

## HOW IS MILO DOING TODAY?

***"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."***

When former President John Quincy Adams was 80 years old, a friend visited him and asked, "And how is John Quincy Adams today?" He replied, "John Quincy Adams himself is quite well, sir, but the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated. It is tottering upon its foundations. Time and the seasons have almost destroyed it. Its roof is worn out. Its walls are much shattered, and it crumbles with every wind. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable, and I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of it soon. But he himself is well, sir, quite well."

If you asked Milo how he was doing, he would have said much the same thing. Milo would have said he was doing just fine, but the house he lived in, his body, was falling apart. If he didn't say it, you certainly saw it.

But if somehow we could ask Milo today how he feels, what would he say? "Milo Karl Walter Petzel is doing very well, thank you. In fact, I have never felt better, and the house I live in is a mansion that words cannot describe." That is the comfort the Lord gives you in these words in our text. Milo no longer lives in a shattered, decaying house, but he is now living in the mansions of God.

### *I. The decaying house we live in.*

The truth is, 91 years of life had taken its toll on Milo. He worked a farm all his life with sweat and tears, which took its toll. Then his kidneys failed and he underwent 12 years of dialysis. And then other parts were wearing out. It is always tough seeing a man who did everything himself needing help to get dressed.

But this doesn't surprise us. Paul states in our text, ". . . ***we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed. . . For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened.***" Paul calls our earthly bodies "tents." Tents are intended to be temporary shelters and they will be destroyed one day. Psalm 90 describes our temporary existence on earth in a more blunt way. ***"You turn men back to dust, saying, 'Return to dust, O sons of men.' For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered."*** Sixty or seventy years ago Milo was like new, morning grass, wasn't he: stronger, sharper. People depended on him. But the Milo you saw these past weeks and years was nothing like the Milo of years ago. And life is certainly short. Again, as Psalm 90 puts it, ***"The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow."***

Milo had his share of groans. Now Milo isn't groaning anymore. He is no longer suffering. That is good. Don't let that be your only comfort today, that he no longer suffers. That is only half of it. It would be like going through a lot of trouble to make a big, fancy dinner, but never eating it. The work is done and the food looks great, but the real joy, eating it, is not there. Milo isn't suffering no more. That is nothing. What we celebrate today is Milo is experiencing something that is greater than anyone can imagine. He is experiencing the glory of heaven.

### *II. The wonderful mansion we live in.*

***"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked."*** Yes, we will leave this earthly tent, but only because we have a better place to go. This is a picture of heaven.

Just what is this heavenly dwelling like? First we learn that it is all God's work. It is a building built by him, not built by human hands. Thus it is perfect. And getting there is the same, God's work. You know, Milo didn't do anything to get to heaven. In fact, as we heard in the Psalm 90 quote earlier, it is God who turns men back to dust. God didn't make kidneys or any parts of our bodies to wear out. They do only because mankind is living under a curse. God told Adam and Eve they would return to dust and die if they sinned. Well, they chose to sin anyway. And now we inherit their sinful nature. So we return to dust and we face decay and our bodies wear out on the way there. Eventually God will continue that curse for eternity at judgment.

But God changed all of that. Romans 5 captures it best when it says that while we were God's enemies, he reconciled us to himself in Jesus Christ. That is God's love. He didn't wait until we stopped being his enemies. That would never happen. So God sent Jesus to save us. He became cursed in our place and paid the penalty for our sins with his own death. Yes, Milo didn't do anything to get to heaven. But he also didn't do anything that will keep him out of heaven, either, because his sins are gone, forgiven, in Christ. Heaven is God's gift to him.

Because of Jesus we can't wait to get there. Milo wanted to leave and live in this mansion. Does this mean he couldn't wait to be rid of you, Florence? Certainly not. Your love and his love for you are well known. But Milo knew that he belonged in heaven and he knew it would be so much better than here, and it made it easier for him that you believe in Jesus too and will join him there.

And now God has taken Milo home. That is what death does for the Christian. Until Christ returns, we go to heaven through death. That is why Jesus calls it a sleep. That is why the victory song goes out, ***"Where O death is your sting? Where O grave is your victory. . . . God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*** Isn't that funny how God takes something that scares us, death, and makes it serve us by taking us to heaven? This is true for Milo's soul, but also his body because God will raise it and glorify it.

I can speak so confidently today about Milo because of God the Holy Spirit. ***"Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."*** The Holy Spirit is God's security deposit. Every day he reminds us that we will be in heaven. I know that Milo was baptized. I heard him say Jesus is Lord. I am sure you saw that twinkle in his eye when you talked about Jesus and forgiveness and heaven. This is why you could ask someone how they are doing, and even if they are plagued with health problems, they can still say they are doing well.

So, how is Milo Petzel doing today? Never better. He is with his Lord and his body will soon join him there. How are you doing? INJ Amen.