

Albert Krueger
CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL SERVICE
August 12, 2023

Homily: “For Whom He Died”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And these are the very things we need when death has separated us from our loved ones. And so it is with the passing of Al Krueger, husband, father, grandfather, friend, and fellow believer in Jesus as his Savior and Lord.

This death is not “just a part of life” as many people say. Death is an aberration. Death robs us of our dignity, our loved ones, and our purpose. God created mankind to live and to live forever. Death entered the world by sin and has plagued it ever since.

And to mourn the passing of someone, especially a loved one such as Al Krueger, is fitting and proper. Even Jesus wept at the death of His beloved friend, Lazarus. So, we weep or mourn, each in our own way. For although we profess to know where he is and that we will see him again, for too long a time we will be separated by a chasm impossible for us to bridge. With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible!

Al was a complex man and a man of many skills and experiences gathered over his nearly 95 years of life. I only knew him for the last 11 of those years. His children, his friends, his grandchildren, and even his great grandchildren have seen more of his life than I have. And there will be a time for that kind of reflection and sharing and memories after the service.

But, it would be impossible to give a complete account of Al’s life. The obituary gives only a brief, thumbnail sketch. I was privileged to hear many of his recollections in our many lunches together at Denny’s with the Old Guys group. We discussed the Bible and world events, new discoveries in science, and things going on in the church.

And usually there would be a time for him recount some period in his past, his work at Redeemer or his early childhood on the family farm in Colorado, his time in the military working on heavy equipment, his business ventures in aircraft and automobile interiors, or all the other various things he had worked on; hovercraft, and carousels, classic rifle replicas and, of course his pride and joy, the J6 Piper Cub that he restored from the ground up and flew at 70 years of age.

As the end neared, Al would long for the promised restoration in heaven and his reunion with his beloved Beverly. His faith was unshaken. Al knew his Savior and the promises He had given. And he knew that the Word of God endures forever. He shared the joy and comfort of those promises freely with others. And he prided himself that he had passed those on to future generations; that was his legacy.

We heard those words in this service already. Words that give life. Words that you can depend on. Words that gave him hope to the end. Hear some of them again:

We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

And more famously: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

And from our readings:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. And, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And finally, the words of proof for the hope we have: Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." And the man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. And Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Yes, all of us are sinners, conceived in sin and repeat offenders all our lives, and that sin condemns us to death. And because God judges the contents of our hearts and counts our thoughts as if they were deeds, we are all condemned and totally without the power to redeem ourselves.

Al knew that. But he also knew that God had given Himself in the form of His son, Jesus Christ, to die for his sins, to take his place, to be his substitute, and in that way, to give him new life. Al knew that, in his baptism, he was marked as a child of the Heavenly Father and received the Holy Spirit who then called him by the Gospel, enlightened him with His gifts, and sanctified and kept him in the true faith. Al knew that it was for him that Jesus died, so that just as Jesus rose from the dead, so too Al would rise to new life.

And Al would want you to know the same Truth. In a world where death reigns and sorrow and sickness abound, there is a sure and certain hope. And you too can have that same hope. Not by anything you can do, for it is a certainty, folks, that you really cannot pick yourself up by your own bootstraps, even if you tug with all your might. No, with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

And God has done it all for you already, defeating sin, death and the devil through Christ Jesus His Son, who died for you and all people. New life, eternal life, is waiting for you to receive: finished, completed, wrapped up pretty with a bow on top. Just believe in the Giver and His gift, and it's yours already.

So, I say to all of you: Do you not know, have you not heard? "I am the resurrection and the life", says the Lord. "He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die." Consider those to be Al's last will and testament for you.

Now, may the peace of God which surpasses all human understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus until the Day of Resurrection. Amen!