

## Revelations 5:5

**“Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”**

Why this? So often the children of men have wanted to ask: *“Why does the Lord do this to us?”* As the heaven is high above the earth, and as the east is far away from the West, so we will not always in this life understand God’s dealings with the children that He loves. Paul says: **“For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.”** I Corinthians 13:9-10 **“Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully even as I am fully known.”** I Corinthians 13:12 One thing we do know and that is that GOD IS LOVE, and that his mercy endureth to all generations: **“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”** Romans 8:28

Certainly it must be admitted that the departure of a young person has a greater affect upon all the people it touches than the departure of an aged person. And so we believe that this death is according to the good and gracious will of God, and the good that it will serve - only eternity will reveal.

If we were standing before the Great Judge viewing all events as he governs them we would have to admit: *“Lord you have done all things well. You have not desired the death of the wicked but*

*rather that they might live.” “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*

**John 3:16-17** Death, and especially this death, is the most powerful and effective preacher that many will hear. Though they avoid the churches and despise all preachers of God’s Word, yet one preacher – death – they are compelled to hear. His church is the earth, his pulpit the death-bed, the casket, the hearse, the grave and the cemetery. With a heartrending voice he cries out: *“O man, it is appointed unto you to die; you have no continuing city in this world, this earth is not your home, this life does not finish your course; in an hour unknown to you, you will have to leave this world with all its treasures. Oh, repent, repent!”* **“For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.” Hebrews 13:14**

Today we will write in the Church Records the name of Ruby Aldworth. On the very first page where the early baptisms of our church are recorded we find that same name. Today we write it in that book for the last time. It was first recorded there when she was joined to Christ in Holy Baptism, it was recorded there when she renewed her baptismal covenant and also the countless times she attended the Lord’s Supper. But more important than the writing in this book, we believe that the name of the departed will be found written in God’s Book of Life. She has fallen asleep believing in Jesus as her only Savior from sin

and by the Holy Spirit was kept in the true faith until her death. It was but a few moments after the words: "**Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.**" **Luke 23:46** were spoken that she peacefully fell asleep in the arms of her Savior, and although we did not see it not, the angels came and carried her soul to eternal bliss where there are many saints that have passed on. Therefore the words from heaven that were spoken to St. John the Divine are applicable here as well: "**Do not weep!**" **Revelation 5:5** We indeed do weep as Jesus did at the grave of Lazarus. My heart is also deeply affected, but as a Christian I do not to weep as those who have no hope. Let me at this time answer the question:

**Why we can say over this casket: the cry  
from heaven is sent to us saying: "*Weep not.*"**

**I. The departed is now with the Savior, who has overcome all things.**

In the verses preceding our text, St. John the Divine talks about a book with seven seals that is held in the Lord's hand and in this book is written the story of the Church. But nobody in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open this book. Therefore John says: "**I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.**" **Revelations 5:4** But then what happened? A voice was then heard from heaven: "**Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.**" **Revelations 5:5** Look at Jesus the Great

Deliverer, the Lion from the Tribe of Judah, and a descendent of David who was able to break the seals of the book. Then John wept no more, for now with joy he was able to read the story of the Church: that it may lead through battle, but also on to victory; that it may lead through night, but on to the light; that it may lead through the cross, but on to the crown. Now John wept no more.

Is it true that these words - *'Weep not'* - apply to us today? Indeed they do. Because just as there is a book in which the whole story of the Church has been written from eternity, so also there is a book written of the entire story of each individual member of the Church. Both books are sealed shut with seven seals and only Jesus can open them.

The days of our sleeping sister were long since written in a book, with her entire story from her birth to her blessed death. But at the time of her birth this book of her life was still sealed with seven seals and nobody in heaven or on earth, or under the earth could open this book of her life. This book could alone be opened by Jesus the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David. Jesus could do this because of his blessed life and death on the cross. Ruby's entire life now lies before our eyes like an open book. And what do we read there - we read: *"She was united to her Savior by a true faith in Holy Baptism."* She continued in her baptismal faith and by a renewal of it in Confirmation, she confessed her faith, showing herself fit to attend the Lord's Supper. Ruby knew that she was a sinner in need of God's grace

and forgiveness which Christ won for all people. Her confession and frequent attendance at the Lord's Table testify to this. Her life's story continued when she was united in Holy Matrimony to a God-fearing man and as Christian parents they continued to feed their own souls on the pure Word of God and the gracious festal board of the Sacrament of the Altar. She also brought her children to this life giving water. She loved her church, she prayed for her church, and who knows what future fulfillment of her prayer will still be answered in the future. Through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit she was kept in the faith, as we earnestly believe unto the end. Indeed, the Lord refined her faith by the refining fire of affliction. Through her affliction, her faith showed as a bright shining light. The more and more she was being drawn away from the vain things of this empty world, she became closer and closer to her Savior. Sitting at her bedside no one could deny the undying faith that lived within her. As a poor, humble sinner - she daily and hourly fled into the arms of her Savior. There she found forgiveness for all her sins, assurance of God's grace and rest for her weary soul.

Can there be the least doubt in your mind about the saving power of the Gospel? To be sure, she, like the entire Christian Church, has to go through conflict. The conflict was both spiritual and physical - but it led to victory. She had to go through night, but now she lives in light. She went through the cross, but now wears the crown.

Why do we dare say that over this casket a cry comes from heaven saying: “*Weep not*”? Should we weep because she has gained the eternal victory in a blessed death, while we must still battle against the devil, the world and our own flesh here below? Should we weep because she now lives in eternal light, while we still must wander in the valley of the shadow? Should we weep because she has entered the glorious Kingdom of Glory, even though we still find ourselves in Christ’s Kingdom of the Cross here below? Should we weep because her earthly days are over, while we still must shed tears here below? Should we weep because she is at last safe with her Lord, while we are still in danger?

**II. With our Savior we will also overcome all things.**

No, for this cry from heaven: “*Weep not!*” is meant for all of us, because we will also overcome all things.

It is true that Jesus alone has the book of our life in his hands and that as long as we have not died believing in Jesus - the book of our life remains sealed with seven seals. But just as surely as Jesus lives, it is true that when our time has come to leave this earth, he will open our book with a blessed death.

Oh that all of us might meditate upon this and learn an important lesson as we sit before this casket, listening to God’s Word.

Therefore I ask you: “*What are you going to do, Oh sinner, you who continue to live in your sins and with a bad conscience?*” Are

you going to leave the church today undisturbed and forget all about God's Word? Will you also overcome the grave and hold the victory even over death? Jesus wants to open the Book of your life through a blessed death. Therefore, look for the Lord while he may be found, call to him while he still near. How can you ever hope to escape destruction if you neglect so great a salvation?

Some of you work as if this earth were your heaven and as if you were going to live here forever. Some day your flesh and bones will have to be lowered into the grave. Are you going to leave the church today as undisturbed as you ever were? Oh no, because Jesus wants to break the seals of the book of your life through a blessed death. Therefore look for the Lord and his light for everything else means nothing. And what will you do, you who have had all the opportunities of the pure Word and Sacraments and have either forsaken them or neglected them for so long a time? Are you going to leave the church today as peaceful as ever and continue in your carnal, secure way? Oh no, because Jesus wants to open your life's book in a blessed death through faith in him. Now is the time to weep for yourself - tears of repentance.

And you younger people who are determined to enjoy your life to the full regardless of what God's Word says - are you going to leave the church today undisturbed? Oh no, do not let your vigor and rosy checks deceive you. A single gust of wind out of the sky

can crumble your strong and healthy frame. Therefore, look for the Lord and his light and live in it, for nothing else will help you.

And you despairing souls, bowed down by your great and many sins – you are living in despair and do not know if God’s grace is meant for you. You are indeed a poor wretched sinner. Are you to go out of church today thinking there is no hope for you? Oh no, for the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son cleanseth you from all sin as well as our departed sister. Jesus wants to give you a blessed death, so that your life’s story may be one of God’s grace for you, the sinner.

And finally, what about you who truly believe that for Jesus’ sake you stand in God’s grace. You believe that your sins are forgiven and that for Jesus’ sake you are righteous before God. Yet there are times that you are troubled with doubts. Do you doubt whether you will stand in the faith until your death? Should you remain in such doubt? Oh no, Jesus wants to break open the seals of your Book of Life through a blessed death. He has said: **“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.” John 10:27-28**