

Sermon #1,213 (Funeral Sermon #42): Psalm 23:1, 5-6; Revelation 7:14-17  
6-23-16 (Loraine Remus Memorial Service), Bethany-Princeton MN

### **Christian Obituary for Loraine Remus**

Loraine June Remus was born on June 22, 1928, to Arnold and Anna (Schumann) Bergemann in Mankato, Minnesota. The Triune God who gave her life in the womb and brought her safely into this world also gave her the new birth and saving faith when she was baptized in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost on July 8, 1928, at Immaculate Lutheran Church in Mankato. She was also confirmed in the Christian faith at Immanuel Lutheran Church. Loraine partook in the joys of regularly being gathered by the Holy Spirit in the holy Christian Church, as a communicant member of Bethany Lutheran Church (ELS) in Princeton, Minnesota. The Holy Spirit preserved her in faith until June 19, 2016, when the holy angels carried her soul to heaven. She will receive Christian burial today, June 23, to await the resurrection of her body when the Lord Jesus Christ returns on the last day with all His holy angels.

God's tender mercies to Loraine during her life included joining her in holy matrimony with Wayne Remus on April 2, 1950; giving her children Maureen, Craig, Stuart, Paulette, Peter, and Marsha; 18 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; and sisters Margaret and Elaine. Blessed be her memory.

#### **THE LORD IS STILL LORAINES SHEPHERD**

#### **The Text: Psalm 23:1, 5-6; Revelation 7:14-17.**

**<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.**

**<sup>5</sup> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;  
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.**

**<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;  
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (KJV)**

**<sup>14</sup> "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

**<sup>15</sup> Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. <sup>16</sup> They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; <sup>17</sup> for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.**

Lord, this is Your Word and these are Your words. Sanctify us by the truth. Your Word is truth. Now we ask You to comfort us not only with Your Word that during her life with us Loraine was one of Your sheep and You were shepherding her, but especially that You are her living Shepherd and she is living and is being shepherded and comforted by You in heaven. Amen.

In the name of Jesus, dear sheep and lambs for whom the Shepherd laid down His life, especially especially you Loraine's loved ones: The peace of the Lord be with you. Amen.

**“The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not [be in] want.”** These are words that we are *given* to say. God inspired these words. They are from Him. So what is actually happening is that the Lord is calling Himself our Shepherd. He is revealing this to us, that He is our Shepherd. As He does this He also reveals who *we* are: His sheep.

These familiar words of Psalm 23, **“The LORD is my Shepherd,”** are answered by Jesus in the New Testament as recorded in John 10, where He says, **“I am the Good Shepherd.”** He also says later in that chapter who His sheep are: **“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”** So Loraine was one of His sheep.

She heard His voice, when she was baptized on her 17<sup>th</sup> day in this world, and in hearing the message preached from the Bible as she did Sunday after Sunday. She knew Him as He revealed Himself in Scripture as God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (as we just said in the creed). She followed Him, the true God, in faith. She answered me with a strong “yes” whenever I would ask her if she confessed before God that she had sinned against Him, that she deserved His temporal and eternal punishment because of her sins, but also if she believed that Jesus died for her, and that – for the sake of Jesus' suffering and death – God forgave her all her sins. She said yes to all that. In so doing, she knew her Shepherd and followed Him.

So Loraine was one of His sheep. But this world, you know, doesn't think highly of sheep. It isn't something to aspire to. It isn't great or notable enough. The world says, “Don't be a sheep,” associating this with blindly following. But faith in Jesus is not *blindly* following. It's following *Him* with eyes open, the eyes of faith, following Him who laid down His life for the sheep – all who follow Him *and* all who don't. Loraine was glad to be His.

But why say only that she *was* one of His sheep? She *is* one of His sheep. For He lives, and so does she. That is our comfort today. When Jesus

said, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me,”* what are His very next words? *“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.”* I want you to hear this promise about Loraine: that if she was His sheep – and she was! – she has not died, for all who believe in Him never die. He gave her eternal life which she is enjoying right now. She is still His sheep because He is still her Shepherd.

