

We read as follows in Jesus' name:

The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to Him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).
(ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth. Amen. (John 17:17)

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Dear Fellow Redeemed, Especially you Maria, Joy, Shawn, and Michael.

Admittedly, this is a rather unusual text for a memorial sermon.

But I think it is an appropriate text for Odell's memorial because it has two things he loved:

- (1) His Savior, Jesus Christ, clearly portrayed as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and
- (2) telling other people about the Lamb of God.

Pr. Obenberger could certainly give you much more of Odell's history here at Parkland, having served as his pastor for over 30 years.

The man was rather active, having served on several boards and committees over the decades.

When I got here 7.5 years ago, he was on the evangelism committee.

I could tell then that he had a keen sense for reaching out to people with their Savior.

Odell had a zeal like John the Baptist, pointing people to Jesus, "**Behold the Lamb of God.**"

He wanted people to see Jesus, to know that it is only through Jesus that we can stand before God without fear of judgment.

This was the confidence that he lived in and cherished,

because as great and genuine a guy as Odell was, he knew that he was not a perfect man.

He knew he did not measure up to God's standards of holiness - nor could he.

But he also knew that God the Father had already sent His Son, Jesus Christ into the world, to redeem the world; each and every sinner, just like Odell himself.

He knew that Jesus had died for him, to atone for all of his sins, from youth to old age.

He knew that Jesus had lived a perfect life on his account.

Baptized into Christ about two months after his birth, from an early age,

Odell had known the greatest recipe for happiness: Jesus' forgiveness.

Confirmed in his baptismal faith at 14 years old, this Iowa farm boy publicly confessed his Savior, and cherished his status as an heir with Jesus of eternal life.

As a young airman, flying around the world to work on the various military planes,

he knew he had nothing to fear should his last day come during the war or accident or illness.

Knowing that his sins are forgiven and that he is covered in Jesus' perfection, gives a man boldness and courage.

If he can stand before the almighty, all-knowing God and judge, confident of his salvation, what can man do to him? What can the devil do to him? What can death do to him?

But this confidence didn't give Odell airs.

The Lord had blessed him with a special gift of gentleness and humility, one that endeared him to many, along with his genuine concern and care for others.

That care was reflected in how he could so easily speak to everyone

whether to fellow service members...or home owners as he assessed their property values... or community members at their county meetings... or neighbors in his mobile home park... or guests to his church... or brothers at Men's Club.

...

But being one that desired all people to know their Savior,

Odell also wanted to encourage others to freely share their Savior with those around them.

On the evangelism committee, Odell loved what some people call "the Andrew Plan."

(The name is taken from our text.)

He loved the simplicity of it and the approachable-ness of it.

Just as Andrew went to his brother Simon and told him, "**We have found the Messiah.**"

And [he] brought him to Jesus, so the Andrew Plan is simply speaking to those you know, whoever they might be, family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc.

and telling them about Jesus, their Savior, and bringing them to church with you to hear Him, encouraging them to hear His Word for themselves.

He liked to point out that it is the most natural form of evangelism.

But Odell was not a "Do as I say, not as I do" kind of guy.

Not when he was training men in the Air Force, not in the Church.

He didn't just talk a big game about the Andrew Plan. He did it.

We heard in the vita how he loved to invite people from their mobile home park to church.

It was through Odell that Gary Lewis, his next door neighbor and best friend, got to reacquaint himself with his Savior again.

Odell didn't just tell Gary, "you should go to church," or "you should go to Parkland."

He and Gary drove to membership classes together and Odell took the class with Gary.

He wanted to be in the class so that he could be refreshed in his knowledge and understanding of his Savior too,

and he would know what Gary had heard and they would be able to talk about it together.

These two men shared many loves of life.

They could talk about farm work, baseball, fishing...

But even better, they could talk about their Savior and encourage each other through life difficulties.

...And in the relatively few years they had together, there had been numerous such times.

But it wasn't just about the sharing with Odell.

It wasn't that Odell just liked talking and this gave him something to talk about.

He genuinely liked sharing the good news of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus, because he genuinely appreciated and cherished this good news himself.

Like St. Andrew, Odell first listened to Jesus himself.

He loved to attend the Divine Service where he could be in the gracious presence of Jesus and hear Jesus speak to him, through His minister, "Your sins are forgiven."

He loved to be present as the Lamb of God, who had been slain for him, also gave to him His body and blood in the Lord's Supper, for the forgiveness of his sin and strength to live a godly life.

He loved to be here with so many brothers and sisters in Christ, especially with you Maria.

And like St. Andrew, he loved to share Jesus with everyone, but especially with his family.

As he got older, his eyesight was going. He couldn't read without assistance.

But that didn't stop him from his daily devotions, meditating on God's Word.

He would have family members read the devotions to him and they would have time to meditate together on what they had read.

And how many times did he end a conversation sharing a Bible verse with you to give you a little encouragement,

wanting to give you one last thing to think about and remember, not about him, but about your Savior?

So maybe that will be a fitting way to conclude; with a Bible verse (a favorite of his):

Ephesians 2:8-9 - **For by grace you have been saved through faith.**

And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria