

### Media and Graphics Notes

<b>Word of Witness Video?</b>	Yes
<b>Sermon Starter Video?</b>	Yes
<b>Sermon Notes?</b>	There is a scripture verse and lengthy quote near the end of the sermon.
<b>Other Notes</b>	

### Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

#### ***What is this sermon about?***

This sermon is about the reality of our death, where God is in our death and the art of living well.

#### ***Why is this sermon important?***

This sermon is important because what we believe about death shapes how we live.

#### ***What is the context of this sermon?***

This is graduation Sunday for local high schools. This is the final sermon in the *Good Grief* series. It has been developed using the sermon series by the same name which was preached at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in 2012.

#### ***What are the next action steps?***

- Follow your heart.
- Live in a way that brings life.
- Live in a way that says, I know that I won't live forever.
- Know who you love and know who you serve.
- Get in touch with the reality death and trust the one who is the author of life.

#### ***What is the good news (bottom line)?***

The good news is that whether we live or die, we belong to God.

#### ***Metadata***

1. Topic(s)
  1. Share
  2. Changing Lives
2. Sermon Books of the Bible



7th Sunday of Easter / Ascension Sunday  
Good Grief - The Art of Dying and Living Well  
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado  
Text Online at <http://j.mp/1QcwuB6>

May 17, 2015  
John 11:38-44  
Preaching Target Word Count: 1,975  
Video is not available online

1. John
2. Romans
3. Series
  1. Good Grief - Facing Death with Hope
4. Speaker
  1. Andrew Conard
5. Tags
  1. sermon, worship, church, Methodist, United Methodist, United Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church, El Dorado, Kansas, Great Plains Annual Conference, death, life, reality, living well, Lazarus,

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Invitation

Closing Prayer

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## John 11:38-44, CEB

38 Jesus was deeply disturbed again when he came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone covered the entrance. 39 Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said, "Lord, the smell will be awful! He's been dead four days." 40 Jesus replied, "Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?" 41 So they removed the stone. Jesus looked up and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. 42 I know you always hear me. I say this for the benefit of the crowd standing here so that they will believe that you sent me." 43 Having said this, Jesus shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 The dead man came out, his feet bound and his hands tied, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

### Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

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## Introduction

### Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

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\*\*\* Start Sermon Timer \*\*\*  
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### Series Review

Today we conclude our series, Good Grief. Over the past several weeks, we have considered Christianity and suicide, the afterlife and how we comfort those who mourn. Today we will consider the realities of our own death, where God is when we die and what kind of plan we might have about how to live out our days.

### Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

## Opening

### Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

### Graduation Sunday

Today we celebrate our graduates at all levels. Graduation is one of those significant moments in life. It is a marker or a milestone. For many people it is a transition from living one way to living another way:

- Living with parents to living on your own
- Attending class to working most weekdays
- Paying for school to receiving income for work

It is a day to remember. From here forward, life will be different in some way. Years from now, when you look back over the course of your life you will remember this time.

### *Transition*

One of Stephen Covey's seven habits of highly effective people is "Begin with the end in mind." We are going to do that today. We are going to consider the very end of our lives and how that affects the way that we live today.

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## The Reality of Our Death

It doesn't matter how old or young we are, death will, sooner or later, change our life.

How do you feel about dying?

When you think about your own mortality, does it scare you?

Are you relaxed with the idea?

Have you ever given it serious thought?

### StoryCorps - Honor to Die

One of the radio shows that I listen to from time to time is StoryCorps. This is a production of National Public Radio which records and shares interesting stories from all walks of life.

One story was of a man who was visiting his 90 year old mother. One of the questions that he asked was, "Mom, what have you been doing to have fun?"

She said, "Well, I've been going to funerals."

He said, "Are you serious? Going to funeral? For fun?"

She said, "Yes, son! I go there, I see my friends that I have known for years. We go out afterward and talk about the person who died. We remember that person and

how our paths have crossed over the years. We share stories and it is a wonderful time!”

She said, “Aren’t you old enough to know that it is an honor to die?”

An honor to die.

I don’t think we have to be a particular age to figure this out.

When we get in touch with our own death, it will change us.

We will think differently about life.

### **Example: Sharolyn Chamberlin**

Last Friday Sharolyn Chamberlin had back surgery. I spoke with her yesterday and she is doing well. The surgery was a success. The day before her surgery, I had the opportunity to go over to their home to share in conversation and pray with them.

One of the things that she shared with me was this:

She said, “I am not afraid of death, it’s getting there that is the trouble.”

This is a statement of faith. Her sense of peace about death was so encouraging. She has given her own death serious thought and was relaxed about the idea of death.

