

Monday, August 17, 2020

We are more than conquerors

- Pastor Hank French

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35, 37-39).

This last weekend Bobbi and I did something we have needed to do for some time but kept putting off in the face of so many other things that needed doing. You know how that goes. I think it is called the “tyranny of the urgent.”

In any event, we spent a good part of the weekend updating our wills, our health care directives, and our final arrangements directives. Twelve years have passed since the last time we tended to these documents and a lot has changed since then.

It was an interesting exercise and a stark reminder of what inescapably awaits all of us—death. And a reminder that, for a person of Christian faith, death is not the “Grim Reaper.” Death is a transition within life and not the ending of life. As Jesus tells a woman grieving the death of her brother in the Gospel of John: “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:25-26). Death is a doorway from life to life—a doorway that we need not fear passing through.

Which is to say that death is not the last word to be spoken over us; death is only the next to last word. The last word to be spoken over us is life.

I have accompanied many folks through their last days, and I always read the Romans text above to them: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

And during funerals or memorial service, I always remind those present that we are not saying goodbye to our loved one, we are saying fare-thee-well until we meet again in the sure confidence that he or she remains where they have always has been, safe in God.

Well, the paperwork is finished, the new wills, health care directives and final arrangement directives will be signed, witnessed and put away in a file folder until needed, and Bobbi and I will get back to living and loving these precious lives that have been given to us by a living and loving God.

Prayer: Holy God, grant us all the confidence to live this life knowing that we always have been and always will be safe in you.

