

It wasn't long, after coming here some years ago, that I learned what Kenny's truck looked like. And usually from behind. And I learned that when I was behind him on Highway 94, it was best just to sit back, slow down, and enjoy the ride. Because he was never in a hurry. He was slow, but he was steady. And he would get to where he was going, that was certain.

I don't know, maybe that was his motto in life. Don't let things bother you, just know where you're going, and you'll get there.

Well, he knew that he was going to heaven. But he seemed to be in no rush here either. We all thought he was going there almost two years ago when he was in the hospital having lost so much weight. But he got out of the hospital, went to New Haven, he put on weight, and he really enjoyed chatting with the lady workers on his floor. Oh yes, he was a confirmed bachelor. But he enjoyed them, and they enjoyed him. Yet the entire time he knew that his room there was only temporary. Slowly perhaps, but steadily, he was on his way to heaven.

Whenever I would visit him, taking the Sacrament to him, he was never unsure about where he was going. He wasn't concerned either. In his mind, it was all a matter of fact. He was on his way to heaven where his dear family was already waiting for him.

I think his pastor, back when he was confirmed, helped to frame his mindset. He gave Kenny the words of Mark 9:24 as his confirmation verse: "*I believe; help my unbelief.*" And God certainly did. He pointed Kenny to Jesus, to His sufferings, death, and resurrection. He pointed Kenny to his baptism into Christ, to the truth that he was God's dear child, forgiven of all his sins, because Jesus took care of them for him.

Long before Kenny was born, Jesus took life slow and steady. And He knew exactly where He was going. He was going to the cross of Calvary to redeem the whole world from sin. Jesus did not marry either, although He did take a bride, His beloved church. He exchanged His life for hers. He took her sins, your sins, mine, and Kenny's, and in exchange He gave to His beloved bride His holy innocence.

This is the faith into which Kenny was baptized. The faith he was taught in confirmation class. The faith preached here to him all his life. And the faith in which he died – that going to heaven was, and is, all about Jesus. This is why Kenny knew he was going there. It wasn't a matter of him being good enough for heaven. It was that Jesus gave heaven to him as a gift purely by grace.

"*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.*" What a wonderful Scripture verse. What a beautiful prayer. It's not how well you and I believe. It's not how well Kenny believed. It's what Jesus did for us, and for Kenny. Jesus did everything. There is nothing we can add to it. It's all done, all finished by His death and resurrection. If there was something we had to do to gain heaven, we could never be certain we would get there.

Don't look at what you have done or failed to do in life. Look at your Savior. See Jesus dying and rising for you. Hear His promise to you that you, too, are forgiven. All your sins are forgiven. Nothing you have done, or failed to do, can keep you out of heaven, because you are completely forgiven.

This is what I would always tell Kenny in our visits. Because it's the truth. So, whether you take life slow and steady or fast and rocky, you have the same Savior that Kenny has, the same promises, the same baptism, the same Lord. And the same Scripture verse to take with you from this day forward, "*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.*" Amen.