

**Sermon Preached by The Reverend Jonathon Jensen, Rector  
Calvary Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
at the Memorial Service for Henry L. Hillman  
Friday, April 21, 2017 at 11 o'clock in the morning**

A year ago, I wrote a letter to Henry about work and love after Elsie's death. In effect, it was his funeral sermon, a year early. We discussed it later, at some length, face to face in Pittsburgh.

Dear Henry,

I hope you are well. You and Elsie have been in my thoughts and my prayers. I would not presume to have become your priest in such a short time, or have more wisdom to share than you gained over a full life, but please indulge me some thoughts before we can meet face to face when you are back in Pittsburgh. There are two topics on which to reflect: work and love.

This season of your life is an opportunity to reflect on your professional accomplishments. Few have the vast and successful body of work or take the time to examine what they have created over the course of a life. Most people tend to work until the last moment, or retire as soon as possible, and never consider what it has all meant. Your work may be slowing down or coming to its eventual end but what you have created will not. The company, products, services, or investments may change, but the formation of them has lasting value – for the city, for the lives they bettered, for the opportunities you created, for the legacies that continue to give back, and for you and your family. What you have built will continue to make a difference for the good. Thank you for all of it.

All of that is good. Honest labor, the creation of new things, and the betterment of others have intrinsic value – but what has it all meant? What would you have done differently, if anything? When did you fail miserably and when did you succeed gloriously? What did you learn from both? To whom, if anyone, do you need to apologize? To whom do you need to give thanks? Other than your family, of what are you most proud? No one but you needs to know your answers to any of these questions but they are good to ask oneself, to reflect on what matters.

The second topic, the more important one, is a love that endures beyond death. The public persona most know is Henry Hillman the businessman and philanthropist; Henry the titan of industry, the visionary, the great man transcending eras. Those are all worthy and deserved accolades and likely bring a mix of pride and embarrassment. But what they miss is what matters most. We know only in part and few ever know the whole person. Henry who *is* loved deeply and Henry who loves deeply expressed in grand gestures and in small acts of kindness that enrich our lives.

I first caught a glimpse of that on a Sunday afternoon when we visited in the hospital. The game was on and you put me at ease by talking about the Steelers' porous secondary. Your deeper self was revealed when we searched for just the right casket that was elegant but not too showy. Your profound generosity of spirit was evident to all at your 70th anniversary party. The usual roles were reversed but you and Elsie made everyone feel a part of your lives. It is an astounding gift to make several hundred people feel welcome and included in a personal way. An image that will never leave me is the way you looked at Elsie and held her hand in the hospital bed, sitting near like a sentinel as her life was slipping away.

Thank you for letting me see Henry the adoring husband, the loving father and grandparent, the loyal friend, and Henry the human being beloved of God.

I know Church was more of Elsie's thing than yours but it is my job and my joy to speak about the faith we share. A person told me once, half in jest, "If you can't marry for money at least marry for love." He was never happy. A good marriage is not based on what we get out of it but what we give to it, ourselves – the best us. Real love is not what we *get* from another person, but what we *give* to another person that, in turn, offers us more than we could ever have imagined.

At about 90% of the weddings I have ever officiated, the couple chose, as their Bible reading, 1 Corinthians, chapter 13. That is the "Love is patient, love is kind" verse. The passage is poetic and beautiful but it's not really about romantic love at all. I chose this for my wedding and for my own funeral. It fits better in the latter context. The reading is about the love that exists between two people who have worked faithfully and diligently at their marriage for a lifetime. It is ultimately about the relationship of the person to God who, through grace and faith and intentional living, begins to catch glimpses of the life that God intends for us. These glimpses of Heaven are a foretaste of the life that Elsie now enjoys.

I have been married twenty years and have been with Natalie, my wife, since I was 23 years old. I've spent almost my entire adult life trying to live up to the man my wife believes me to be, or the person my dog believes me to be for that matter so, one day, I can believe it too. We both know the love our wife has for us is not dependent on our efforts but that makes me try all the harder. I am continually trying to earn something that already has been given and continue to receive. God's love is like that, too. In the best sense, it is a gift that we spend a lifetime trying to earn, to be worthy of, to know, to understand, to return, to accept. That's what you do when you know you are loved for who you are without qualification.

In a good relationship, a healthy and holy marriage, like you and Elsie share, two people become one flesh. There are still two people but each shapes the other over time so one can scarcely tell where one person ends and the other begins. That's the ideal, the point, anyway. That, too, is a glimpse of the eternal life that we hope for in God. With an abiding love like that comes great vulnerability. One becomes open to deep hurt and loss when the other is gone. But that openness and vulnerability to love also make possible a profound joy unlike any other.

In the Christian faith, we acknowledge the sense of loss and grief in death. But we also believe in a love that transcends death. Saint Paul, expressed it this way, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, then we shall see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known." I think what he meant is this – in this life, we only see glimpses or reflections of God's love, usually expressed through other people. In the next life, we shall see God face to face. I believe we will also see friends and family face to face meaning that any barriers we have such as pride, ego, shame, fear, insecurity, regret, and all the rest become meaningless concepts we leave behind on earth. Love does not end at death. "Love never ends." It transcends time, space, and even death.

What I have to remind myself from time to time is how Natalie loves me or Elsie loves you is just the faintest reflection of the love that God has for each of us. The life that Elsie now enjoys, the one that is waiting for you and me, face to face, is more sublime, more beautiful than we could ever imagine.

Thank you for allowing me to be a small part of the life of your family. You have been a blessing.

*This was sent as a letter to Henry Hillman from Jonathon Jensen on April 28, 2016.*