

GUNARD HEIKKILA

November 24, 1941 ~ August 23, 2020

The other day I lost an appendage of mine. Not one of my physical body, but a fellow servant in the body of Christ, Gunard Heikkila, who is now resting in the arms of Jesus. I had the joy of serving with Gunard here at Trinity in New York Mills over 7 years. He was a great mentor, sounding board and instigator of mischief. He had a great heart for our Shut-ins, as he and His wife Jan would call on them faithfully.

We are placing Gunard in his resurrection apartment in the cemetery at Bethlehem Cemetery, in Frazee, Mn, on Saturday the 29th, 2020. I am looking forward to seeing him again on that day of Resurrection.

I ran across this old devotion and used it with the staff of Trinity, in our meeting the other day. Very fitting as we wait for the return of our Glorious Lord.

DEATH — WHERE LIFE BEGINS

Luke 7:11-12 Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd. ¹² Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her.

Nain means “pleasantness” or “Beauty.” But there was nothing pleasant or beautiful the day Jesus came to a town called Nain. There were only tears and death.

Our Lord had just come from the town of Capernaum, where he healed a centurion’s servant. As a result of this miracle, a large crowd followed Jesus as He walked a day’s journey southwest of Capernaum to the slopes of Little Hermon, where Nain was located. When Jesus came near the gate of the town, He saw a dead man being carried out. It was a gloomy event, at least for many of the people. Death, humanly speaking, is the loss of everything. But Jesus knew otherwise. There was hope which He alone could bring. He alone could offer and present hope because He alone is the Prince of Hope and the Prince of Life.

As visitors and travelers on this earth, we observe death everywhere. We open the newspaper and read the obituary column; we drive downtown and pass a funeral home; we tour the countryside and see a cemetery. Death is all around us, and the words of St. Paul in Romans 6:23 pierce our ears and hearts: “For the wages of sin is death!” No one looks forward to death. However, if we look at the perfect redeeming work of the Visitor who came to Nain, we see that He has power over sin and death.

Because of Jesus we don’t have to fear death any more than our bed. Thankfully, St Paul’s Romans 6:23 passage does not stop at a dead end, but rather tells us, that for all who believe in Christ, that is where life begins— eternal life! Listen closely to Paul’s entire passage: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

He gives us hope and peace and life. With His promises in view, each new sunrise reminds us that a glorious eternal day will dawn for us. And the evening shadows teach us to say with childlike confidence:

Now I lay me down to sleep; I pray the lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Amen

