

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

WEDNESDAY's WORD – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler
to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week
January 25 in the year of our Lord 2017 - #682

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This week our Church Family is sharing in ministry with two families that had loved ones pass away. Sister Betty Detter & Brother Raymond Blevins both went **home** to be with the Lord on Saturday ... both after long illness ... both surrounded at the time of death with loving families. The funeral services for Brother Raymond (who is Brother Brett Miller's grandfather) will be tomorrow, here at the church, viewing @ 10 am and worship @ 11am. Services for Sister Betty will be on Saturday, here at the church, visitation @ 9:30am and worship @ 10:45am. The Sisters & Brothers of our Bermudian Hospitality Ministry will be sharing receptions for both services. We say a special word of sincere thanks to all who are helping with the Hospitality to these families!

A story shared by Brett and his grandmother Romaine makes me smile and reflect on a Christian's death. Brett's grandfather was raised as a rather poor farmer on a farm not far from our church. He and Romaine were married quite young and moved into a "Summer House" on his parents' farm. Life wasn't easy ... they worked hard ... they would have celebrated 74 years of marriage in March! The story is about the days of depression era gas rationing. Raymond would go to farm sales with a neighbor farmer. Instead of wasting the gas, Raymond would ride his horse to the neighbor's farm, then point the horse in the direction of "**home**" and the horse would run back **home**. Romaine would be watching and open the barn door and call the returning horse in ... **home!**

Are you clear? Crystal clear ... that as a believer in Jesus Christ as your Lord & Savior ... this world ... as comfortable & blessed as we are here ... is not **home**? The Apostle Peter tells us that we are "**aliens and strangers in the world**" (1Peter 2:11) and an old hymn sang, "*This world is not my home, I'm just a passing thru....*" Do you grasp the reality of that?

I remember when Jim & Betty Detter began worshipping with us. They had been active, involved members of another church for many years. They didn't make the move to Bermudian lightly. But they found something here that caught their hearts and became beloved members of our Family. Jim sang with the Bermudian Men's Vocal Group, Betty became active with our Sisters. Throughout Jim's long illness Betty stayed strong. But a piece of her heart truly died with Jim. She just didn't really feel at **home** any longer. Then came her own illness. A hard road. On Saturday morning she heard her Lord call her **home**. Cancer done. Loneliness done. Welcomed **home** by her Savior. And I believe reunited with Jim

Raymond was part of that "*greatest generation,*" a hard working man of the earth. While he drove truck as a late career, as Brett commented, "*He was always a farmer at heart.*"

He instilled in his family a strong work ethic, the importance of family, and faith. When their son Jeff fought the long hard battle with ALS disease, Raymond & Romaine were right there to help and grieved the loss deeply. Dementia ... a stroke ... took their toll on his 94 year old body, but even when near death, and mostly unresponsive, as some of his very last words he was able to whisper *"I love you!"* to his bride of almost 74 years.

On Saturday evening ... like that horse so many long years ago ... Raymond heard the call **home!** His Savior awaited. And I believe Jeff was waiting to welcome his Dad too.

Join me in surrounding prayer for these families! Share a tear, like Jesus at the tomb of His friend Lazarus, at the sense of loss of the friendships in Christ we shared. But share a smile as we remember funny stories, and shared moments of life, love and ministry. We have NOT lost Raymond & Betty ... we know exactly where they are! **Home!**

"So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please Him." 2 Corinthians 5:6-9 NLT

Pastor Larry <><