

Sermon: December 7, 2008  
“The moments of life and DAWN”

If you are looking for a meditation that is both short and a bit dis-jointed ... well, this is your day.  
I have my routines ... you have yours. And yet ----- it's in *life's unexpected interruptions & moments*  
that we may see God's face and hear God's voice most clearly.

This morning ... I'm just ready to write my first sermon notes, and the phone rings.  
Blair shares what we knew would come soon ----- “*Don, Dawn just died.*”  
So, instead of writing words ... I spent some tear-filled spiritual time in Blair's and Dawn's family room.

Once again ... today ... I am reminded how much DEATH is our teacher.  
Death is our “rabbi.”

Each of us faces death in varied ways ----- the death of our job ... a fractured relationship ... a life-changing  
moment ... and probably the hardest death of all: when someone we love deeply leaves us.

As we look death in the face ... we learn about what's important and what's not. We have to face our own  
mortality. This morning ... being with Dawn's family ... I become silently embarrassed by some of the stuff I  
worry about and make noise about.

I think of life's most precious gift ... our time, those we love, our heart and spirit.

Yesterday ... shoveling a bit of snow ... I walked out back and thought about my dad.  
He always had enough ... not always a lot ... but always enough.

Most of all ... he had enough time to spend with his family ... enough “stuff” to share with us ...  
enough love in his heart to give us hope ...

And then I think of all the times when I've worried about not having ENOUGH!!

The gospel lesson this morning is about “messengers.”

John the Baptist was a MESSENGER ----- pointing the way to someone ... more important than him ...  
who would usher in a new kind of kingdom.

Now the “real messenger” ---- Jesus.

A messenger of hope ... and goodness ... the power of forgiveness and gentleness.

Yesterday ---- I encountered two messengers.

Had a wedding yesterday --- nice couple. But the ladies in the wedding party .... whoa!!

I'm not sure if she rented them ... or where she found them!!

I walk through Charter Hall to see if everyone is here and ready. The “matron of honor” gets in my face:

“*What do you have to do to get a cup of coffee around here?*”

Well ... if you ask nice ... I'll get you one.

After showing her the pot ... she exclaims: “*How about some cream and sugar!@?*”

I look down at my shirt ... to see if it says “Dunkin' Donuts” on it.

A couple minutes later ... two young girls are kind-of messin' with the art-work that is here for our Artists'  
Faire tomorrow. I ask the “humble matron” to please ask the kids not to play with the art work ... to which she  
replies: “*Why don't you move it ... you knew we were coming today!!*”

(I won't repeat here how I responded.)

Yes, this lady is a messenger ----- of what it's like to be rude ... about what it's like to live without respect for  
others and their property.

We live in a world ... in which a “lack of respect” has almost become a way of life.

“What's in it for me?” ----- too often our motto.

This is why my encounter with this next messenger is something I will never forget.

Enter ---- the angel “DAWN.”

After the wedding ... with the rudeness of the bridal party ringing in my hear ... I go to see Dawn and her family. It's no secret to anyone that she is about ready to "cross over" ----- from this earthly kingdom into one beyond. With heavy eyes ... she looks at me and everyone else. Her smile is still one of beauty and grace.

Quietly she asks me: "How are Jude and the kids?"

She is about to leave the most important people in her life ... and she is asking me how my family is.

Then she smiles and points her finger at me:

*"I know you only know 3 passages from the Bible ...  
make sure you read that Ecclesiastes one at my funeral!"*

She closes her eyes.

Her family is gathered ...the funeral is planned ... her final "good-bye" will be right around the corner.

Dawn Kelch ----- messenger of goodness and grace.  
Messenger of love and gentle power ... even in her final moments.

LIFE IS ABOUT the moments we share.  
*Washing dishes with your grandma after Christmas dinner.  
Hanging ornaments on the Christmas tree with your granddaughter.  
Struggling together with your kids' math homework.  
Telling stories about your dad over your favorite beverage.*

Jesus used ... and still does use ... the "moments" of our lives ... to speak to us -----  
to carry us and nourish us.

Never take these moments for granted.

For Dawn ... the earthly moments are finished.  
Our moments with her spirit will never end.

Yes ... Dawn ----- messenger of goodness and grace.

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