

Wayne Osmundson
1.10.12 Ebenezer

1 Cor. 13; John 14

- in our gospel reading today Jesus is saying goodbye to his friends
- he knows that he is going to die soon
- and the people who love him are beginning to understand that too and they are sad, naturally disturbed, upset
- they don't want to lose him, they love him and don't want him to leave them
- and so facing his own death, he comforts them
- "Do not let your hearts be troubled" he says to them
- and using the image, a picture of God's house, God's home
- and he tells them that he has to die, just like all humans have to die
- but that he, God's own Son, dies so that, not only will he be with his loving Father
- but so that he can ensure a place for them to dwell with God, at home with God too
- that, in the mystery of faith, that through him and their relationship with him and their faith in him
- they will be with him again in the Resurrection
- he gives them this glimpse of eternity
- and naturally they don't understand it; they're confused; they still don't want to believe it
- and one of them how, where? and Jesus says simply: "I" "I am the way" "I am the truth and the life"
- it is through me that you come to God
- those words help them begin to understand; to believe
- as followers of Jesus through age upon age have heard, read these words
- and found encouragement for their faith

-as we come together today to lay Wayne Osmundson to his final resting place, to say goodbye, to give thanks for his life, to celebrate and to grieve his death

-we know, we have heard, we hope and trust that Jesus is the way

-on this day, for tomorrow and the days that lie ahead, and for always

-I had the privilege of meeting Mr. Osmundson, just one time, just before Christmas, and I am grateful for that

-being just on board here at Ebenezer I took communion to him up at Rice Estates

-my colleague, Pastor Pingel, told me that he was a very faithful member, great guy

-another staff member had told me what a kind, kind man he had been

-I was looking forward to meeting him we had a brief visit; he talked a little about his sons

-he talked about what good care he was getting at Rice Estates

-we shared the Eucharist

-and I thought, yes, he does seem like a fine person; a person of faith

-and, having gotten to know Wayne a little better over the past few days in my conversations with Paul and Michael and Jerry

-I hope and believe that Wayne's children, grand-children, great grand-children, can take comfort from these words of Jesus

-that Jesus has a place prepared for Wayne in God's presence in the resurrection

-I also hope, and believe, that Wayne himself took comfort from these words of Jesus

-“I am the way...”

-when he suffered through the death of his friends and comrades during his military service in WWII

-the Battle of the Bulge, the experience of the ravages of war

-and he returned as a decorated veteran the battlefields of Europe to continue his life, at school in Rochester, NY, having been raised in Minnesota

-met the love of his life, Jacqueline; riding on a bus was the story in the family

-they married and began family, and a long and successful career in the printing business here in Columbia

-but then again when his oldest son died in a tragic automobile accident

-I've been told that Wayne was a strong willed and independent man

-but where else but through faith does the courage and good will come from for the great effort to which he and Jacqueline went, after that accident

-in their own grief to drive for miles, searching out and finally finding another grieving family in order to break the terrible news to the in person

-so that they wouldn't have to go through the shock of a telephone call, the shock they themselves had gone through that very night

-what inspired Wayne and Jackie to make sure that their younger sons never heard a word of blame or anger or hatred toward the person who was responsible for that wreck

-only words of forgiveness; it was an accident; we forgive

-I am the way, the truth and the life

-and then when the love of his life, and to whom he was, throughout their whole marriage, I understand, he was deeply in love and completely devoted

-and when she became ill, he became her care-giver for years,

-until, at last, after she had died, and he lived alone; wouldn't hear of considering another companion, for company

-apparently took umbrage at the idea

-where does one turn for comfort but God; God's love in Christ

-Jesus said "I go to prepare a place for you...for Jackie, for Wayne, for Jimmy

-for all of us

-our epistle reading today is one that's frequently read at weddings

-about the power of love

-and it isn't about romantic love, between lovers, the kind in date movies

-the rapturous, exciting hilarious, rapid fire kind of love

-this is the kind of love that is work; patience, kindness, humility, courtesy even
-endurance, courage, honesty
-it's the kind of love that it takes to bind two people together in a marriage over decades
-and to raise four sons together, to be faithful
-even to extend to society and justice and fairness in the workplace, faithfulness in the community
-because the love that St. Paul is talking about here is God's love, it comes from God
-and by the power of the Spirit, it's a love that works through us
-and that's why it's a love that never ends
-love never ends
-and so, even as the death of his beloved son and spouse could never separate Wayne from them
-his death can separate him from his sons and their families
-but we will live on in the love and memory of those he leaves behind
-but more than that, by the power of the cross, Wayne will live on in the resurrection
-just as Jimmy and Jackie
-and this is the hope in which we live, as we, do the best we can to be followers of Jesus
-who loves us with a never ending love
-and who has gone before to prepare a place for us too
-he who is the way, the truth and the life