

Zulah Dark's Funeral Remarks

Bishop Cameron Ford, January 6, 2018

Brothers and sisters, I am grateful to share a few thoughts with you on this sacred occasion. Sister Zulah Dark was a sweet, wonderful woman and we are saddened by her passing. But we know that she is happy to reunite with her beloved eternal companion and it will not be long before we see her again.

Aside from reuniting with her beloved husband, there is another reunion that I think Zulah was very much looking forward to. Before the family prayer, I shared with the family the following scripture from Alma 40:11:

“Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection—behold, it has been made known unto me by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life.”

We know that life is about choice. As the scriptures say, we “are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Ne 2:27)

We feel confident that sister Dark chose the better part. She loved the Savior and built her life around His gospel. What a beautiful heritage she has left for her posterity.

I recently read an account that has made a deep impression on me as to exactly what we are choosing when we choose the Savior, the “great Mediator of all men”, the creator, who gave all men life. It is an account related by Fiona and Terry Givens in their book called: “The Christ Who Heals”. I have felt impressed to share it with you today. Please bear with me while I read it to you.

“Fiona has a dear friend who suffered an unspeakable atrocity when just a little girl. Geographically isolated as she was, there was no one to hear her cries or to aid her. In order to survive, as many do, she tucked the horror into the depth of her subconscious mind. Still, the effects continued to haunt her, marring all aspects of her life. She suffered a series of further setbacks and abandonments. Even after she became a member of the Church, she continued to bear the psychological trauma bound up in the hidden memory, in addition to single-mother travails. Still she remained faithful—accepting callings and attending sacrament meetings week after week and year after year. Fiona marveled at her courage and tenacity. There was no evidence of any respite or healing. Yet, still, she came.

Then one day, out of the blue, she approached Fiona with the words: “I have something important to share with you.” ...[Using] words that often precede revelatory experience [she said]: “I do not know if I was awake or asleep, . . . but last night the Savior appeared at the foot of my bed. He was weeping. He called me by my name and spoke: ‘I am so sorry for your life. I am so sorry for your life.’” which, while weeping, he continued to repeat until I awoke the next morning to find my pillow bathed in tears.” Tears of divine healing. Tears of absolute love. She awoke with the knowledge that in the absence of ministering angels, she learned what few of us experience so profoundly: “Man is never left completely alone, abandoned to his own resources. . . . God is taking part in his life and destiny.”

“Nothing extraordinary changed in her day-to-day life; she still struggles with the familiar difficulties. Something remarkable, however, had transpired in her soul—she knows the Savior is a co-participant in her suffering, and his image is engraven upon her countenance. Tyler Johnson has evoked a powerful picture, based on his reading of Alma 7, of Christ’s “personal act of willing sacrifice wherein the Savior enters into our suffering with each of us one at a time.” As he renders the image, [he says] “I saw in my mind’s eye,” how “in every particular, he suffers with me: each pain, each sin, each sickness, each sorrow. He willingly stays for the duration, feeling each lash I endure with flesh every bit as sensitive as mine. He stays with me, he cries with me, he suffers with me, and, by the end, his empathy for me glows—perfect and complete.” [That is the end of the account]

Brothers and sisters, who can withstand the pull of such overwhelming love? I know that I, for one, cannot. I stand in awe and wonder that such a being exists. For such a one, I would be willing to do anything. I testify that He does exist, that He lives. And I testify that He has set His heart on you, and on me, and on all of us.

That is the personage that sister Dark has recently had an experience with. His love is the truth that she has chosen by the accumulative decisions made in her life. May we, after our own lives of hard fought learning and experience, also choose the better part, in my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.