

**Funeral Message for Pauline Calkins, Conducted on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016,  
At the Reformed Baptist Church in Tama, Iowa.**

**Psalm 23-**

**The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the path of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

If Pauline were here this afternoon she would ask me to preach the gospel to you, and so that is what I aim to do. Let us ask ourselves this question in light of the passing of one whom we love, into eternity: “Is the Lord my Shepherd?” Is the Lord the One who has convinced me that the good pastures of His word the Bible are the food which my soul should feed upon? Do I have the promises of God working in my heart today? Is the Lord Jesus Christ the One who has brought peace to my soul and stilled the agitated waters of my heart, by my believing in Him for eternal life? Do I feel that I can rejoice in the eternity that is coming? If the Lord is my Shepherd, do I need anything more than Jesus to help me live my life to God and to go to heaven when I die? I want you to know and be convinced that you do not.

The question which I would like you to consider with me this afternoon is this: Do you remember Pauline in the way that she really was, as a Christian woman? For in bringing you this message this is certainly the most important thing. I know that there are many commendable things that we can speak of, concerning Pauline, at this hour. And we will speak of some of these. But I want to ask – Do you know that you have Christ in your heart, as she did? To have Christ is to have the sure hope of eternal glory. Ask yourself now, does my heart belong to Him? Do I know, even now, the reality of Christ’s upholding, and strengthening power; His ability to restore my soul in this time of our dear loved one’s passing into eternity? O how precious is the Risen Christ at a time like this. If you know the Lord, He is leading you on the path of righteousness today, so that you will consider what the right response is, to Pauline’s going to be with the Lord. Yes, there is sorrow in Pauline’s leaving us, but there is also great joy, because we know where she is. She is with Jesus.

Have you believed in Jesus in order to receive the gift of eternal life? Have you been born again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? Have you repented of all of your sins so that you are not living primarily for yourself and the things of this earth, but for God and doing His will? Do you know the reality of Christ shepherding your soul? This is what Pauline would have you to know if she were here to speak to you now. She would say to you: I have now passed through the valley of the shadow of death. For her it was a great struggle at times, but she fought the good fight of faith, and she finished her course. She was trusting in the Lord Jesus, even in her time in the Nursing Home where she experienced great forgetfulness and the great desire to

be back in her own home. But now she is victorious. She has passed through death, and she is now in her eternal home. She will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

If you believe in Jesus, death is only a shadow that you will pass through, if you are a Christian. The one who believes in Jesus never actually dies when their body dies. The instant the Christian dies physically, their spirit is made perfect. There is no longer any sorrow; there are no longer any tears. But even greater than these things, there is no longer any sin that she will have to struggle with, or against, any more. Pauline is beyond the veil of tears. She now dwells in a place of perfect holiness and peace, and she beholds her Savior and Lord continually. Jesus says in John 11, verse 25 – “I am the resurrection and the life.” “He who lives and believes in Me shall never die.” “Do you believe this?” Each of us must ask ourselves that question. Do I believe this? If you believe in Jesus you will never die. If you do not believe in Jesus you must perish in your sins. On this most important matter of whether you will go to heaven or whether you will go to hell, it is vitally important that you do not make a mistake.

Sometimes when we think about death, we are more persuaded by what some friend or what our unsaved relative tells us about death, rather than listening to the Bible itself. I wonder if this is right? If Jesus is not raised from the dead, then there is no resurrection from the dead. If Jesus is not raised from the dead then there is no eternal life of bliss and glory. If the promises of God are not true then we have nothing to rest our heart and soul upon, nothing we can lay our head upon to give us comfort today. Sometimes people will tell you that everyone goes to heaven when they die. This is simply not true. People do not automatically go to heaven when they die. They only go to heaven and live there forever in the glorious presence of God, if they have believed in Jesus the good Shepherd, for the salvation of their soul. Let me ask you whether you have had dealings with God over the salvation of your soul? Have you asked Him to forgive you of your sins? Have you asked Him to change your heart so that you no longer love sin? Have you asked Him to give you grace so that you will be willing to do the will of God as it is set forth so clearly in the Bible? When you are trusting in Jesus, the good Shepherd, you will be able to say things like this: “I will fear no evil for You are with me.” You can say, “Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.” You can say, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

