

**“Borrowed Time” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Miki Etzel Memorial  
John 14:1-6 – November 4, 2023**

- I. **To all of the family and friends** gathered here today, grace, peace, and mercy are yours, through our living Savior, Jesus Christ.
- II. **Today is a reminder of how fragile life can be.**
  - a. I did not see this coming – just as I’m sure none of you thought Miki would be gone so quickly.
    - i. The truth is, none of us can predict the future, and everything can change in a moment.
    - ii. Miki was in church one Sunday and in glory the next.
    - iii. She was doing her everyday activities, just like she had done for years in the past, and then she was with Jesus.
  - b. I got to know Miki a lot better when Herm got ALS.
    - i. I went over to visit quite a bit, and I learned a lot about their faith in Jesus... and it blossomed later in life.
    - ii. Even though Herm was baptized and confirmed in the Lutheran Church, he stopped attending regularly after work and family took from his time.
    - iii. Miki came to a new member class at Ascension, and the Holy Spirit got ahold of her – as she began to firmly believe in the promises of God in Jesus Christ.
    - iv. Through her getting involved in reading the Bible, going to church, and learning more about Jesus, Herm started going to church and getting involved himself.
  - c. Miki’s faith was always something she wore on the outside – and if you were around her for long, she would let you know about Jesus.
    - i. She told me that her golfing friends would say, “Oh, that shot was lucky!” and Miki would reply, “I don’t believe in luck, but that was a blessing!” – (I’m sure I got that story wrong), but she was always trying to point out that God is in charge, and she wanted to start a conversation about Jesus.
    - ii. Whenever she had the opportunity to witness about Jesus, she did just that... through every challenge and difficulty she endured.
  - d. One of the stories Miki told me when I was visiting with Herm was about Teri going home to be with Jesus.
    - i. She just said that the Lord allowed us to “borrow” Teri for a certain amount of time... but in the end, Teri was His.
    - ii. That struck me as such beautiful way to see things – she wasn’t bitter – she was filled with gratitude for the time she had with Teri, and she was confident that she would see her again one day.

- iii. In the same way, we were able to borrow Miki for a time, but the Lord brought her home in His timing, and we await the day that we get to joyfully reunite with her again.
  - iv. That is the essence of our faith, that those who believe will be together in the presence of God in eternity... and this earthly existence is simply a place where we borrow everything from God – the people we love and the time we have.
- III. **Jesus makes** it clear that all who believe have a place prepared for them.
  - a. It's so hard to see beyond the world and where we are right now.
    - i. Our consciousness, our senses, and environment all tend to take precedence over spiritual matters.
    - ii. Many times, we just don't understand the bigger spiritual picture, so we cling the earthly things around us rather than to Jesus.
  - b. In our reading today, Jesus is helping His followers to understand that He cannot stay with them in person... like He's been doing for the last several years.
    - i. He tells them that His fate is sealed, and He will die at the hands of sinful men, only to be raised again on the third day, and ultimately He would go to be with the Father.
    - ii. The disciples don't want to hear about losing their friend and teacher, especially when they probably had plans for Him to rule over the kingdoms of the world...
    - iii. But Jesus says, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me."
      - 1. Don't be troubled by the things you cannot understand, but have faith... believe that God knows what He is doing.
      - 2. Don't be troubled that you won't be with Me in person, but know that I've prepared a place for you – and you will be with Me.
  - c. The promise Jesus makes to all who believe is that He has a place made up for each of us where will live with Him in perfection and joy forever.
    - i. Every second we are on this earth is one second closer to our home in the presence of God... and the presence of all those who have gone before us.
      - 1. Miki believed that with all her heart, and she was absolutely prepared to go home at any time.
    - ii. That is the blessing of faith – trusting that Jesus really did live in this world, really did die for our sins on the cross, and really did rise again to give us forgiveness.
      - 1. I know that some people might think Miki was a good person – which she was – but no one is good enough to get right with God.

2. That is why Jesus clearly states – “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” – because without faith in Him, we have no way to get right with God, or be in the presence of God.
3. The amazing gift that Jesus provides is not only the forgiveness of sins – but all the benefits that come from being right with God as well.
  - a. He provides peace that no matter what happens we will be okay in the Lord.
  - b. He provides us with an inheritance of being a beloved child of God – we are called heirs of His promises.
  - c. He provides assurance that whoever believes will be in His presence for eternity – with no pain or trouble ever again.
4. The best part of all of that is we don't do a thing to receive these gifts – they are given to us by grace through faith.

IV. **I will always be thankful for Miki's life of faith.**

- a. Much of the time, she lived with God in mind, rather than the world and all its temptations and trials.
- b. None of us gets through this life without our fair share of challenges, and Miki was no exception.
- c. Yet, that is the promise and the gift of faith – one day our trials will end as we move into our heavenly home with Jesus...like Miki did a few weeks ago.
  - i. Her earthly journey has ended, but her life has just begun.
- d. That is the Good News that Miki wanted everyone to hear – and what she wants each of you to walk away with today.
  - i. She is absolutely perfect right now – and if there is any way to want or desire something in heaven, it would be to see her loved ones and friends join her as well.
- e. There is no other way... only faith in Jesus Christ gives us that supreme confidence like Miki had – in her own words, “The greatest gift of all is knowing without one single doubt that at the moment of my death, I shall be with Jesus Christ, my Savior!” Amen.