

**“Blessed Be the Name of the LORD”**

**(Job 1:21)**

**Pastor Espinosa**

**The Text: <sup>21</sup>And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”**

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ. And may the LORD pour out an extra measure of His peace upon you Aubrey, and upon you Ray, dear sister and brother in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**It is extraordinarily humbling to read Job: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return.” (1:21) There is no measuring or comparing of that human endeavor here or that human life-span there. Everything is made even; everyone is the same. The great King who reigns for 40 years enters life and leaves this earth in the same way as Ruby Ann did. We came into life in all humility, and we leave this earth as beggars. Dust is our constitution and no span of life, collection of articles, generation of memories, accumulation of wealth, notoriety, recognized legacies, etc. changes the dust. We are naked into life and out of life. We are dust coming in and dust going out. The playing field among men and women becomes remarkably the same. And yet, there is more to the story. There is the time in-between.**

**Over the years, I’ve recoiled at what appears to be an over-simplified summary of why we are here at all. Back in college -- right here in this chapel in fact -- I heard someone say: 1) we are here to be saved; and 2) we are here to share the gospel that others would be saved. This is surely a gross reductionism! What of our contributions by grace through faith? What of our legacies that flow from God’s goodness in our lives? What of the quality of life that is lived longer and more consistent with the parable of the talents, esp. in respect to the good steward who most greatly increased his master’s gift? How can the years be insignificant? Why are there texts in Genesis and the Psalms that indicate God was interested in revealing our life spans between 70-120 years? What of the revelation about good works which the Word itself in Revelation 14:13 puts forth: the good deeds of disciples follow them into glory. But we can be even more basic than that and say that even our pleasures which are intended by God for us to enjoy are meaningful. A good baseball game, a good barbeque, a good book, a family vacation...these too are important, because our LORD loves to give and creation is the epitome of His giving. Based on all of these then, time *is* important; time and space provide the arena for walking with the LORD and doing these good works which God prepared in advance for us to do; and for enjoying His good gifts which He prepared for us from eternity.**

**This is as they say, “the rest of the story,” and these reasons are assuredly why the death of little ones is so much more difficult to accept. We may mourn the death of a loved one, but if that loved one lived a “long life,” there is a certain inherent and automatic consolation realized: they were “blessed” – as we say so often – because they were given a long life. But what of the death of a little one? For these, we do not feel any consolation for any additional things they received in life, because where were they? It is easier, rather, to feel as though they were robbed of life.**

**But here I must interrupt this rational depression which we so easily engage in. There is more to the story, because the LORD knew Ruby Ann. This is an astounding truth and we are not permitted as Christians to ignore it. Rather, we are called to embrace it. The ETERNAL God knew Ruby and thus she was and is known eternally. To the LORD Ruby Ann has not a short life, but an eternal life; the LORD's knowing Ruby was not partial or encumbered because she lived for 19 weeks, but since the LORD's knowing is perfect, she was and is perfectly known: known as His child, known as His daughter; known as a radiant lamb ushered into glory.**

**We must never forget that her dad Ray baptized her. She received the greatest gift anyone can receive. It is a gift higher than ordination; higher than any terminal degree; higher than any scientific discovery; higher than any cultural achievement: she was born-again; she received the washing of rebirth and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. She received as an inheritance the Kingdom of God. She received the greatest gift the Heavenly Father ever bestowed on His creation. Ruby Ann received Jesus Christ as the author and perfecter of her faith. She received Jesus as her perfect righteousness; she received the forgiveness of sins. She received the gift of the Holy Spirit and her little body became a temple of the Holy Spirit that lived within her. She became washed and sanctified, so that her body will rise again in glory. She received the status of a holy one for one the holy things are reserved. She received the blessing of a life-span that has no end; she received the greatest legacy as child of God who enters the heavenly mansion; she received the communion of saints as her eternal family; she became rich as an heir of the King of Kings and LORD of Lords; she gained an inheritance that no earthly inheritance even remotely comes close to.**

**This is why the rational depression doesn't work in the scheme of eternity. Ruby is not dead. Ruby is alive, because Jesus is the God of the living. The moment she was put into Jesus' death, her death died; the moment she was put into Christ, His resurrection became the basis for her eternal life. So Christians should not succumb to all of the cultural ways of referring to what we refer to as "falling asleep." That is how the Word of God puts it. When Ruby breathed her last, she fell asleep and they who sleep still live! She lives now. 70-120 years can't hold a candle to eternal life. The rest of Job 1:21 is "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed is the Name of the LORD!" The LORD gave and He gave again when Ruby was baptized; and He is still giving: pouring out light and life upon the little lamb Ruby Ann whose death the LORD has taken away. This is why we bless the LORD this day. Ruby Ann was not cheated out of life; but through the One who bore her sin death was cheated out of Ruby Ann; this is why we bless the LORD as she even now shares the glory of Jesus' resurrection; the grave has been cheated out of robbing Ruby Ann of life. For now we walk by faith, but for the little lamb Ruby Ann who received Jesus, she sees glory and the day is coming that you will also share her sight when we will see the LORD face-to-face; and see the saints in glory, like Ruby Ann. This is why we say this day and every day we think of Ruby Ann: "blessed be the Name of the LORD!" He gave us Ruby and He took away her sin and death! And you – O hearer of the Word this night – He has given you the eternal love and mercy of God through Jesus who takes away your sin; who takes away your death. Let us say it loud and clear: "blessed be the Name of the LORD!"**

