

Pastor Geoffrey Boyle
Memorial for Janice Brack
13 November, 2010
Isaiah 25:6-9

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

The Lord loves to gather His people on mountains.
Mountains are strong.
They're both beautiful and terrifying.

If you're up for a good adventure, go climb a mountain—
You'll feel like a king!

Just be sure you don't fall off—
It's a long way down from a mountain!

And so it is with the Mountain of the Lord.

When the Lord takes a mountain into His service,
He takes it as a place of blessing.

The mountain in our Old Testament reading today is what the Prophets called, "Mount Zion."

"On *this* mountain the Lord of Hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined."

Mount Zion was the mountain of promise,
the mountain where Israel, the Old Testament people, would rejoice,
the mountain where food was abundant, wine overflowing, and laughter filled the ears.

But for Israel, Mount Zion was *hidden*—
Who could find such joy and laughter and blessing?
Where is such a mountain that promises what Mount Zion promises?
Where's the food and wine?
And more importantly,
Where can we find this place where the veil of death is removed,
Where tears are wiped away,
Where our reproach and anger, our jealousy and our hatred are removed?

Well, Janice has found this Mount Zion.
She's found the promised mountain that filled the hopes of the prophets.

But for Janice, this mountain, though exciting and new and more than she ever hoped for,
Isn't a strange mountain—
She's been here before!

“Well how can that be,” you ask, “she’s only just died once!”

No, no—she’s died before, just look at the words in the front of your bulletin under “Remembrance of Baptism:”

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (*Romans 6:3-5*)

When she was washed as just a young baby with the waters of Holy Baptism, *she died*.

And in that death, that *first* death, she was taken to Mount Zion.

You see, Mount Zion,
 this mountain of blessing and joy and laughter,
 this mountain where sin is washed away, death and suffering are no more,
 is the same mountain as *Mount Calvary*.

Mount Calvary is that hill outside of Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified—
 the mountain marked by the Cross.

Janice came to Calvary quite frequently!

In fact, each time I was privileged to visit her, I would ask,
 “Janice, would you like to have the Lord’s Supper?”
 To which she would very matter of factly respond: “Well, of course, Pastor—I’d love it.”

The Lord’s Supper is the way in which Mount Calvary (and, therefore, Mount Zion) comes to us!

The Lord’s Supper is the mountain upon which death is removed, sin is forgiven,
 and tears are wiped away—
 it’s the place where joy and laughter fill the ear,
 where food and wine, along with the body and blood of Christ, flow
 endlessly.

Janice came to this mountain often—and now she doesn’t have to come down!

Now she eats and drinks to her heart’s content—
 With none of the usual side-effects we suffer from.

Now her joy isn’t marked by suffering, and her laughter has no hint of fear.

Now she has ceased from her mourning, her tears of pain and sadness are gone.
 Now she is with Jesus, and the veil of death is removed.

She sees clearly, breathes easily, and runs and skips with joy!

Who knows, she may even still be “The Flower Lady” in heaven?

Janice is blessed on this Mount Zion.

She's been here before, by way of Calvary,
by way of the cross, and suffering, and death.

Her joy on earth was gifts of the Lord:
gifts of Body and Blood, water, Word, Church, and Family.

May you all find joy in these gifts too—
Even when they seem so unspectacular, so ordinary, so meaningless.

For hidden behind the ordinary stands the extra-ordinary, the magnificent, the glorious.
Hidden behind the cross of Mount Calvary stands the Feast of Mount Zion.
Hidden behind bread and wine stands the Lord Jesus *for you!*

So come to the Feast here on earth, of Body and Blood for your forgiveness and life,
For in it you get a glimpse of what Janice rejoices in on a daily basis.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit