

Caleb Evans (4)

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Preacher: Fr. Caleb Evans

[0:00] Amen. Amen.

So, as we were planning today's memorial service, I made the honest remark that my life is better for having known Gloria Joy.

I'm going to suggest that that's probably true for everyone here. I see a lot of nods. All of us who knew Gloria know about her kind heart, her gentle sense of humor, and her faithfulness to Jesus Christ up to the very end.

But also, knowing Gloria, I know that she wouldn't want me to spend all of my time in this homily talking about her and her faithfulness to Jesus. Now, I'm quite confident, to the contrary, that Gloria would want me to talk about the faithfulness of Jesus to her and to everyone who knows him as Lord and Savior.

Because the faithfulness of Jesus is why today is ultimately not about defeat and not about loss, but it's about victory and it's about eternal life.

[1:49] Looking at our epistle reading from 2 Corinthians through today, I can't help but think about what our dear sister Gloria went through in her final months.

She was often confined to bed. She was often tired. She was often talking to me about how she was ready to go to be with the Lord.

I look at verses 6 through 8 and I can't help but think of Gloria. We know that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Yes, we are of good courage and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. My friends, we have the assurance today that Gloria, even though she is away from the body, is at home with the Lord.

Even though her body failed, as all of our bodies will fail, the promises of God don't fail. Our bodies will fail, but Jesus Christ never fails.

[3:07] One of the last times that I saw Gloria, I told her right before I left, I want you to know that we love you very much, but even more importantly, Jesus loves you.

He will take care of you and will be with you always. I spoke to Gloria, knowing that she was someone who trusted in Jesus Christ, who believed that her only hope was that Jesus paid the penalty for her sins when he died on the cross for her.

That he rose again so that she could have victory over death. I wasn't speaking to her about some vague hope that there might be some kind of afterlife.

No. I spoke to her about her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, because her sins were forgiven in him, and because she has eternal life in his precious name.

Because this is a certain promise for everyone who knows Jesus. knowing that her life in this world was drawing near to its end, I spoke to her about Jesus because Jesus is the only real comfort that we can find in the face of death.

[4:30] As he says of himself in the Gospel passage we read just a minute ago, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? I have to say this morning, Gloria believed in Jesus.

She put her trust in Christ for the forgiveness of her sins. She believed that she was going to be with the Lord because Jesus is the resurrection and the life. And thinking back about when I was getting to know Gloria, when I came to Church of the Holy Trinity three years ago, over three years ago now, I was told that Gloria was the oldest member of our congregation.

So I still remember my first pastoral visit with Gloria. It was so early on in my time here that I was still learning names and still trying to match names with faces. I had a certain image in my head of

what a lady in her 90s might be like.

And I have to say that when she answered the door, she was not at all what I expected her to be. She had a sharp mind.

[5:55] She had a great sense of humor. She was very physically able. If I didn't already know, I would not have even come close to guessing her age correctly. I think back on that now and I mention it now because I want to point out God's goodness to Gloria.

And to say that she was blessed with many years. And that is a great gift. That's one that not many of us will get to experience in the way that she did ourselves. But as great as that is, as much of a cause for rejoicing as that is, knowing that she is at peace, that she has entered into the joy of Jesus, knowing that she is now delighting in God's presence and will be delighting in His presence forever, is an even greater cause for rejoicing.

I was talking to my six-year-old daughter Mia this morning about how much I miss Gloria. And she says to me, Daddy, she wanted to go to heaven and that's where she is.

But we grieve this morning because we will miss Gloria, but we should not grieve without hope. She has gone to that place where the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.

She will never grieve again. She will never get tired again. She will never hurt again. And if that's not enough, her body will be raised when Jesus comes again in glory.

[7:37] Gloria stands in victory over death. Why is that? It is because Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life.

He stands in victory over death and so does Gloria because she believed in Him, because she trusted in Him to save her and to give her eternal life.

Look back at our gospel text again. Jesus says to Martha, whose brother has just died, I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. And then he asks her a question.

Do you believe this? That question is for all of us. And there is no question that any of us will ever answer that is more important than this one.

[8:46] Gloria believed, so the promise that she will never die is hers. May each one of us answer that question, do you believe this, in the same way that she did, putting our trust in Jesus Christ and one day be reunited with her where she is in celebration and victory around the throne of God.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.