What did we hear from Revelation 7? **“Therefore they are before the throne of God”** – this group now includes Loraine – **“and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.”** Who is the one who sits on the throne? Throughout the book of Revelation it is the Lamb of God, Jesus. We hear: **“For the Lamb who sits on the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”**

It says that even in heaven He is shepherding her and all who are there. But then right in the middle of that beautiful picture there is a note about sadness. The bit about wiping away tears is bringing up the sadnesses and heartbreaks, a feature of life on earth. It is acknowledging the reality of life on earth and what it was like for Loraine and all who are now in heaven, what it was really like for them and what it’s like for us all. Another feature like this of life on earth is found in Psalm 23, where it says **“Thou preparest a table before me”** – where? – **“in the presence of mine enemies.”** The presence of enemies is constant in life. This is not about political enemies or terrorists, but it’s about the enemies of our faith: the devil, the wicked world, and our sinful flesh. Death is an enemy too. And sin, temptation, despair, and a bitter heart.

These are all enemies of our faith. They were daily enemies of Loraine and her faith, things the devil used to attack Loraine’s faith to try to make her lose her faith and her salvation. Loraine did have struggles and heartbreaks. Her husband Wayne’s death, and the death of her daughter Marsha at a still relatively young age, were bitter pills for her. She struggled with accepting this. We are not only innocent victims of such heartbreaks. But everyone is guilty of making the people in our lives more important than God, clinging more tightly to people and the things of this world.

This is idolatry. This is failing to love and trust God above all things. Loraine was guilty of this too. As she confessed, by her own sins she deserved God’s punishment. Her faith wasn’t good enough. She was too weak.

This should resonate with all of us. For don't you make the features of your life – your family, your children, your work, your home, making something of yourself – more important than the Lord? By the time and effort you invest in them, in comparison with God's things, you daily show that you love them more. By the way downturns in these pursuits harms your confidence and self-image, you show your trust is in these things and people, not God.

It was hard for Loraine to say, sincerely, **"I shall not want,"** because frankly she felt the lack, at the very least, of people she had lost. But she loved Psalm 23, and this shows something. I often think that people who love Psalm 23 don't quite know what it is they love. They receive from Psalm 23 more than they ask. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm is not about how peaceful and idyllic life is. It's about how thorny and dry and bleak it can often feel. This psalm is about faith. It is saying that what you can't see or feel, you believe that you have it. It provides the faith that you lack. It is a confession of faith, that you believe that you have all that you need because your Lord, whom you can't see yet, gives it to you. He gives it to you by faith. He shepherds you. He leads you where you yourself would never go. You are led by Him.

This following Him where He leads is important. It is listening to His Word. The green pasture and the waters of comfort, this is picture language for His Word. But what is the most important part of His Word? Where is He leading you? Where was He leading Loraine? What did He want her to hear? What does someone who is weak in faith, who is struggling with God's will and God's ways, what do they need? The sad thing, you know, is when people just try to struggle their way along and figure it out themselves and depend on their own resources and making their own way.

The Bible gives a completely different picture. The heart of the message of the Bible is found in the words we heard from Revelation 7:14: **"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."** This says that Loraine didn't have to make her own way and dig deep for faith that would overcome. She couldn't overcome, but Jesus could and did. He took all her sins and shortcomings into His own body. He shed His innocent blood for her, to give her His innocence. When she was baptized and whenever she heard the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins, He was washing her clean, making her white and pure and holy in God's sight, through His blood, the blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

You see, Jesus made something of Loraine. He made her what she needed to be. When her faith was lacking, He purified her faith and His perfect faith counted for her. When she didn't want His will to be done but wanted what she wanted, through His Word of forgiveness He removed these sinful thoughts and wishes. When she received the Lord's Supper – which was often! – He strengthened her in faith toward God and love for others. This is what it was like for her being His sheep, following Him, hearing His voice and knowing Him as her Lord, Savior, and Shepherd. This was His **“goodness and mercy pursuing [her] all the days of [her] life.”**

And now see what she is! **“I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever,”** she now says. And from Revelation 7: **“Therefore”** – because Jesus' blood has washed her clean of all sin that she had done and that was done to her – **“they (including Loraine) are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore ... for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.”**

It's just glorious, isn't it? This is Loraine's life. The Lord, the Lamb, is still shepherding her. It is not the comfort of the forgiveness of sins she receives now, for she has no sins; He did that during her life. Now she has the comfort she longed for. Now she sees everything she believes. She has everything. She is reunited with Wayne and Marsha. She has everything she wants. She has no struggle about this. She never will.

There is nothing greater to aspire to in life than this. The world and your ego will hold out things to you that will only slip through your grasp. But to be His sheep is the greatest thing. He will dwell with you and you will dwell with Him and never lack. It is only by being shepherded by Jesus in this life – going to church, confessing your sins and receiving God's unshakable word of forgiveness – that you will be shepherded by Him in heaven and lack for nothing forever and ever. Amen!