

**Her Name was Blessed**  
**Funeral Sermon for Beata Hawley**  
**Matthew 5:1-12**  
**Acts 10:34-43**  
**Psalm 121**  
**April 18, 2011**

Beata L. Hawley was born in Dalton, Minn., on March 28, 1918, to Johan and Anna (Erickson) Melom. She graduated from Elmore High School. Bea married George Hawley in Elmore, Minn., on July 5, 1936. She worked at Dayton's for more than 20 years.

Bea was a member of Zumbro Lutheran Church for over 50 years where she belonged to the Tuesday Morning Quilters, and Mary's Circle. She also belonged to the Dayton's Retiree Club. Bea loved to fish, bowl, knit, sew and work on crossword puzzles.

Bea is survived by her husband of 74 years, George; three children, Janice Heusinkveld, of Rochester, Glenn Hawley, of Midland, Texas and Roy Hawley, of Pine Island; 17 grandchildren; 24 great-grandchildren; and several great-great-grandchildren. Bea is preceded in death by her parents, a daughter, Joyce Snyder, a sister, Ora, and two brothers, Hjalmer and Manfred. Blessed be the memory of Beata Hawley.

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Dear friends in Christ, grace, mercy and peace to you from God of Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Jesus says, "Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted." George, Jan, Roy, Glenn, family and friends; blessed are you who mourn the death of your beloved Bea today, for you will be comforted. It doesn't seem to matter how long and full one's life has been, when it comes to an end it leaves those who still live to feel the absence of that one you've loved for so long. Yet, God brings comfort in the memories you share of Bea and the holy presence of God who guided her through her whole life.

We gather today to grieve, but also to celebrate the long and blessed life of Bea. When I met with Jan and Roy last week, they had told me that Bea's parents named her Beata after the Beatitudes, which we just read. Beatitude means blessing. And from the stories you have shared over the last several days and now today, I certainly can tell that Bea lived out her namesake to be a blessing in your lives.

We see in Matthew's account of Jesus' beatitudes, blessings come out of brokenness. It is not common sense to say to someone, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven" or "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst, for they will be filled". Each of these broken situations speaks the truth about what life is like at times. In addition to what can be seen is a promise that is not yet seen and one that only God can fill.

On the surface, these beatitudes may just feel like empty wishes. Yet this is the way that Jesus comes into the world. It is in the brokenness of death which separates us from loved ones where space is made for the God of mercy and comfort to

come into our lives. God seeks out the cracks in your lives, the places where there is hurt and distance from God who lovingly formed you and chooses to redeem you. God fills brokenness with blessings when disappointment and discouragement dominate one's thinking and being. God fills brokenness with blessings when the pain of enduring a long illness seems hopeless. God fills brokenness with blessings when relationships fall apart and hostility takes over. God fills brokenness with blessings when everything in the world says "no", yet God says "Yes".

As Christians, this week we are moving steadily toward the cross, and Jesus' death on Good Friday. It is a time we remember the last supper and Jesus final instructions to his disciples to love one another as Christ himself has loved. This week is a time when we remember how the powerful people of the time stopped Jesus' ministry dead in its tracks by unjustly beating him and sentencing him to death, even death on a cross. This week we see how the world said "No" and tried to break the will of God, tried to destroy the power of God to heal the sick and save the lost, the least and the lonely. We see how everything stacked up against God, even death, and yet it could not hold God back from bringing blessings to a world in such desperate need of grace. In spite of the injustice of the world, God filled the brokenness with blessing on Easter Sunday morning, when Jesus' friends and followers discovered that the tomb was empty, that he was alive and that there was nothing, not even death that God could not make whole again.

Bea was steeped in this story. She knew the power of God's ability to make all things new from early on. In her baptism, she

was claimed by this God who makes blessings out of brokenness. In her life, though there were challenges and failures along the way, she did not give up hope on her Lord who promises to make all things new. She instilled this in her family and spoke the truth of what she witnessed. I know how she loved Pastor Wayne's Bible Studies, and she continued to grow in her trust of God's promises for her. Now in her death, those promises have been made reality. Her mind is restored, her body well, her spirit free to be exactly as God desires her to be. And there is nothing broken in her any longer. In her death, as in her baptism, she has been claimed by Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit to be whole, to be free, to be truly blessed. Amen.