September 26

Happy Monday, everyone.

Perhaps like many of you, I recently watched parts of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. It is estimated that worldwide, 4 billion people watched as the queen was laid to rest amidst much pomp and ceremony. That is more than half the world’s population of 7.3 billion people.

During the ceremony, the queen’s “unwavering Christian faith” was referred to several times. Though it would appear that the queen was a person of few words publicly, nonetheless, upon her death she chose a funeral service that was steeped in Scripture and Anglican hymns. She purposely chose that her final words to the nation and commonwealth she served, as well as to more than half the world’s people, would not be long-winded speeches about her many accomplishments, as is often the case with public figures, but rather about the Lord she served. Among the several Bible passages read that day to the people of world were these from the apostle Paul’s first letter to the church at Corinth, read by The Right Honorable Baroness Scotland of Ashtal KC:

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:20-28).

Think of it. Queen Elizabeth II reigned over more than a billion people among the 54 states of the British Commonwealth for seventy years. Kings, queens, presidents, and world leaders called on her and sought her advice. And yet, upon her death, her message to the world had nothing to do with any of that. Instead, the woman who entered the world almost a hundred years ago as Princess Elizabeth, and who literally had the world at her fingertips, leaves this simple message as her legacy: “In Christ, all will be made alive.”

And now the queen rests with her King.

IHS,

Pastor Lou

September 27
Grace and peace to you this day.

As I mentioned yesterday, I recently watched part of the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. Hundreds of thousands of people waited in line for up to 24 hours to see a glimpse of the queen’s coffin as she lay in state.

The funeral service was held in Westminster Abbey, a soaring Gothic cathedral that was built between 1042 and 1367 AD. Since the coronation of William the Conqueror in 1066, all coronations of English and British monarchs have occurred in Westminster Abbey, and sixteen royal weddings have occurred at the Abbey since 1100. Here are a couple of pictures:

![Westminster Abbey](image1)

![Funeral Procession](image2)

The service was conducted by The Very Reverend Dr. David Hoyle MBE, Dean of Westminster. Music was provided by the Choir of Westminster Abbey and the Choir of the Chapel Royal, St James’s Palace, under the direction of James O’Donnell, Organist and Master of the Choristers, Westminster Abbey. Of course, no royal funeral is complete without a bunch of trumpet payers. For Queen Elizabeth, trumpet music was provided by the State Trumpeters of the Household Cavalry led by Trumpet Major Julian Sandford and the Fanfare Team of the Household Division Bands, conducted by Lieutenant Colonel David Barringer MBE, Commanding Officer, Household Division Bands. The organist was Peter Holder, Sub-Organist, Westminster Abbey. Needless to say, it was quite the production.

I actually think there’s nothing wrong with any of that. I think that ceremony and ritual help define who we are, and institutions such as the church serve as guardrails on society. That being said, I can’t help but think of how, in contrast, the “funeral service” of our Lord was conducted. This is how the Gospel writer Luke records it:

“Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they
went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment” (Luke 23:50-56).

No pomp. No ceremony. No choirs, trumpets, or Very Reverends. The King of Kings would leave the world seemingly unnoticed. But three days later, all that would change.

IHS,

Pastor Lou

September 28

Greetings, DGCC Family.

Following Queen Elizabeth’s funeral service, her body and the royal entourage proceeded to Windsor Castle, where she was laid to rest in St. George’s Chapel. Here is a picture of her tombstone where she was buried next to her husband, Prince Philip, and her father and mother, George VI and Elizabeth:

Once again, in contrast, our Lord’s tomb was nothing of the kind. A simple stone cave with a large stone in front. No tombstone, no flowers, no chapel, and certainly no castle. Perhaps it looked something like this:
And unlike Queen Elizabeth, who died a very wealthy woman, Jesus died with no earthly riches to His name. Yet, this is how the Lord foretells the death of Jesus through the prophet Isaiah:

“His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth” (53:9).

Here we get a foretaste of the true royalty of Jesus. Even though He died with wicked men, (the criminals who were crucified along with Him), Jesus was buried in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. While the tomb was simple and unadorned, nonetheless, it tells us that while Jesus left this life alongside common criminals, He would emerge from the tomb as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, triumphant over the grave, and victorious over death.

In this world, royalty has many earthly symbols and trappings. But for us as followers of the King, our only symbol is the cross, and our only trapping is the grace found in that cross that promises life eternal.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

September 29

Grace and peace to you this day.

One of the prayers that was read at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II was this:

Almighty God,
Lord of light, life and hope,
we come to you today with thankfulness for a life well lived.
As our nation stills itself and the silence is broken only by the sobs, we turn to you.
Lord, we give thanks for your Spirit at work in the life of the Queen,
and for the ways you sustained and guided her.
For her wisdom and goodness,
her courage and service,
her love and steadfastness,
her leadership and unwavering devotion to duty,
Lord, we give thanks.
Lord Jesus, we know that you are the Resurrection and the Life,
and that death is not the end. We believe that the Queen is with you and will hear the words:
“Well done good and faithful servant.”
So, Lord in our grief grant us strength and turn our eyes to you.
We pray also for the royal family; in their sorrow might they know your peace and strong arms of love holding them.
Grant them smiles in the midst of tears, and hope in the good news of Jesus that death has been destroyed and life is eternal in Christ.
In Jesus’ name,
Amen.

This was a prayer chosen by the queen herself. A monarch who had wise advisors at her disposal nonetheless recognized the need for the Holy Spirit to guide her and keep her. And rather than leave this earth with eulogies and speeches, she left it with these words:

“Lord Jesus, we know that you are the Resurrection and the Life, and that death is not the end…Grant them [the royal family] smiles in the midst of tears, and hope in the good news of Jesus that death has been destroyed and life is eternal in Christ.”

To that I say, Amen.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

September 30

Happy Friday, everyone.

For our musical devotion for today, I thought I would play one of the hymns that was sung at Queen Elizabeth’s funeral, “The Day the Thou Gave Us.” Here is the link and the words:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzDuAUCmBE8

The day you gave us, Lord, is ended,
the darkness falls at your request;
to you our morning hymns ascended,
your praise shall sanctify our rest.

We thank you that your Church, unsleeping
while earth rolls onward into light,
through all the world her watch is keeping
and never rests by day or night.
As over continent and island
each dawn leads to another day,
the voice of prayer is never silent,
nor do the praises die away.

So be it, Lord! Your throne shall never,
like earth's proud empires, pass away;
your kingdom stands and grows forever
until there dawns your glorious day.

IHS,
Pastor Lou