

Sermon for The Funeral in Memory of Lois Schmidt

Date: February 1, 2022

Location: Clasen-Jordan Mortuary, Austin, MN



Old Testament: Psalm 103:1-8

Epistle Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Gospel Reading: John 8:21-36

Sermon Text: John 8:21-36

Sermon Title: The Son Sets You Free

Hymns:

LSB 809 Great Is Thy Faithfulness
Here I am Lord.
In the Garden

Liturgy:

Funeral Service



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Text: John 8:21-36

²¹ Jesus spoke to the Pharisees. He said, "I'm going away, and you will look for me. But you will die because of your sin. You can't go where I am going."

²² Then the Jews asked, "Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means when he says, 'You can't go where I'm going'?"

²³ Jesus said to them, "You are from below. I am from above. You are from this world. I am not from this world. ²⁴ For this reason I told you that you will die because of your sins. If you don't believe that I am the one, you will die because of your sins."

²⁵ The Jews asked him, "Who did you say you are?"

Jesus told them, "I am who I said I was from the beginning. ²⁶ I have a lot I could say about you, and a lot I could condemn you for. But the one who sent me is true. So I tell the world exactly what he has told me."

²⁷ (The Jews didn't know that he was talking to them about the Father.) ²⁸ So Jesus told them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one and that I can't do anything on my own. Instead, I speak as the Father taught me. ²⁹ Besides, the one who sent me is with me. He hasn't left me by myself. I always do what pleases him."

³⁰ As Jesus was saying this, many people believed in him. ³¹ So Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, "If you live by what I say, you are truly my disciples. ³² You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³ They replied to Jesus, "We are Abraham's descendants, and we have never been anyone's slaves. So how can you say that we will be set free?"

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "I can guarantee this truth: Whoever lives a sinful life is a slave to sin.

³⁵ A slave doesn't live in the home forever, but a son does. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

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Grace to you, and peace in the name of Jesus the Holy Christ of God. Amen.

Lois Schmidt was a sinful woman. Now we don't always think of someone like her as being sinful, but sinful she was. She was at least as sinful as I am, and as you are. She was a slave to sin, because all of creation is a slave to sin and sin's affect.¹ Not one of us can escape that plague of pestilence that permeates every part of our lives. Sin is that thing that keeps picking away at us, little by little, until it wears us down.

As Lois neared the end of her life in this world we saw the effects of sin on her. It attacked her. It was relentless and merciless. It brought pain to those who watched helplessly as sin's attack on her would not relent. In the end her body could no longer withstand the power of sin and she, at God's call, quit this world.

What hope do we have? Is that our future too? Is our end simply a body crippled by sin? Is that our inevitable future, to live and die and end? By no means! Though we may not be able to escape sin's attacks in this world we have a promise. A promise made to us by God Himself. A promise made long ago. A promise made shortly after the creation of the world.

Adam and Eve had everything. They were perfect. They had a perfect relationship with God and a perfect life to live under His care. Sin is powerful, however, and sin got to them. They ate from that forbidden tree. God told them if they ate from that tree they would die that very day.² God had spoken and His Word is true, but if God's Word is true why didn't they die? If you read Genesis chapter three, and the chapters that follow, you will see they lived hundreds of years. They didn't die like God said. Is God a liar?

By no means! We need to understand death from God's point of view. God is an eternal being. He has no beginning and no end. Likewise Adam and Eve, being made in the image and likeness of God,³ were also eternal. Though having a beginning, they were like God, being without end. We are eternal beings. We do not simply stop existing at some point. We will always exist. You right now are an eternal being. There is no time when you will not be. Your future has no end.

When God said Adam and Eve would die He was speaking of that very thing that so many of us are feeling here today. Death has separated Lois from us. She

1 **Romans 8:22** – We know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

2 **Genesis 2:17** – Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat[a] of it you shall surely die.”

3 **Genesis 1:27** – God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

is no longer with us. We can't talk to her or listen to her. Our plans are lost. My family and I had plans to eat some desert with her and sin stopped that. Sin got her. Death has separated us from her. From God's point of view, when Adam and Eve sinned, they were separated from God. They were cut off from His presence and His instruction. They were dead to God.

Though they had angered God, God would not endure being separated from His children forever. So in the very same breath in which He punished them, He also gave them a promise. Listen to His Words:

The LORD God said to the snake, "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all the wild or domestic animals. You will crawl on your belly. You will be the lowest of animals as long as you live. I will make you and the woman hostile toward each other. I will make your descendants, and her Descendant, hostile toward each other. He will crush your head, and you will bruise His heel."⁴

Who is that One that will crush the head of Satan? Who is that One who will fix what we have broken? Who is that One that will restore our relationship with our Father and make us alive again? We now know that Messiah has come and His name is Jesus. He came on that first Christmas night in a little berg called Bethlehem.

