

Bob Petersen Funeral Remarks

Bishop Cameron Ford, January 27, 2016

I feel privileged to have the opportunity to take a few minutes and share the thoughts that have come to me as I have reflected on the life of Bob Petersen. When someone that we love passes away, we are naturally drawn to ponder their life and what they have accomplished. The big questions about the purpose of life also more easily bubble to the surface. As you think about the life of this beloved man over the coming hours, days, months, and years, I would invite you who love him and know him the best to honor him by taking his very best qualities and emulating them in your own life. I feel confident in saying that a man can receive no greater tribute than this.

In the few short minutes I have I would like to share with you what I have learned from this good man during the short association I had with him. Brother Petersen was truly one of the heroes of World War 2. For those that had the privilege, I think we can all agree that it was an awe inspiring experience to listen to him describe the events of his life during the war. As we lose the amazing men and women from his generation, "The Greatest Generation" we can't help but feel that we have lost some of the noblest Son's and Daughter's that our Father in Heaven has had to offer the world.

It has been said that the Gospel of Jesus Christ makes bad men good, and good men better. As we as a bishopric visited with brother Petersen and heard him tell us the story of his life, we couldn't help but recognize the hand of the Lord in this good man's life. In his youth he told us he was not fully engaged with the gospel, but that even so he felt the Lord protected his life during the events of World War 2. After the war it was clear that the Lord patiently waited and worked on him as he struggled through the issues and concerns that he had. When he finally decided to engage with the Lord, he held nothing back. He was eventually sealed to his sweetheart Ione, and faithfully served in the Church in many different callings over the years, including the calling of a Bishop. He was an inspiration to all of us in the Kaysville 11th ward. When we last visited him as a bishopric, he bore a fervent testimony of the Savior and of His

church. He even offered to provide financial help to those that might be in need in our ward. Brother Peterson was a good loving man committed to serving his Savior and those around him. The Stake President visited him last week and later told me: "What a wonderful and loving man! Thank you for the information so I could visit him. I am humbled by his attitude and his faithfulness. Please pass on to his family my appreciation for his spirit and love. As I left his room I couldn't help but want to be a better person."

What is it that caused what started out as a good, but uncommitted, young man to become such a faithful, loving, and powerful force in the life of his family, the church, and his neighbors? I testify that it was the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the Savior's atonement. The Lord's influence caused him to become a powerful and true High Priest, and a loving and faithful disciple. The Lord never gave up on brother Petersen because He knew the amazing man that he could eventually become. And of course, the beautiful thing about our Heavenly Father's plan of salvation is that the story does not end here. Brother Petersen will continue to learn from and serve the Lord on the other side of the veil. But now he will be able to do it once again at the side of his beloved one.

As I have pondered the life of brother Petersen, it has once again confirmed to me the power of the love that God has for his children. The apostle Paul wrote of this love when he said:

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

The Lord feels the same way about you and me, as he does about Bob Petersen. He knows what potential each of us has and is patiently cheering us on and waiting for us to step aside and allow Him to work His miracle in our lives. If we let him, His love will eventually transform us into the beings of light and love that our Heavenly Father designed us to be.

Brothers and sisters, if there is only one lesson that you learn from the life of Bob Peterson, let it be that he loved his Savior enough to allow Him to shape and mold him throughout his life. May it be so with us.

I testify that our Savior Lives. He is the light and life of the world. I love Him with all my heart. Because of Him and His resurrection, we know that the grave has no victory and that death has no sting. I testify that because of Him we can have confidence that our sorrowful partings now will be followed by joyful reunions in the future.

I testify of these things in his holy name, Jesus Christ. Amen