

Pastor Troy E. Medlin  
Memorial Service for Bob Taylor  
Grace, River Forest  
11/9/2024

Stacia, Dianna, John, Robert, all who knew and loved Bob: grace, mercy, and peace be yours in the name of the one in whom Bob was baptized and with whom he now dwells: the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, the horizon of our days, our companion along the road, our constant song throughout the journey, and our final destination. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rejoice in the Lord always, let your gentleness be known to everyone. In the short time that I got to know Bob, it seemed like he lived these two calls from St. Paul with ease. And always with a smile on his face. His smile seemed to put others at ease too. His disposition was contagious. He'd always say that he was "great." And you believed him. Contentment and gratitude were always on his lips in nearly all the conversations I had with him. He was so thankful that Grace welcomed him, a Methodist. To know Bob was to know someone who had a kind of peace- like that peace of God which guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. I know Stacia was the reason behind most of these attributes becoming his.

We all know many dwelling places throughout our lives. We find shelter, rest, purpose, and meaning under all sorts of shelters. We learn to abide wherever life takes us, and wherever we go in life.

For Bob- one of those places was a bit counter-intuitive. You could say he found shelter, rest, purpose, and meaning-- all while being *on the move*. Wherever he laced up his running shoes, in a way, he was home. A runner for 40 years, competing in 800, yes, you heard that right, 800 races. Often, he would run with his beloved Stacia, wife of 54 years. Making their way down Oak Park Avenue, through Scoville Park, down Euclid, to Ontario, on those paths, or on the bench near the library just to take a breather--- they were home. Together. The two of them were co-founders of the Oak Park Runners Club and in the OP runners club and Chicago Area Runners Association halls of fame. The only couple to achieve that.

There was the vocational home Bob found in the Navy- even though he didn't talk much about it. Then, off to Northwestern on the GI bill. He worked as an engineer. He was so proud of roofing the diamond shaped building on Michigan. I'm sure all of us can instantly picture that building that plays such a starring role in the beautiful Chicago skyline.

Bob's steps, wherever he went, always seemed to lead him back to Stacia- that is if they weren't already matching each other stride for stride. Not only were they married for 54 years, but 40 of those were spent literally in the same dwelling. They practiced abiding so well. It was easy to be

at home with one another. Stacia mentioned how much she misses all the little things they shared together. Things like never missing the price is right or wheel of fortune. Or traveling down to Sanibel Island every January for 40 years. When they retired they had brunch and dinner together every day. On the weekends, Bob would always want to go to a brunch buffet. And, Bob was a very proud father, grandfather and great grandfather.

All of these experiences and places point us, direct us, like mile markers, signposts,-- toward our eternal home. Jesus said-- I am the way, the truth, and the life. So- with Jesus we will never be lost- not today and not ever. God keeps us safe through every dark and shadowy valley. Secure in God's hands, sin and death can never veer us off course for good. We belong to God.

When Bob was baptized, he was clothed with Christ. Sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. There he was joined to Christ's death and resurrection and made a member of the body of Christ. In those waters so long ago, Bob was given everything that God could ever give, all by grace alone.

Christ- the forerunner- has gone ahead of us. He has traversed all the way down to death itself and risen again, and now prepares a place for us just past what we thought was the finish line. An abiding place near still waters and green pastures, down paths of righteousness and peace, accompanied by goodness and mercy. He still sets a table before us.

In the presence of this God, our companion and savior, we can say in faith that no death is final, and that Bob, like Christ- lives again. And we will too. For Bob-- even after death-- the path continues with just one more surprise. For death is now just the gateway into eternal life- more trail unfolding into the vast expanse of eternity.

Still, we mourn and grieve. We wish this were not so. We miss Bob. Especially- you Stacia, I know. 99 years is long, but never long enough. So we keep gathering. Telling stories. Sharing memories. Supporting each other. Comforting one another as we do today.

Keep running, walking, moving, smiling, feasting (especially around brunch buffets) and practicing those things that Paul talked about and that Bob bore witness to. Follow Bob's example as he followed Christ.

Bob- like St. Paul writes in Second Timothy: you have fought the good fight, you have kept the faith, and yes, you have finished the earthly race, everything else is just gravy- and we are all rounding the corner, headed towards home, and we will see you there.

Don't worry, we will catch up in no time.

