Hear again the Word of the Lord:

*I know that my Kinsman Redeemer lives,  
and no man coming after upon the dust will arise.  
And, after they have struck off my skin,  
thus, from my flesh I will see Elohe (God)<sup>1</sup>*

Pauline and Nancy, family and friends of Ken Bowker:

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

This afternoon, God has called and gathered us together to remember the good work He did in, for, and through our dear brother, Ken. We are here today, in part, because of the good work which God moved Ken to do on March 15, 2015. That day, during the Rite of Holy Matrimony, while standing there, he began to fulfill his God-given role as spiritual head of a new household. As he made the sign of the cross over his new bride, he, using ancient words, made solemn promises and gave a public witness before God and all who were gathered here that day. He had rehearsed that action and those words, many times. In faith, Ken traced the seal of Christ over Pauline as he gave her the ring, his body, and all his worldly goods. Just a bit over a year ago, their marriage bond was entwined with the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.

That same Spirit and Word then used life events throughout their year of marriage to move Kenneth in the end, to declare a strong confession of Christ-crucified for the forgiveness of all his sins. As the days of his mortal life drew to a close, before witnesses on a couple of occasions, Ken declared he believed in Jesus His Savior. He then wanted to know what would come next as God

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<sup>1</sup> Job 19:25-26

delivered him from the illnesses of this life into blessed eternal life.

Through the Word of God, Mr. Bowker was assured that which he loved to sing in the two hymns he selected to bring comfort to you today was coming into fullness for him. He appeared heartened to learn then that which he fully knows now: in the Lord his Shepherd, he wants for nothing. On account of the Faith of that Good Shepherd, Ken now dwells in God's eternal house.

As this life drew to a close for him, your husband, step-father and grandfather, brother, and our friend, held fast to the hymns of praise that have now sanctified his rest. Now he reclines at Christ Jesus' eternal banquet table. There he is experiencing the everlasting reality that God's kingdom stands and grows forever, that which we will soon confess in song.

Today, we celebrate that, in 1935, Kenneth George Bowker's name was added to the everlasting Name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We can rejoice in that which God began some six weeks after Kenneth's birth into this fallen world. That is, God added his name to the Book of Life.

We are also free, in our time of loss, to have joy in sorrow. That is because God moved Ken to affirm the good confession of the Faith He gave to him in Holy Baptism even as he prepared to depart this veil of tears. God the Holy Spirit planted that Word deep in Kenneth. When it was needed, as the health struggles intensified, the Spirit caused it to well up in him. In this, he may be likened to Job, whose words have been repeated into your ears this day:

*I know that my Kinsman Redeemer lives,  
and no man coming after upon the dust will arise.  
And, after they have struck off my skin,  
thus, from my flesh, I will see Elohe (God)<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Job 19:25-26

As he recorded those words, Job was weighed down by the pressures of this life. All seemed lost. Even his closest advisors were counseling him that all he was suffering was on account of some sins he had committed that were unknown to him. The world, spiritual forces, and even his own body were pressing in on him, moving him almost to a point of losing hope.

Does that sound familiar?

For the love of Pauline, Kenneth left England. Gone was his access to their system of health care. British cowboy action shooting was left behind. (That must be something to behold: Englishmen garbed in old U.S. Western wear, boots, hats and all, slinging six guns and lever-action rifles in the wild, wild, west of Cheshire). He left it all behind.

Here, he had to live through the experience of hearing about a counselor who told his wife that, should he enter their care, they would not feed him. (He had a good appetite until the last couple of days). He had to adjust to the American health care system (which at times this past March in particular gave him some angst).

Ken faced the reality that his English culture, with its State Church, really did not encourage British citizens to regularly receive God's gifts. He, at times, wrestled with the fact of being a baptized person and yet not having a Church home. As the end of this life neared, he ached to know what comes next.

His own body, which he had pledged in troth to Pauline, was letting him down. His physical strength waned in the last months of his mortal life.

Against those pressures of the world, spiritual forces, and his own body, Ken heard the comforting Word of God. God gave him several gifts this past year in particular. The first is, of course, Pauline. Her love and tenderness added to a much better quality of life than he would have had without her, had he remained

alone in England. The second is loving family, in particular his sister who prayed for him, shared the Word of God with him in verse and song, and stood by his and Pauline's sides in their time of trial.

The third was the music of the Church. With breath and alertness failing him, he still sang out the words to, "The Lord's My Shepherd." After the service ended in his hospital room, when the three of us turned to talk, someone noticed Ken's mouth moving. The ladies bent down, and we all heard him singing, "The Day Thou Gavest."

That, dear ones in Christ, and you who through the Word shall be in Christ someday, is evidence of the Holy Spirit working in Saint Kenneth George Bowker. It has been rightly taught that what we say or sing becomes what we believe. Ken's eternal life in Christ proves that statement.

That is what caused us to invite you to this funeral in this place. Because of the Holy Spirit's work in him, his mortal remains stand veiled under the white cross-marked pall. That you may know is reserved only for use to cover the earthly remains of Christians who have fallen asleep in the Faith.

Before that covered urn, stand two flags. From that image, you may know that, in terms of earthly homelands, Ken had his heart in both nations. It has been said that happens to people who put down roots for a while in lands apart from their birthplace.

It is also true that our brother who has fallen asleep in the Faith of Christ had his spiritual heart in two places. For a while, his love clung to this world. As this world slipped away, his heart yearned to dwell in eternity.

On account of God's work in him, his heart now resides in the eternal Father's House. Ken had been given the gift of time to return full to our Lord. Can you who are apart from God now guarantee that you will have such time

given to you?

Hear and believe that which God gave to our Christian brother is also for you. God's Word has completed its work in Saint Kenneth. He who is now resting in Christ, will someday arise to new life. Gone will be the mortal ailments of this fallen creation. Passed away will be all the pains of this world. On that glorious day, that which Ken learned of anew this month just passed, blessed life will be an enduring reality.

"I don't know what comes next," was the statement once made. Hear now, you whose hearts are open to the Good News, of that which is coming next. This sermon began with a declaration of that reality: Christ is risen!

That means that Jesus Who died to take away God's wrath at us sinners, Who shed His blood to cover our sinfulness and save us from death and hell, is our Kinsman Redeemer who lives! Too many eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection from the dead gave their lives in order to remove any refutation of that proclamation. Their words are recorded in the Book, the Bible.

Because Jesus lives, our sainted brother lives in Him. He whose remains are now dust, ashes, which will be returned to the earth's dust, will be raised up to sound forth the testimony. These words are true for Kenneth Bowker today: *they have struck off my skin.*

In Christ, Whose bodily return to earth is imminent, these words will be true on the Last Day: *from my flesh, I will see God.* He will see God for himself, and his own perfected eyes will behold Him forever. On account of Jesus being bodily raised from the dead, the confession of all the faithful's testimony to that truth has been sealed. Christ is risen!

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

Easter V, Saturday

Funeral Service in memory of the Faith God gave to Kenneth George Bowker

Psalm 23; Job 19:23-29; I Corinthians 15:12-26; John 20:1-18

(Readings from the the Festival of the Resurrection (*LSB One-Year Series*))

April 30, 2016

*Pastor Michael A. Morehouse*

***Soli Deo Gloria***