

A Time to Thank God

I think picture boards at funerals are a great idea. Everyone wants to look. They see these wonderful moments and memories. It could be the dance at a wedding or the family at Thanksgiving. It could be bouncing a baby on a knee or a confirmation picture. We see them when they were young and when they were old and everything in between. People smile when they see these pictures. Picture boards are great summaries on one's life.

I have another picture board I like to share with you. It is painted in words and not pictures and it is found in Ecclesiastes chapter three. I believe these words capture our lives well and summarize all the things we experience.

***There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.***

Doesn't that describe your life? Doesn't that describe Diane's life? You talked about having this text used at Diane's funeral because you saw a couple farmer pictures in it and she loved farming. I see them, too. It says there is a time to plant and a time to uproot. What time is it now? I am not a farmer and I don't pretend to be one. I overheard a couple farmers who thought some of the bigger operations might be out in a week or two bringing in the corn. Spring is a time to plant corn. It is now time to uproot the plants and harvest the corn. There is a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them. I didn't know farmers are such rock collectors. You gather up stones from the fields all time. There is a time to tear down and a time to build up. How many barns have been torn down and replaced with new.

I see your mother and wife in these verses. Diane was not a mobster or mobsters wife, so the time to kill may not fully describe her. But I am sure, if there was a threat to you, she would have defended you. And how many times has she healed you with a band aid or a hug or kind word? There were times to tear and times to mend whether mending an old shirt or mending a broken relationship. Diane certainly knew when it was time to be silent and listen to you. But she also was happy to speak and share advice or crack a joke. There is a time to love and a time to hate. Diane knew she was loved by God and in turn loved you. But there is also a thing known as righteous anger and Diane hated the sin she committed and hated the bad things that threatened you. There is a time to keep and throw away. I learned that the hard way when we moved to Arlington. I figured we only use about a quarter of what we own. We kept some things. We threw away other things.

Diane's life, your life, my life can be found in this picture board in Ecclesiastes chapter three especially these last months and last week. It says there is a time to weep and a time to laugh. You certainly laughed a lot as a family, but now it is a time to weep. This is a time to mourn, but with the Lord's strength you will learn to enjoy things again like dancing. A time to search as you followed the doctor's advice on treatments and a time to give up when you knew the treatments will not work. How many times has Diane embraced you? I know you would want to hold her one more time, but it is time to refrain as she is called home. So it is true, there is a time to be born and a time to die and there are the ups and downs in between.

That is life captured in eight short verses. We have some ups and we have some downs. How long before we start forgetting some of these memories? My mother died in 2000. Every time I went home I would open her closet and smell Chanel Number 5. After a few years the smell went away. Memories fade. And later in Ecclesiastes we are reminded of something. At death the soul is separated from the body and goes before the Lord. What will the Lord do with it? Like a teacher grading papers he will give us a grade. I dreaded grade day at school. We dread being graded on the Last Day for the Scriptures are clear. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Take this list from Ecclesiastes and drop all the good stuff like dance, laugh and so on and keep all the bad things like weep and mourn and that is what is waiting for us when this earthly existence comes to an end. As a professor at the Seminary once put it., earth is the closest we will get to heaven; it only gets worse from here.

But that same professor also said that for believers, earth is the closest we will get to hell; it will only get better after death. I want to point out something in the beginning of this text. It says, ***"There is a time for everything, and a season for every***

activity under heaven." Notice it says under heaven. This is a picture of life without God. Now let me put God into the picture.

In our Thessalonians reading, Paul told his congregation he didn't like them to grieve like the rest of men. Even believers grieve, but not like those without Christ. We grieve with hope. In the gospel you saw Jesus raise a young man back to life. All God has to do is say the word and the dead come back to life. Well Jesus is coming and he will give the command and the dead will live again. Why? It said in Thessalonians, **"We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep."** Jesus died, not because of cancer or falling off a tractor. He died because he had no sin as God, but he became sin for us. In other words, he took our place. Remember how there is a grading time when we stand before God? You know what grade God gives you? An A+. It should be a double F because of our sins, but Jesus died and rose again and God forgives our sins and gives us Jesus' grade, a perfect A+

So we don't grieve like the rest of men. We grieve with hope knowing that believers will rise and enjoy eternal life in heaven. Now is a time to mourn, but then it will be a time to laugh. In fact, take this text from Ecclesiastes and drop all the bad stuff like death, mourn, weep and keep only the good stuff like dance and laugh and that is what it will be in heaven. Remember, this is the closest we will ever get to hell because of Christ. It will only get perfect. This may be a time for mourning and also a time to thank God.

One last thing. Paul said in Thessalonians, **"Therefore encourage each other with these words."** That is what I tried to do now. I think you were listening, but don't shelf God's Word until next time. Lets get into it even more. Last Summer I ignored the apples on my apple tree. By the time I decided to do something, the apples were bad. Not this year. We have three boxes of apples ready for applesauce canning. God's Word is with you today. Don't ignore it because one day it will be too late. Spend more time with it and with Christ. Be encouraged by it so you never ever grieve like the rest of men. Amen.

FUNERAL SERVICE FOR DIANE FRANZEEN

Hymns: *On Eagles Wings*, CW 440
 Amazing Grace, CW 379

Readings:

Luke 7:11-17 *We see Jesus do something only God can do because he is God. We see him raising the dead with only a command.*

Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”

Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 *How is Jesus going to use his power to raise the dead? When he returns and raises us to eternal life all because he first died for our sins.*

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

THE OBITUARY FOR DIANE FRANZEEN

Diane Franzeen was born on May 13, 1954 in Gaylord to Robert and Mildred (Carlson) Weckwerth. On June 13, 1954 she was baptized in Christ at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Arlington, MN and confirmed in her Christian faith on April 7, 1968 also at St. Paul's. She was a 1972 graduate of Arlington – Green Isle High School. On April 28, 1973 Diane married Donnie Ehlers at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Arlington. Donnie passed away suddenly on December 5, 1991. Diane married Wayne Franzeen on December 13, 1997 also at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Arlington. Diane's life-long occupation and passion was agriculture. She served on the boards of UFC, Western Co-op and Southern Minnesota Directors for over 20 years. Diane also served as a committee member of Cenex Harvest States.

Diane is survived by her husband, Wayne Franzeen; son, Darren (Darcy) Ehlers; daughter, Denise Ehlers; mother, Mildred Weckwerth; brother, Curtis (Lori) Weckwerth; sisters- and brothers-in-law, Sandy (Vernon) Binger, Linda (Randy) Kramer, Marie (Matt) LeFebvre, Marsha (Willard) Kruse, Wendell Ehlers, and Marlys (Don) Wacker, as well as many nieces, nephews and extended family. Diane is preceded in death by her father, Robert Weckwerth; husband, Donnie Ehlers and brother, Jeffrey Weckwerth.

On September 15, 2020, the Lord called out of this veil of tears the soul of Diane Marlys Franzeen at the age of 66 years, four months and two days. Her mortal remains will be laid to rest at the Arlington Public Cemetery there to await the resurrection of the dead.

“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised,” Job 1:21.