

Order of Service

Prelude Music

Hymn – Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah (83)

Eulogy - Pastor Don

Norman Burgess was born July 20, 1926 in England. He served in the National Service at the end of the Second World War. He was educated at Birkbeck College in the University of London, taking a degree in History. He served as a teacher in Norfolk for many years.

He met and married Beryl in Wales, in 1949. They had one son, David Burgess, in 1952. Norman and Beryl decided to emigrate in 1962, although Norman was thinking of New Zealand, but Beryl decided on Canada. With that settled (!!) they moved to Simcoe, Ontario where Norman, the History major, took up duties teaching English. Eventually Norman added Theater Arts to his work and built many lasting relationships with his students.

Norman's mother, Winifred (Winnie), moved to Canada in 1979 and lived in Norman's home the rest of her life. Beryl passed away in 1985.

After her passing, Norman married a long-time friend, Barbara, in 1990. Shortly after their marriage, Norman and Barbara moved to Victoria, with Winnie, to set up the last phase of Norman's life.

In Victoria, though Norman was no longer teaching, he continued to make lasting friends with a wide social network. He and Barbara joined Grace Baptist Church, getting involved with the people of the congregation. During these years, Norman's mother lived with Norman and Barbara until passing just six weeks short of 101.

When Barbara passed on April 7, 2010, Norman continued with his church life but also expanded his circle by befriending waitresses, chefs, and restaurateurs all over Victoria.

Norman passed away early in the morning of Oct 4, 2021. He lived a full life to the very end, alert and companionable and beloved by his friends and family. He is sorely missed.

The last thing we should remember is that Norman, committed the last third of his life to faith in Christ. He served in the church, often substituting for the pastor, with an especial interest in teaching Hebrew history and poetry.

Norman taught a survey of the history, in addition to careful teaching through Job, Ezra, and Nehemiah. His passion for teaching and for the Lord Jesus Christ made a lasting impact with his Christian brothers and sisters.

For Norman, faith has now become sight.

Scripture Reading:

Ps 23.1-6 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

³ He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Testimonials:

Cullen Johnson

Maureen Perry

David/Laura Burgess

Hymn - Arise, My Soul, Arise (299)

Text: Job 42.17

Our text is the last verse of the book of Job. As I mentioned earlier, Norman taught through the book of Job for us at one time. I think this was before we were recording messages, but I did find two of Norman's messages on Job.

By the way, if anyone is interested, I can burn a data CD of 35 messages Norman gave here.

Because of Norman's interest in Job, when I found this text, I thought it fit as our text for Norman's service. Here is the text

Job 42.17 And Job died, an old man and full of days.

Norman was ninety-five years old.

By any reckoning, that's old. So, he was an old man.

But the verse doesn't stop there: "Job ... [was] full of days."

Anyone who knew Norman, and I guess that is all of us here, knew that Norman was "full of days." He lived out a long life making his days full. He filled his life with

1. study,
2. teaching,
3. fellowship,
4. faith,
5. and friends.

Today I want to talk about what it means to really be "full of days." There are people who live long, but their lives end empty. I am confident in saying that Norman's life ended full.

So how do we get to have a full life?

To answer that, we need to consider Job.

I. Consider Job

A. Challenging things to consider

1. Job 42.16 says Job lived 140 years – either, 140 more years after his troubles, or 140 years in all
2. Job 1 and 2 begin the story with a conversation between God and Satan about Job
3. As we go through those first two chapters, we find Job losing everything he has when God gives Satan permission to afflict him
 - a. Thieves came and stole Job's entire herds of donkeys and oxen
 - b. Fire fell from heaven and destroyed Job's entire flock of sheep
 - c. The Babylonians came and stole Job's entire herd of camels
 - d. A final messenger came and told Job that all his sons and daughters were killed when the building they were in collapsed on top of them

- e. Finally, Job himself contracted some kind of painful skin disease that made him a social outcast, forced to live in the garbage dump

Now, a lot of people read these bits of Job and find it hard to believe that the book is literally true

B. Consider the theme of Job

1. The theme of Job is this question: “why is there evil in the world?”
2. People have asked this question through the ages
3. Many people find the *theistic* view of Job hard to take: “if there is a God, why is there evil in the world?”
4. However, let’s look at it another way:
 - a. If there is NO God, where does that leave us with suffering?
 - b. If it is just survival of the fittest, why should we care about the weak?

