

THE LAST VICTORY

A FUNERAL PLANNING WORKSHOP

SESSION II: Tears Mixed with Hope, The Funeral Liturgy LECTURE NOTES

First, the angels teach us heavenly worship:

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ " glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" [Luke 2:13-14]

- True worship gives all glory to God and all comfort to sinners. This means that the Lord Jesus is extolled as the Savior of all sinners. This understanding of worship excludes bad practices (like eulogies, man-centered services, etc.). The Lord is the object, and we are the subjects of His love and mercy.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

An Outline of the Funeral Service (Lutheran Service Book, page 278)

Opening Hymn

- We sing in the face of death. Nothing can stop the praises of God, and the joy of our salvation. In a way, this singing is the mocking of death, our victory song over the darkness of the grave.

Invocation

- The Scriptures promise that "All who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
- The funeral service is the conclusion of our baptism. What does baptism have to do with life and death? The answer is in the Catechism:

What benefits does Baptism give?

It works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Remembrance of Baptism

- Romans 6:3-5 Christians have already passed from death to life.
- The Funeral Pall: Covered in Christ's righteousness. Revelation 7:14-16

Introit, Psalm or Entrance Hymn

- Death cannot silence the praise of God; through our tears faith continues to cling to the promises of God and sing His praises.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13 “We do not grieve as other who have no hope.”
- 1 Corinthians 15: 54 “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Kyrie

- In life and death, the Church lives only by the Lord's mercy.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

- Psalm 50:15 “Call upon Me in the day of trouble...”
- A collect is a prayer that summarizes all that we are expecting from God in the service.
- First, we thank God for the mercy shown to our departed, and for the rest they now enjoy.
- Second, we ask the Lord to grant us faith until He brings us, too, to that promised rest and blessedness.

Scripture Readings

- Romans 14:5 The Scriptures give us comfort and hope.
- The pastor, together with the family, will select appropriate texts. If fitting the texts from the week's lectionary might be used.
- Concerning the two verses:
- Revelation 1:5-6 holds before us the resurrected Jesus and the blessed promise for us in the title “Firstborn”.
- 2 Timothy 2:11b-12a speaks of our being with Christ, in life, in death, and into eternity.

Apostle's Creed

- The Lord teaches us in His Word, and we confess to the world His truth.
- The Creed ends with this fantastic word: “the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life + everlasting. Amen.”

Hymn of the Day

Sermon

- The pastor has the opportunity to speak of the reality of the new life given to our blessed dead.
- The pastor also comforts the living by holding forth all the promises of God for us:
- In the valley of the shadow of the valley of death, the Lord is with us.
- Faith fights against despair, and in the sermon we hear the Lord's Word. Faith comes from hearing.

Prayer of the Church

- We ask our heavenly Father to provide us all that we need.
- In the last petition, “deliver us from evil”, we pray that the Lord would at last take us from this veil of tears to Himself in heaven.

Lord's Prayer

Nunc Dimittis

- The Nunc Dimittis is surrounded by the marvelous words of Jesus: “I am the resurrection...” John 11:25-26
- We cling to the Lord's promise: “Whoever lies and believes in Me will never die.”
- Nunc Dimittis is the marvelous hymn of St Simeon (Luke 2:29-32).
- Simeon, seeing Jesus, is now ready to die.

Concluding Collect

- This closing prayer asks for the comfort of the Lord's presence and promises, the promises of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Benedicamus and Benediction

- Psalm 103:1 “Let us bless the Lord”. Remember Job 1:21: “The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”
- Numbers 6:24-26 The Lord gives us a smile, and that is what gives us peace.