Funeral Sermon
December 8, 1975
Byron, Illinois
Mr. Thomas Zimmerman

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

PSALM 16: 11 "THOU DOST SHOW ME THE PATH OF LIFE; IN THY PRESENCE THERE IS FULNESS OF JOY, IN THY RIGHT HAND ARE PLEASURES FOR EVERMORE."

The telephone rang. I answered it: "Hello, Pastor Thrun speaking."..... "Hello, Pastor, this is Marion Schneider. I have some sad news --- Tom Zimmerman died today."..... I stood in SHOCK for several moments. Then I asked the obvious questions about HOW IT HAPPENED, etc. Toward the end of our conversation I asked if she had LEONA'S TELEPHONE NUMBER. She gave it to me -- and I called..... There wasn't much that I could say or that you could say either, Leona --- but there was one thing we could do together --- and that is PRAY! We did that!

It may sound strange that I should come here today to officiate at TOM'S FUNERAL and want to talk about JOY, and GLADNESS, and PLEASURE. I'm sure that everyone in this Chapel today is wondering how you and your daughters are going to have a MERRY CHRISTMAS this year..... But that is the way it is with the CHRISTIAN ..... This is our CHRISTIAN FAITH, and HOPE, and CONFIDENCE. And this is really what CHRISTMAS is all about --- GOD FOR US, GOD WITH US, GOD GIVING US HIMSELF IN HIS ONLY AND DEAR SON, GOD SHEDDING TEARS AND CRYING OUT IN AGONY FROM THE CROSS, GOD DYING THE DEATH THAT WE ALL HAVE TO DIE. — to make us happy!

There is no use asking, "WHY?" You might just as well ask: "Why did the Holy Son of God die at the tender age of 33?" What happened to JESUS and what happened to TOM is something that will happen to ALL OF US. Because of SIN, we are ALL BORN TO DIE. But that is WHY JESUS came -- to RESCUE and REDEEM us from the THROES OF SIN AND DEATH -- to take upon Himself the CURSE of our existence -- to DIE OUR DEATH so that we may have LIFE!..... And now that HE HAS COME, and LIVED WITH US, and DIED FOR US --- of one thing we are sure: "NOTHING SHALL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS, OUR LORD."

If you are going to have a MERRY CHRISTMAS this year, you must think of the CHRISTMAS Tom is having in the PRESENCE OF OUR LORD. This is what our text says: "IN THY PRESENCE THERE IS FULNESS OF JOY, IN THY RIGHT HAND ARE PLEASURES FOR EVERMORE."

We still see through a "GLASS DARKLY" -- a BLURRED WINDOW. We still live and walk by FAITH! But it is DIFFERENT with TOM! Just IMAGINE what it must be like for him NOW! Just think of it: "NO MORE SIN -- NO MORE SORROW -- NO MORE PAIN -- NO MORE TEARS -- NO MORE CRYING --------- only JOY AND GLADNESS -- sitting down at the GREAT BANQUET HALL OF HEAVEN -- celebrating CHRISTMAS -- seeing Jesus FACE TO FACE -- hearing the ANGELS AND ARCHANGELS singing their ETERNAL ANTHEMS OF VICTORY AND TRIUMPH TO THE "LAMB WHO WAS SLAIN FOR US AND FOR OUR SINS." There is only ENDLESS REJOICING with all the COMPANY OF HEAVEN.

That is really what CHRISTMAS is all about --- and that is why we can REJOICE today. Into the DARKNESS OF DEATH there comes now the NEW DAWN of NEW LIFE and the RESURRECTION: "BECAUSE I LIVE, YOU SHALL LIVE ALSO." SIN has lost its sting. DEATH has lost its power. GRAVESTONES and GRAVES no terror hold. "FOR CHRIST HAS ABOLISHED DEATH AND HAS BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL."

You must never WEAKEN IN YOUR FAITH about the NEW LIFE. It is not only the ASSURANCE that ALL OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN -- but that HE WHO FORGAVE THEM by His DEATH ON THE CROSS now LIVES ETERNALLY -- and WE SHALL LIVE WITH HIM. This is the way the Scriptures always describe Him: GOD ALWAYS CONCERNED -- GOD ALWAYS TO THE RESCURE -- GOD ALWAYS REACHING OUT TO US -- GOD ALWAYS GIVING, CREATING OUT OF NOTHING, FILLING OUR EMPTINESS, BRINGING LIFE OUT OF DEATH -- GOOD OUT OF EVIL -- JOY OUT OF SORROW. "FEAR NOT," says Jesus, "I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST; I DIED, AND BEHOLD I AM ALIVE FOREVERMORE, AND I HAVE THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES."

TOM knew his LORD..... It is for us to KEEP THE FAITH -- to RREJOICE IN HIS PRESENCE WITH US -- to WORSHIP AND ADORE -- to AWAIT WITH JOY AND CONFIDENCE "THE DAY OF HIS APPEARING" -- when we shall join our LOVED ONE in the JOY OF THE LORD. What a REUNION and HOMECOMING that will be! And what a MERRY CHRISTMAS! "IN THY PRESENCE THERE IS FULNESS OF JOY, IN THE RIGHT HAND ARE PLEASURES FOR EVERMORE." AMEN.