

Death has come often to our church community during these past two weeks. Here's what I've been wrestling with; nothing new or important, just some things to share.

1) Death is disruptive. When a loved one dies, everything is turned upside down. All plans come to a grinding halt, because we have to grieve, and process, what has taken place. When my father died, there was no place to gather, no place to go. There was no service (though there might be one later); his wife was in New Hampshire, one grandson was in Gettysburg and another in Pittsburgh; one son was in Maine and his daughter was in Hendersonville, NC. At the same time, I knew I could not preach just two days later. I needed some time . . . so I drove out of town and met a retired pastor friend of mine and let him minister to me.

2) Relationships that are imperfect in life (and that is every relationship!) do not become perfect in death. Stuff is sometimes left unresolved. And that's when we again celebrate what we can celebrate, forgive what we can forgive, and trust God to sort it all out.

3) In Jesus Christ, death no longer has the final power. Our faith in eternity, and our faith in the blessedness of life, invite us to stop, to mourn, but then to know it is OK to go again about the business of living. Sometimes it takes years to get over a death, but God offers help and promise for us to get through, to hold on, until the blessedness of life reasserts itself to us. Grief is one of God's gifts to us so that healing may take place, but eventually the ability to rise above grief is a God-given gift itself.

4) In the midst of all this, I was involved in a wedding. I don't know when I've enjoyed being a part of a wedding more. Weddings speak of hope, of promise, of good times to come. Not a bad way at all to end a difficult two-week stretch . . .

— Eric Lindblade