

**The Memorial of Bob Hollowell:
December 18, 2025**

Just like you... Randy and Denise...
My dad served in the US Navy...
His tour of duty... was during the Korean War.

I remember one day... very clearly.
When I was probably 8... or 10...
I was exploring and hiding in...
The back of my parent's closet...

Hidden far from sight...
I found a metal foot locker.
It was from my dad's time in the Navy.

I went and asked him...
If I could look through it.
He gave me permission.

In the locker there were all kinds of objects...
Reminders of his time in service.

I found his uniform...
Which was way too small...
I think people were littler back then.

Then there was a photo...
Of the ship he served on.
I can't remember the name of the ship...
Right this minute.

But I asked him...
What did you do...
On that ship.
What was your job?

He said... I fired the big guns...
The 50 caliber Mark 7s.
Now remember...
I was just a kid...
And I didn't know any better.

So I asked him...
Did you sink any other ships?

He looked at me...
In a way... that was sad.
And he said...
That's nothing to be proud of.
And that was it.
He never talked about it... again.
But I will never forget what he said.

What you wrote about Bob...
In his obituary...
Reminded me...
Of my dad.

That yes... he was proud of his service...
And he gained significant and important life skills...
Like tenacity... discipline... and strength.
Characteristics that helped him...
His whole life long.

But he didn't boast about it.
It was not something...
He needed to tell other people...
Because he was...
Doing his duty.
Serving his country.
Fulfilling what needed to be done.

Actually... it seems to me...
That a lot of folks...
From that era...
Were cut from the same cloth.

Hard working.
Strong willed.
Quiet demeanor...

But also...
What were the words you used...
Oh yeah...

Ornery...
Liked to tease.
Got into harmless trouble.

I mean... just look at that grin.
You can tell...
There was a little naughty...
Behind that smile...
A spark of joy...
A love of life.

He looks like...
He was always thinking...
And ready for action!

There is something about...
How men... of this age...
In particular... show their love.

It's not often in words.
But usually... in their actions.

In living with... and loving...
You... Annette... for 62 years.
Living like a team...
Working hard together...
True partners...
To make life good...
For yourselves... and for your children...

People who take care of each other...
Take seriously your responsibilities...
And just do what needs to be done.

There was a sense of duty.
Of doing what is right and good.
And fixing things.
Right?

Building a house.
Caring for animals.
Loving the land.
Restoring old tractors.

There was something...
Inside of Bob...
A drive...
A desire...
A mission...

To work to make things right.

What if the reason...
That desire...
To fix things...
Runs so deeply...
In the hearts of some people...

Is because...
It's just an echo...
Of what God does...
In our world... for us.

I mean... God is the creator...
Of all things...

But God is also...
The sustainer.
The redeemer.
The rescuer.
The fixer.
Of all things.

It is undeniably...
Within God's nature...

To redeem and make whole...
God's own creation.

Therefore logically...
If we are created in God's image...
If we are children of God...
If we are filled with...
The Holy Spirit...
Constantly working inside of us...

Then... it makes sense...
That we want to fix things too.

And it makes sense...
That we get upset...
That it breaks our hearts...
When things go wrong.
When people suffer.
When loved ones die.

It's not the way...
God wants it to be...

It's not the way...
We want it to be.

And that's exactly...
What was happening...
In the Isaiah passage...
You chose for today.

God was not willing...
To watch his people...
Just die...

With no hope.
With no future.
With no promise...
Of life.

So... God fixed it.

A little context first.

When Isaiah says...
On this mountain...
He's talking about Mt. Zion in Jerusalem...
Where the temple is.
The place where God lived.
The place where the people of God...
Gathered... to worship God.

Isaiah is talking about a day...
When God will return...

To that mountain...
And make things right.
Not just for Israel.

It will be for all people... all nations... everybody.
There will be a feast of rich food...
And well-aged wine.

But most importantly...
On that mountain...
The shroud that is cast...
Over all people... all nations... everybody...

Will be swallowed up.
Death will be swallowed up... by God...
Once and for all...
Forever.

It's a beautiful image...
That makes it absolutely clear... that...
Death does not get the last word...
God gets the last word.

God is saying...
I am going to fix...
The problem of death.

But how?
That's the question we have in our hearts.
That's what we need to know today.

In the light of Bob's death...
And the death...
Of so many people...
We have known and loved...

We want to know how....
Is God going to fix death.

See. We are just like Mary and Martha...
In the gospel lesson I read today.

They were doers.
They were fixers.

They wanted Jesus to do something...
About the fact...
That their brother was sick...
And then eventually... died.

If you had been here LORD...
This wouldn't have happened...
Our brother would not have died.

But Jesus said.
Mary... Martha...
You know who I am.
You have seen me at work.
You understand what God is doing through me.

I AM the Resurrection and the Life.
Your brother will live again.

Then he had them roll away the stone...
That covered Lazarus' grave.

And Jesus stood outside that dark sorrow-filled cave.
And with a voice that echoed back..
To creation... to the beginning of all life...
To the power that created the world...
And everything in it...

Jesus said...
Lazarus... Come out.

And the man who once had lived...
And then had died....
Lived again.
Just like Jesus said.

Jesus was able...
To stand in the face of death...
With that same power...
That came from God his Father...
He didn't create something new...

He recreated.
He restored.
He resurrected...

Something that was.
That had already been.

He gave Lazarus...
Life out of death.

He gave his sisters...
Joy out of despair.

And in this story...
He gave us...
Hope...
Even when things seem hopeless.

See... Jesus is...
The solution... the fix...
To the problem of death.

He has the power.
To raise us from the dead.

By his resurrection...
He has the power...
To destroy death and despair.

Jesus is the one...
Will come again...
And make all things new.

Just like he said...
He is the resurrection...
And the life.

He is life.

And so...
I want to read...
One more bible verse today.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
The apostle Paul is writing...
To the church in Thessaloniki...
To clarify... what it means...
To believe in Jesus...
Especially... regarding death.

And he wrote.

Brothers and sisters,
We do not want you to be uninformed
About those who sleep in death,

So that you do not grieve
Like those,
Who have no hope.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again,
And so we believe that God will bring **WITH** Jesus
Those who have fallen asleep in him.

According to the Lord's word,
We tell you that we who are still alive,
Who are left until the coming of the Lord,
Will certainly not precede those
Who have fallen asleep.

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven,
With a loud command,
With the voice of the archangel
And with the trumpet call of God,
And the dead in Christ will rise first.

After that, we who are still alive
And are left
Will be caught up together
With them in the clouds
To meet the Lord in the air.

And so we will be with the Lord forever.
Therefore encourage one another with these words.

So. If I have this right.
Bob was a fixer.
A man after his heavenly Father's heart.

But there comes a day...
When even fixers...
Need to be fixed.
All of us. Will need to be fixed.

And when that day comes...
Jesus will call with the voice...
Of the authority of God...

Which belongs to him...
Which rests within him.

And he will stand at our graves...
And yell... Bob come out...
Bob will be raised.

The fixer will be fixed.
His life will be restored.
He will be made new.

And so will you.
And so will I.

And on that great and glorious day...
When death is no more...
We will all say together....

Thanks be to God.
Amen.