What a precious thing it is when the goodness of God and the mercy of God follow you all the days of your life. When you know God, you come to realize, if you are thinking rightly, that He is always doing you good; even when you are going through the most difficult things of your life. And mercy follows you too. God will not condemn you for your sins, for there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. But He will faithfully forgive all of your sins as you confess them and sincerely repent of them. He will lead you on, like He did with Pauline, to become a righteous and holy person. How good and gracious a God He is. May each of us prove this to ourselves, and find the everlasting joy that God gives to those who are trusting in Him for eternal life. The Lord God is a Sun and a Shield; the Lord gives grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. How blessed is the person who trusts in Him.

Today is a day for remembering and honoring the life of Pauline, the one whom we loved and appreciated for who she was. She was a person who was independent, strong, hard-working and resourceful. She was a person who could fix almost anything. She was a person who lived by her convictions. She cared for others and loved the Lord. She

looked forward to someday being with Him. She was a person who loved flowers and plants; gardening and growing things. She would often share the first-fruits of her garden with us; such things as plant starts, cuttings, and bouquets of flowers. She would often bring these over to our house and surprise us with them. She was a very smart person, and would save vast numbers of newspaper clippings and magazine articles. She thought that she might need them at some point and so her rooms were full of them. She had a very good memory until her dementia set in, and she would often tell stories of by-gone times of her youth and growing up in Kansas, or her time of teaching school there. She had a very good and very specific memory for many details of past events related to herself and other family members. Her love for her dear husband Arthur, and her family, and other people around her, was evident in many of the things that she said and did. She was a Sunday School teacher in our church for a number of years and a helper in VBS since Jenni and I have been here. She regularly attended church because she loved to worship the Lord. She loved reading her Bible and good books. She was a great conversationalist.

When she was young she walked to school about five miles away, and she worked hard at her studies, and she made sure that she got her high school diploma. She was a very determined person. This hard-working determination continued throughout her life. As she raised her children, she inculcated these same values to them. Whether it was helping deliver newspapers or whether it was being the “poppy lady” for the American Legion, she was often seen striving to do good for others. As many people in this community can attest, she took good care of a number of elderly people in their own homes; Wes Sabetka, and others. She was also very practically minded when it came to doing chores around the house. When she became older it was hard for her to give up doing what she was so used to doing. A good example of this was that she could not as easily climb a ladder and maintain her balance. I am told that when a family member took away her ladder so that she could not climb up on it to clean out the gutters, she climbed outside on the porch roof, without permission, to clean out the gutters she could reach.

When she came to live at Sunnyhill Nursing Home, my wife Jenni and I remember how happy she would be that we had come to pick her up. Every Sunday she wanted to go to church, even if she was tired. In the many conversations which I had with Pauline over the years that I knew her, her love for her husband Arthur and her children and grandchildren was evident in her speech. She often thought about them, and I am sure, prayed for them as well. With Pauline there was a love for people and a love for her church family, and a love for her community. Although her dementia may have changed many things in her perspective about life, in her later years, her love for the Lord remained undiminished by time. The Lord Himself was her keeper. He guarded her going out and coming in. He is the One who should be praised today because He is the One who will remember each one of His people and He will do them good forever. Although we are sad in losing Pauline at this time, we know that the best is yet to come, for her, and for all who believe in Jesus. You have not permanently lost someone dear to you, if they are a Christian, and you are a Christian. For you know where they are. And you will be going there yourself someday. And so I pray that each of you will trust in the Lord, and you will see your dear one again, and be in the glory there with her, forever.