

+In the Name of Jesus+

VICKY & LYLE, FAYE & AL, TERRY, DEAREST FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND ALL WHO GRIEVE THIS DAY,

“Do not be afraid, I am your shield and your very great reward,” Those are the words of Dorothy’s Confirmation verse. On July 13, 1947, our departed sister was confirmed in Christ at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Wittenberg. That day, she confessed the gifts that Christ had given her in her baptism; her faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; her intention to continue steadfast in this confession and Church, and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it. And the words of Genesis 15:1 were spoken over her.

It is fitting as we worship for the last time on this side of heaven with a much-loved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, good neighbor, and faithful friend that we consider the words of her Confirmation verse; for these words are a fitting remembrance of her earthly life.

“*Do not be afraid...*” The Psalmist describes this earthly life as we know it, *the valley of the shadow of death*. It’s scary, it’s frightening out there. Sometimes, maybe more times than we would like to admit, we find ourselves shaking in our boots like frightened little rabbits.

It seems like **fear** is just part of our earthly lives. Even as small children, we fear the monster under the bed or in the closet. As we get older, our fears become much more real: will illness or infirmity of body or mind rob me of the vigor of life? Then, there is our greatest enemy, **death** itself. As King David said, “*there is but a step between me and death*” (1 Sa 2:3). Death pursues us with every step of our earthly race.

There is a great lie today in our world, and to be clear, it is a **lie** of the devil, that goes like this: “Death is a natural part of life.” Lie! In fair Eden’s garden God breathed His very life into us, that we would live with our Creator forever and ever without end. Death only came into God’s creation and our lives when we disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit. That rebellion against God is called sin, and the Bible says, *The wages of sin is death (Ro 6:23)*.

In the Bible, whenever God says to us not to be afraid, God gives us the reason **why** there is no reason for us to be afraid. “*Do not be afraid,*” God says, “*I am your shield.*” Dorothy had no reason to be afraid even in the darkness of the valley of shadow of death, because she had Jesus to be her Shield and Defender.

We could not save ourselves from our sin and its wages of death, so God, who gave us the precious gift of life that we would live with Him forever, took it upon Himself to save us. And the most precious Gospel in a Nutshell, as John 3:16 is called, tells us how God saved us: *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*

God did not want us to die, so He sent His own Son to be our Savior. Jesus was born of Virgin Mother to be without sin. But, He took on our sin to be His very own, the sin of every sinner, and the very Son of God was condemned to death for those sins. Upon Calvary’s cross, He died in our place, as our substitute, as our Savior, so that we would be forgiven.

And, the 3rd day He rose, to remove the sting of death and grave once and for all. How we rejoice in the words of 1st Corinthians 15, *The last enemy to be destroyed is death (v. 26)*.

On February 11, 1934, in the new birth of her baptism, our Lord brought Dorothy to a firm faith in Jesus as her Savior. Living in Christ and Christ living in her, our departed sister could say, *“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear” (Ps 27:1)?*

And in that blessed washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, God gave her faith that showed itself in deeds of love. St. Paul tells us the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Ga 5:22-23)*. How those fruits were evident in Dorothy’s life and how we were privileged to receive them from her.

On April 5, 1959, God brought Delmar and Dorothy together to be one in holy marriage. The book of Proverbs says this, *He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD (Pr 18:22)*. How true those words are of your mom! I had the joy and honor of being their pastor. They were, indeed, the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Delmar and Dorothy were faithful members of this congregation. They attended the worship services of God’s House, and ate the life-giving Body and Blood of Jesus, for they knew it was a foretaste of the feast to come. And, I would also add on a personal note, that they were good friends to my wife and to me. Their wedded days together were a living witness to the blessing that God intended the estate of marriage to be.

One of my favorite quotes comes from the Large Catechism, “God, parents, and teachers can never be sufficiently thanked and repaid”. Vicky, Faye, and Terry, when you think of the love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness God gave to you **through** your Mom, you can never sufficiently thank her or even begin to repay you. How God used her as an instrument of grace to serve you, to make your life sweet!

She loved you grandchildren and great-children, as the blessing from God she knew you to be. How proud Great-Grandma would be to hear Hollyn playing today.

In Dorothy's life, the Lord God showed His power even in trial and heartache. Our most gracious Father in heaven gave her courage and faith that she would not be afraid.

Our dear sister's last days were indeed accompanied by the misery and infirmity of life lived in a fragile jar of clay. Yet, they were a living witness to the faith, and hope, and trust that she had in Jesus. As her days grew ever darker, thornier; as the cross grew ever heavier; surrounded by her most loving family, she waited patiently for her Lord. She never abandoned her hope in Christ Jesus, because she knew her Savior would never abandon her. With joy, she heard the Word of God. With Job of old, she could boldly confess,

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself".

"Do not be afraid, I am your shield and your very great reward." This past Friday, Dorothy lived her greatest day on this earth. Jesus came to take her to be with Him in heaven, that she would be forever with Jesus in heaven. She was faithful unto death. The crown of life has been given to her. She lived in the Lord and died in the Lord. She rests from all her labors in the bosom of Jesus, and most certainly, yes, her **deeds of love** do follow her.

And, you Dearest Family and all who mourn, you are not alone. For Christ, faithful to His promise, is with you. His rod and staff will comfort and cheer you. The joy of heaven awaits you. The Lord will rescue you from

every earthly temptation and doubt and struggle, to bring you safely to heaven, to be with Jesus, the angels and archangels, and Delmar, and Dorothy, and all who have loved the Lord's appearance.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.