

On behalf of all of us at St. Munchin Church, I'd like to extend my condolences to Noreen and all your family. Dale was a true gentleman, and he will be greatly missed.

Dale grew up in Cameron, and he loved it here. His work took him away from this area, but he and Noreen wanted to come back here to retire. Cameron was a place that always felt like home to him, more than any other. He worked long and well at Sutherland Lumber. He was a professional man of business, but also a compassionate man with a human heart. His faith was very central to him, and he believed in the importance of supporting his church with prayer and action. He faced a number of health issues over the years, and he was concerned about the future wellbeing of his family. He deeply loved Noreen, and he took seriously his responsibility to provide for her. Dale always seemed to be a man at peace, as if he knew more about life than anyone else, as if he'd seen a vision of what God ultimately had in mind, and that it was all good.

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus speaks about the good things that await his disciples. He talks about wisdom and the will of God. Jesus says God hides some things from the wise and the clever and reveals them to the childlike. We can work very hard at trying to understand some things, trying to figure out a reason why, trying to read God's mind, and we'll fail. But if we have a childlike faith in God, born of love, nurtured by trust, and sustained in hope, we will experience God in very profound ways.

For this reason, Jesus extends an invitation to all those who are weary. It's an invitation that comes like a cool drink of water on a hot day. "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

This is the warm invitation Jesus extends today to Dale. Dale has searched for Christ throughout his life. He has trusted in God's eternal promises. There were days he wondered about the future, but they were relieved by days he was grateful for the past. With childlike trust, he prepared all his life for this final journey, and with joy our Father welcomes him home with open arms.

On a personal note, I regret that my sabbatical makes it impossible for me to be present with all of you today as you mourn the loss of this great man. I have admired Dale a great deal ever since I arrived at Cameron. I found him to be a man deserving the deepest respect. It is sad for me to think that he will not be there when I return.

But I know Dale would want us to rejoice that Christ will be here, just as he always has been and as he always will be. And if anyone here experiences troubling days, Dale would want us to be calmed by the gifts that God alone can give: faith in Christ and trust in his word. If we strive to do what Christ has asked, the burden we carry will indeed be light.