Christmas, just recently past, to us has become a celebration of merriment and mirth. We sing song of that sweet Baby of Bethlehem, but that first Christmas was not full of peace and pleasantries. In that manger was laid One who had come to wage a holy war against Lucifer himself. That Babe was born for the purpose of fighting a battle we could never win. He came to crush the head of our greatest enemy, just as God had promised so very long ago.

Christmas is about our Champion taking the field of battle. There He declared us as His own, and vowed that no one would ever take us from Him.⁵ The battle was fought. It was long and it was hard. At the end of the epic struggle our Champion hung on a cross. There He was, in one of the most gruesome means mankind has ever invented to torture someone to death. It appeared He had lost. It appeared our slavery to sin and Satan was permanent. There would be no escape for us. So it seemed.

4 **Genesis 3:14-15** (GWT)

5 **John 10:28** – I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

No one understood that day what was happening there. Our Redeemer was not losing the battle as He hung there. He was winning! He was there taking all of the Father's wrath, in our place. He was there, paying the price for all our missteps and mistakes. He was there, dying in our place. He was there, enduring Hell in our place. The full and total separation from God, while He yet breathed. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"⁶

Yet before He breathed His last He spoke. He spoke wonderful words. Words that should ring in your ears every day of your life. Those words were, "It is finished!"⁷ Those words did not mean He was finished. They meant the work was finished. The work to save you. The work to make full payment, to buy you from the slavery in which you were trapped. The work of waging war against our enemies and defeating them all, fulfilling God's promise. The work was finished.

Those were not words of exasperation, they were words spoken through exhaustion and exultation. There, at that very moment in time, Lucifer's grasp on you, on me, on Lois, was broken. We were set free by Jesus the very Son of God. At the beginning of this message I asked: Is there any hope for us?

St. Paul, by the power of God the Holy Spirit, wrote these words:

Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence. God has done all of this. He has restored our relationship with Him through Christ.⁸

He continued:

In other words, God was using Christ to restore His relationship with humanity. He didn't hold people's faults against them.⁹

Lois Schmidt was a sinful woman. Sin and sin's affect had taken its toll on her. Her body could no longer bear up under the load of sin. It was sin, and sin's affect: death, that finally won. Yet in that same moment Death was defeated, and

6 **Matthew 27:46** – about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ... "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

7 **John 19:30** – When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

8 **2 Corinthians 5:17-18**

9 **2 Corinthians 5:19**

Lois Schmidt was ushered safely home. She now enjoys the paradise of Heaven and the wonder of that peace that can be found only where sin cannot reach. She can now see that for which we still hope: Heaven.

Jesus said:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.¹⁰

Lois' battle is done. All the trials and troubles of this world have been forced to abandon her at the Gates of Pearl.¹¹ Now she waits. She waits the way a child waits for Christmas. With fervor and wonder she waits for the day when Jesus will come again. This time He will come, not in humility, but in might and in power, as our bodies are raised up, restored and we are placed in that new Heaven and new Earth that will never end, and never know the stinging touch of sin again.

O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.¹²

In that wonder Heaven may call out from the hymn book of Holy Scripture and sing with the angelic choirs as their voices shake the very foundations of the palace at New Jerusalem, the house of God Almighty.¹³ In their voices is heard these words:

Praise the LORD, my soul!
Praise His holy name, all that is within me.
Praise the LORD, my soul,
and never forget all the good He has done:
He is the One who forgives all your sins,
the One who heals all your diseases,

10 **Matthew 11:28-30**

11 **Revelation 21:21** – The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

12 **1 Corinthians 15:55-57**

13 **Isaiah 6:4** – The foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of the angel who sang out, and the house was filled with smoke.

the One who rescues your life from the pit,
the One who crowns you with mercy and compassion,
the One who fills your life with blessings
so that you become young again like an eagle.

The LORD does what is right and fair
for all who are oppressed.¹⁴

Lois Schmidt was oppressed by sin and sin's affect, but no more. She is free because the Son set her free.¹⁵ God, through His Word and His Sacraments, sustained and preserved her. He held her and protected her. He was her Champion. At the end of her battle He took her hand and led her safety home.

To God alone be the glory.

Amen.

**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**



¹⁴ **Psalm 103:1-6**

¹⁵ **John 8:36** – If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.