### ***Transition***

Have you connected with the reality of your death?

What do you believe about God in our own death?

Where will God be in our death?

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## **God in Our Death**

As Christians, death can be hopeful.

God will be there and God will be active.

We find one example of this in the story of Lazarus from the scripture today.

### **Story of Lazarus**

You remember that Jesus was friends with Lazarus and his sisters - Mary and Martha. He would hang out with them at their house.

Mary and Martha send word to Jesus that Lazarus is ill. Jesus arrives four days after Lazarus has died. He meets Mary and Martha and they take him to where Lazarus is buried. When they arrive, the scripture tells us that Jesus began to cry.

This is the only story in scripture that records Jesus crying.

### ***God with Us***

We see Jesus mourning the death of a friend and perhaps anticipating his own death. He is grappling with death. This passage teaches us something powerful about our own death - God will be with us.

Jesus is God incarnate - God with us. Jesus crying to the tomb of Lazarus gives us insight into how deeply God cares. God enters into suffering with us. Jesus is with us in life, at the moment of our death and beyond.

### ***Unbinding***

Ultimately this is a story about life. Jesus says, "Lazarus, come out."

Lazarus comes out of the tomb still bound by the grave clothes and Jesus says, "Untie him and let him go."

When we die, Jesus is there. Unbinding us and setting us free from whatever it is that has held us back from being everything God has designed us to be. As we get in touch with our own death, we are able to trust the one who is the author of life.

It will be okay. There is something more and greater to anticipate in our death – something very hopeful.

### ***Transition***

This brings us to the way we live our life between today and the day of our death.

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## **The Art of Living Well**

### **Lazarus' Second Death**

You see, there is something else about this story that is interesting and it is not recorded in the words of scripture.

Lazarus had to die again.

Did you ever think about that?

Lazarus has taken the journey from this life to the next. Jesus brings him to life again. Can you imagine what his life was like then? He is given the opportunity to live his life again. There is a period of time between his first death and his second death. How is he going to live it? Imagine with me for a moment.

### ***Imagine Living Life Again***

Can you imagine that his priorities shifted?

Can you imagine that he related differently to his sisters? Perhaps more generous or patient.

What about the people that were there and saw him come out of the tomb? The next time that he passed them on the street, don't you imagine it was a different conversation?

What about the next time that Jesus came over to their house for supper?

I imagine that Lazarus came out a totally new person.

Lazarus knew death from the inside out.

### **Living Well**

This is how I want to live.

I want to be in touch with my own death, so it is not scary.

I want to be connected with God and able to trust God's leadership in my life.

I hope to be more committed to living every day in a way that honors God.

The apostle Paul writes in Romans 14:8:



“If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to God.”<sup>1</sup>

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## Conclusion

We don't know if we are going to die tomorrow or live for many years.

## Good News

The good news is that whether we live or die, we belong to God.

### *Example of Steve Jobs*

I want to share another example and also a word for our graduates

“Steve Jobs was an American entrepreneur, marketer, and inventor, who was the cofounder, chairman, and CEO of Apple Inc.”<sup>2</sup> In 2005, he was the commencement speaker at Stanford University. One of the stories that he told those graduates was a story about death. I want to share part of it with you today. He says this:

“When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: “If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right.” It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: “If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?” And whenever the answer has been “No” for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything — all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure — these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.”<sup>3</sup>

## Call to Action

Follow your heart.

Live in a way that brings life.

Live in a way that says, I know that I won't live forever.

Know who you love and know who you serve.

Get in touch with the reality death and trust the one who is the author of life.

Ask yourself:

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 14:8, CEB.

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Steve Jobs," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Steve\\_Jobs&oldid=661882151](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Steve_Jobs&oldid=661882151) (accessed May 16, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2005/june15/jobs-061505.html>

“If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?” If the answer for you has been “No” for too many days in a row, change something.

### Invitation

You may find yourself in a place today, where you know you need to change something. One way to change is to say “Yes” to Jesus, for the very first time or again after a long time. So, I invite you to pray with me.

If you would like you can repeat the words quietly, under your breath. Let’s pray together:

### Closing Prayer

Jesus, I trust you with my life.  
I am sorry for all I have done that is wrong.  
Forgive my sins and make me yours.  
I trust you as my savior.  
I wish to follow you as my Lord.  
Help me not be afraid when I think of death.  
Thank you for loving me.  
Please fill me with your Spirit.  
Help me follow you all of my days.  
In your Holy Name,  
Amen.

8:30 AM			11:00 AM		
Sermon Time					