

Nelda Dalby Memorial Service – February 24, 2018

Prelude music

Thank you all for being here this afternoon. We welcome you on behalf of Nelda's family and the people of our fellowship. Everyone here has a story of how your life is better because you knew Nelda and experienced her love. Love of country, community, and family. She lived her life with full and constant gratitude, for her blessings, and for those who loved her. We especially thank Doris Manuel and Dorothy Pringler for their abiding care for her. We celebrate Nelda today, with music, pictures, scripture, and most of all, the stories. Let us pray.

Our God of grace and glory, we remember and honor Nelda today and we thank you for giving her to us to know and to love. By your compassionate presence, console us in our mourning. Inspire in us the confidence of a certain faith, the comfort of holy hope, and the peace which passes all understanding; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

From the family.

**Video presentation
Tributes**

Scripture readings – Elizabeth

Isaiah 40:31. But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not lose heart.

Romans 8: 28, 31, 38-39. We know that in everything God works for good^{1a} with those who love him,^{1b} who are called according to his purpose. ... What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? ... For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-13. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; ¹but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have

been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

John 14:1-3. Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so would I have told you that I go and prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.

Prayers and Lord's Prayer – Elizabeth

Musical selection: "Go, Rest High on the Mountain." Doug Stone

Scripture (Matthew 6:25ff.) and Sermon – Jerry

Mt. 6: 25ff. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Do not be anxious." Good luck with that these days. Nelda told me something extraordinary one time. Rather out of the blue in an otherwise seemingly innocuous conversation, she said, "You know the one thing good about having cancer is that you don't have to worry about getting cancer." She meant it. It helped her deal with it. Heroically I think, and she was a hero to many cancer patients and survivors who looked to her for hope and witness.

I met Nelda for the first time on a house call a few days after she got back from Houston after her first surgery. I'd been pastor here for all of a couple of months and the powers that be around here thought it was about time I met her. It was my honor then, and every time through the years since.

From the start, she never let cancer define her, and her life ended many years later from other things altogether. That's how you "do not be anxious." Make no mistake. It's not like she was never scared or worried. She fought cancer back a couple more times. She channeled the energy it takes to dial back that anxiety by volunteering and fund-raising for the American Cancer society. She did that pretty much constantly through the years.

She co-founded the Garza County Recovery Center. She was deeply involved with the Managed Care Board and Women's Protective Services. With the emphasis on CARE..

She also was a founding member of the Garza Theater board and I'm sure the

grandkids have vivid memories of going to the show with Nana.

She sponsored countless clients in AA who struggled to let “the day’s troubles be sufficient for the day” – to live one day at a time. There are people in town now, or who passed through over the years, likely some in this room for whom she was their life-line. Literally. There are hundreds more who carry a story, or cherish a memory, of how she quietly made something happen to make their lives better. You and I will never know most of those.

It’s not easy being a public figure in small-town county politics. For all the good you do, and for all the heart you put into it, someone’s always got a sideways glance. And sometimes deeply misleading news and stories about you and your motives. There was a time in their lives when many Sundays would come after very disturbing public conversations that week about the people she loved. She and Giles would come to worship, heads high, and she’d just smile ruefully. “Here we go again.” Nelda knew her own heart. She was also determined not to turn her opponents into enemies. She held the high ground by holding onto that distinction. And her faith in the rock-solid foundation of good in her world gave her strength to continue serving, and loving, and quietly caring for others. With heart.

“Do not be anxious.” Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. ... Consider the birds of the air.” Nelda loved the natural world just outside her door and through her windows, especially those facing West. She knew God had blessed her with a very unique view on his creation and love.

Even more profoundly, the “birds of the air and the lilies of the field” were something of a metaphor as she nurtured her family and watched them grow. On the subject of which, we have a very specific memory that captures the spirit of love and persistence and heart that she instilled in all of her kids, and the grands and greats. I’ll illustrate with just one. Lyndyn is her youngest grandchild. Right after she was born, and pretty much without fail, we recall how Nelda made every Sunday “Picture and Story day,” and we swapped stories as we have one about the same age. One time in particular, and I think Lyndyn was about three, Nelda came in with a story of Lyndyn being given a chore of some sort. Which somehow didn’t get fully done or completely correct. So, when you don’t have time to do it right, you make time to do it over. She got sent back into the fray to finish the job. Walking away, Lyndyn was heard to say, with a big shrug of her shoulders, “I twy and I twy.”

That’s become a mantra of sorts around our house. And it captures the heart of Nelda’s legacy. Hang in there. Do not be anxious. Twy and twy.

Nelda was born with heart. And the power of God’s love came into and through her heart as she joined hearts and shared her love, most of all with the one great love of her life. Imagine a couple standing together. I think of a prayer that’s

part of every wedding where I preside. Imagine a couple at the altar. Imagine Nelda and Giles. Now hear these words of prayer. “Grant O Lord that, at each days’ end, they will be found as they are now, hand in hand, thanking you for each other.”

Nelda and Giles began and ended 22,229 days together, thanking God for each other.

“For now we see through the mirror dimly, but then face to face. ... “

Giles and Nelda, now again face to face and together with Jesus – for eternity.

Do not be anxious. One day at a time. Take heart. Amen.

Musical Selection: “One Day At A Time.” Doug Stone

Prayer and Benediction – Jerry

Let us pray: With our abiding thanks, it is into your hands O merciful Savior that we commend Nelda, your servant. Acknowledge her we pray, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock. Receive her into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of all the saints in light. Amen.

To Honor Nelda: Go into the world in peace. Have courage. Hold onto what is good. Return to no-one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering. Honor all people. Speak and act with love on your lips and in your heart. Be generous. Honor our life together. Be humble. Share good humor. Love. Amen

Postlude music