

Betty Lindstrom—Funeral

“The Last Word”

Sermon Outline:

THERE'S ONLY ONE—THE ONE LORD JC—JESUS THE CHRIST—WHO GETS THE FINAL SAY TODAY AND FOREVER!

- I. Sure, Death acts like he's in charge but he doesn't get the final say here at Betty's funeral!
- II. In the Gospel Reading, Jesus demonstrates that He has the final say, laying the smack down on Death, bossing Death around!
- III. Because Jesus gets the final say, we can in Betty fashion stick it to Death, telling Death off!

Sermon Text:

Let's get right to it! That's what Betty would want! No fluff! No messing around! Just getting to the point! Well, here's the point: Death doesn't get the last word! Death doesn't even get a say at all!

THERE'S ONLY ONE—THE ONE LORD JC—JESUS THE CHRIST—WHO GETS THE FINAL SAY TODAY AND FOREVER!

- I. Sure, Death acts like he's in charge but he doesn't get the final say here at Betty's funeral!

Death goes around acting all big and tough, pretending to be the Boss, treating us as though he has total control over us. Yeah, Death seems to be on an unstoppable warpath, gobbling up one person after another, leaving no one outside his reach, including Betty. Death can't help but rub our noses in our loss, spewing his lies into our ears, trying to convince us this is all so permanent, saying: ***“Betty is another one of my victims! She's gone forever! You and the doctors couldn't stop me! I win! You lose! Hey, sooner or later I will get you also! You can run but you can't hide! Once I get you, that's it! Game over! I'm a dead end! Nothing after me except nothingness! So go ahead and distract yourself with those Easter hymns and those Bible Readings about victory over me! It's all made up to make you feel better! C'mon, stop with the fairy tale stuff! The reality is that I get the final say and that's it! Hey, it isn't that bad! It is what it is! Just the Circle of Life!”*** Don't listen to Death! Death is the King of Fake News! Nothing that comes out of Death's mouth is the Truth! Death is a 24/7 serial liar! Whatever Death says is just plain false even here at Betty's funeral! Sure, it appears that Death has claimed Betty and has her forever! Sure, it looks like Death gets the final say but

- II. In the Gospel Reading, Jesus demonstrates that He has the final say, laying the smack down on Death, bossing Death around!

Check it out! Jesus goes to the tomb of Lazarus and it's been four days since he breathed his last but that doesn't stop Jesus from barking out His orders: **Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone” [John 11:38-39a].** Jesus gets an earful from Lazarus' sister Martha: **Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days” [John 11:39b]. “Jesus, You can't be serious! Lazarus stinks to high heaven! His body is already decomposing! Why are you putting us through this? There's nothing You can do now! He's too far gone! Death has chalked up another victory! Just go home!”** In the face of Death, Martha has her doubts, but Jesus doesn't pick on her! He's

gentle towards her, reminding her to keep the eyes of faith glued on Him for she will see God's glory: **Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" [John 11:40]** Martha will see God acting on behalf of man in the God-Man Jesus and so will the Funeral Party! The stone is rolled away and everyone holds their breath, watching and waiting to see what Jesus will do, but first He prays: **So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me" [John 11:41-42]**. Jesus prays to the Father so that the Funeral Party at Lazarus grave and those here this morning would believe that the Father sends Jesus into the World with the mission to destroy Death for Lazarus, for Betty, for you and me! This is no wishful thinking! Jesus has come to empty cemeteries! Death can't keep anyone down for the count! Jesus gives us the proof! All Jesus has to do is speak a couple words and Death must retreat, releasing its victims, letting them go for good: **When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go" [John 11:43-44]**.

Even though Lazarus was brought back to life, he would still die again! Why? Lazarus was still a sinner, and as Pastor Paul says: **The wages of sin is death [Romans 6:23a]**. Because of Sin, because of our Holy Ten Command breaking ways, the paycheck we earn is Death! We deserve Death but Jesus doesn't desire the Death of any sinner and so Jesus comes as the Lamb of God who takes away the Sin of the World, marching all the way to the Cross with you on His mind, shouldering Lazarus' sins, Betty's sins, your sins and mine, enduring our hellacious punishment, dying the Death we deserved to die, letting Death swallow Him whole! Yes, Death gulped Jesus down in one bite on the Friday we call "Good!" But Death bit off way more than it could chew! Jesus gave Death indigestion and such a horrible bellyache that Death could only do one thing! Death gave in! Cried out, **"Uncle!"** Death couldn't keep Jesus down, violently vomiting Jesus out of the Tomb, rendering Death powerless, leaving Death without any way to keep us six feet under!

Yes, Jesus' resurrection is the first resurrection of many more to come! Jesus' Easter Morning clinches our own Easter Mornings on the Last Day! Do you believe this? Betty did! That's why Betty had hope even in the midst of so much suffering! She believed what Pastor Paul says in our Epistle Reading: **Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality [1 Corinthians 15:51-53]**. What Good News! Death doesn't get the final say! Jesus does! Jesus won't let Death be a dead end for Betty or for you who believe!

III. Because Jesus gets the final say, we can in Betty fashion stick it to Death, telling Death off!

Don't cower in the face of Death today! Betty wouldn't want that! She knew Death was a defeated Enemy, just a nuisance, like a stupid mosquito on a summer evening! So let's pull a Betty, taking down that filter, giving Death an earful, mocking Death, taunting Death with those 1 Corinthian 15 nana nana nana questions: **"Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" [1 Corinthian 15:54b-55]** Death is the capital "L" Loser! Jesus will prove it when that Last Day Trumpet Sounds and He comes to Betty's grave, Lazarus' grave, yours and mine, crying out: **"Come out!"** His words will do what they say! We'll be raised with Betty, immortal, incorruptible, imperishable, to live it up in the New Heavens and the New Earth, celebrating JC's victory over Death with her! What Good News to know Jesus gets the final say on that Final Day so that we'll finally see Betty face-to-face again! Come soon, Lord Jesus! Amen!