

At Home

Funeral Sermon for Ruby Glabe

John 14:1-14

Psalm 90

August 8, 2011

It wasn't long ago that Ruby sold her house and moved to Madonna Meadows. She loved her house, and the independence it gave her. She loved her neighbors and the cat that lived with her. She loved gardening and growing flowers in her healthier years. Her house offered her so much. In a visit from one of our pastors, right before her move, Ruby was asked if she was sad about selling her house. Her response was a surprise. She said, "Well, I guess it will just mean I'll have to make some new friends." Ruby didn't spend much time looking back. She didn't worry much about what was coming next. She saw that she had an opportunity ahead of her and she was going to make what was coming next count. I guess that's fitting given that she spent so many years working in a bank. Making things count just made sense to her. To Ruby, her home was not as much about the physical location of her belongings as it was the people that were part of her life that made home.

Psalm 90 begins, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations." There are a lot of different images for God in the Bible, Father, Son, Spirit, Eagle, Mother, Dove and here God is Home. It reminds me of that famous old hymn...

"Oh God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal home."

What is a home; but a place where when you return to it, you are welcomed and accepted just as you are. A home is a place that provides shelter from the storms of life. It is a place where the truth is spoken in love. It is the embrace of those who know us best.

God's home is secured for us by Jesus, who knows each of us better than we know ourselves. In the gospel we heard, Jesus tells his disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"

It's as if Jesus is looking us straight in the eye and saying, "I know everything about you, and don't you dare doubt that there's anything that would stop me from making room for you in God's home."

Your lives may be filled with all kinds of challenges, fears, and regrets. When we number our days in the presence of God we may look back on some with shame, we may feel as though the world and maybe even God have turned against us sometimes. Yet, Jesus reminds us that a home has been prepared for us to return to, not only in death but in life as well. The psalmist asks God to "teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Though life may seem to slip away faster and faster each day, the psalmist calls us to make each day count, to seek the wisdom of God's home in life as well as in death. God does the work of making a home for us and places the ownership in Jesus hands.

Jesus isn't the landlord who builds the home and leaves; he's the home owner who graciously invites us into his home so that he can abide with us. In this house we trust who Jesus says he is. We trust that our salvation is not gained by our own merits, but by the selfless act of God's love through Jesus' death and resurrection. And when we make our days count with Jesus, we learn that God's house is always open to us.

God has given to Ruby and to you the free gift of God's amazing grace and in so doing, has opened the doors to God's home for you and for her.

When I talked with Goldie earlier this week, she said over and over again, "I am at peace with Ruby's death." Peace is a sign that we are at home with God. It is a sign that God abides with us in the midst of grief and despair, in the face of trouble and loss.

Romans 8 reminds us that nothing – not the past or the future, suffering or peril or even death can stop God from abiding with us and giving us peace in the presence of our Savior.

Ruby's home in life was with her sister, her friends and her Lord. And in death Ruby has entered her heavenly home. It is a place where she is at home with Christ. I imagine in this new home she's found a few more things to account for, she's found some new friends and some old ones too. Amen.

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Ruby Constance Golberg was born September 27, 1923 in Rock Dell Township, Minn. to Theodore and Jeanette (Hatlestad) Golberg.

She grew up in Ostrander and graduated from Spring Valley High School in 1941. She took a one-year correspondence course through Nebraska School of Business and several evening classes through the American Institute of Banking.

After graduating high school, she worked at Ostrander State Bank until moving to Rochester in 1945. She worked in the Trust Department at Marquette Bank for 43 years. She retired on Sept. 30, 1988 as Trust Administrative Assistant.

Ruby was a member of Zumbro Lutheran Church. In her earlier years, she enjoyed rollerskating, square dancing and singing in choirs.

She is survived by her sister, Doris Mae Golberg of Rochester. She was preceded in death by her parents.