Friedrich Nietzsche was a German philosopher who is famous for his phrase, “God is dead.”

The idea that God is dead lead to nihilism, the idea that nothing has importance or has purpose.

Nietzsche tried to overcome purposelessness without resorting to God, rather with the “will to power.”

His ideas led to all kinds of bad outcomes, including urban unrest, the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, and the rise of Nazism in Germany.

5. Job’s answer to suffering involves getting into a right relationship with God, but that gets ahead of ourselves

C. Consider Job’s suffering

1. He lost all his possessions
2. His wife counseled him to “curse God and die”
3. His three friends came to comfort him on the theme, “admit it Job, it’s your fault”

4. He justified himself, and grew increasingly depressed in his suffering as he felt abandoned by God

D. Consider Job's answer

1. First of all, God proved to Job that many things were beyond his understanding
2. God pointed out that though Job could not understand the many natural processes of the world, nevertheless God sustained them without effort

By the way, we pride ourselves on our science today, but we still only have a very minimal understanding of how things work. We know more than Job, but we still can't explain it all. (For example, Covid: still much that is mysterious about it, and some of it we may never know.)

3. Finally, God challenged Job

Job 40.2 "Will the faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Let him who reproves God answer it."

4. When Job came to the end of God's challenge, he said,

Job 42.1-6 Then Job answered the LORD and said,² "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.³ 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."⁴ 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.'⁵ "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You;⁶ Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."

5. After this, God restored to Job double of all he had, and so ends the story

II. Consider Norman

- A. Norman's life basically was a grand drama in three acts

1. Act I – thirty-six years in England
2. Act II – twenty-eight years in Simcoe, Ontario

3. Act III – thirty-one years in Victoria, BC
- B. In Act I – Norman grew up, was educated, married, and busy at his profession
1. From what I recall, Norman had some religious connections
 2. But during these years, no serious commitments
- C. In Act II – Norman pursued his teaching career and family life
1. But his connections put him into contact with numerous committed Christians
 2. Students
 3. Barbara and others (Beryl and Norman knew Barbara for many years, Beryl worked in an office with Barbara)
 4. At the end of this Act, Norman married Barbara and became a Christian
- D. In Act III – Norman made many friends, but the focus of his thinking and life found itself centered in the Bible and the church
1. Norman knew his share of suffering
 - a. He endured the War in his youth
 - b. He buried two wives
 2. Norman knew, in the end, to trust God with his troubles
 - a. He couldn't explain why everything happened to him
 - b. But he had come to God, seen that God is good, and he trusted God with his life

Job 42.17 And Job died, an old man and full of days.

Elie Wiesel was a Holocaust survivor and activist for human rights. He didn't really believe the Bible. According to one book about Wiesel, he suggested "that what Job should have asked at the end of the book was: 'What about my dead children?'"¹

¹ John H. Walton, *Job*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 436.

- 1) That is the answer of bitterness
- 2) Job's answer, and Norman's answer, is faith

Conclusion:

What is your answer to life's troubles?

- Some people try to find answers in constant work
- Some try to find answers in pursuing the good life
- Some try to find answers in philosophy, activism, doing good public works
- Others, sadly, try to find answers in a bottle, or with a needle

The Bible doesn't always answer our "Why?" questions, but it does answer our "Who?" question.

Who can you trust in this world of trouble? God

How can you trust Him? Through his son, Jesus Christ.

Would you like to make your life "full of days"? Trust Jesus Christ.

Job 42.17 And Job died, an old man and full of days.

Hymn - Amazing Grace (147)

Closing Prayer

Recessional: Family leaves the room first

Tea in fellowship room