

TEXT: Isaiah 54:10

THEME: GOD'S LOVE CANNOT BE SHAKEN

Dear Family and Friends of Our Dear Departed Brother, Gerald,

Gerald was baptized here at Trinity in 1929, in the old church on Broadway, of course, and then fourteen years later, in 1943, he publicly proclaimed his saving faith through the rite of Confirmation. In accordance with Lutheran tradition, Pastor Emil Kasischke assigned a Bible passage to Gerald, his confirmation verse, a verse to give Gerald comfort and confidence throughout his life. I would like to share that verse with you now, Isaiah 54:10. **“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.**

In this verse, the Lord underscores his love with a comparison. The most permanent and enduring things we know on earth are mountains. They remain from generation to generation. Mount Everest may have a different name today than it did in the days of Isaiah, but it has remained the same mountain down to our day. But God says that even if such a mountain, or any mountain, could be shaken and removed, God's love cannot be shaken. It is a deep, permanent love—a love **“for you,”** God says. His people are the objects of his love and compassion. Gerald was made a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior—faith worked in his heart through his Baptism when he was only a few days old. Gerald publicly confessed that saving faith at his Confirmation. And week after week throughout his life, he publicly confessed that saving faith with us, his brothers and sisters in the faith, right here at church every time he spoke the words of the Apostles' or Nicene Creed. And so Gerald, at age 83, had a good life because he knew God's love for him, God's deep, permanent love for him. From the love of God flowed Gerald's comfort, peace, and confidence throughout his life. From the love of God flows our comfort, our peace, and our confidence, even on this day when we mourn our loss.

We certainly will miss Gerald, or Ger, or Crow, as he was known to some of his buddies. Not only was he a loving husband and father, and a faithful church member, he was a man who truly loved life and enjoyed what God had given him. His first job was cutting ice on the Saginaw River, hauling it with horses, for ice boxes. Consider the advances made just in Gerald's lifetime! He served our country in the Navy. He worked on the railroad, at Jenison Hardware, and finally the Chevrolet Plant as a pipe-fitter. He built his own house, sometimes with permits. He loved wood-working and chopping wood and was sometimes more interested in the trees than his hunting. He loved flowers, especially his red geraniums that he kept for years and always planted in the same places. And he loved to fish, but because of some hearing problems, whenever Gerald and John Guettler discussed ice-fishing, everybody in the entryway of church knew where the fish were biting. And Gerald didn't slow down much. He rode the Magnum Roller Coaster at Cedar Point when he was 80!

You see, until the last few weeks of his life, Gerald had never been seriously ill, never had an operation, never been hospitalized, never even had the flu. When you think about it, that is amazing in and of itself! Yes, the last few weeks were difficult, but even in that we

see God's grace, because knowing the end was near, it gave family and friends an opportunity to say good-bye and see you soon in heaven.

At Gerald's Baptism, God entered into a covenant, a contract, with Gerald. It was not a two-way contract like our human contracts. Our contracts state that if party A does something, then Party B will do something. God's contract with Gerald and us is completely one-sided. God does everything and we get the benefits. God fulfilled the requirements of his one-sided contract with us by sending his Son, Jesus, to suffer and die to pay for our sins. Because of the Lord Jesus—not because of anything we have done—we have peace with God. The peace Jesus has established between God and us sinners, including Gerald, remains sure and certain. God will not change his mind. All those, including Gerald, who trust in God and what he has done to redeem humanity are covered in the contract, or covenant, of peace. Nothing in all eternity will change that covenant, because nothing can change the deep compassion God has for his people, for Gerald. All believers of all time are included. You and I are too.

Pastor Kasischke chose one of the most comforting and beautiful passages in all of Scripture for Gerald to use throughout his life. Now that God has taken Gerald home to heaven, let that passage comfort you, too. **“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.** The Lord had compassion on Gerald and shortened his time of suffering on this earth and took him home to heaven. We find comfort in that same compassionate love of our Savior-God and look forward to the day of resurrection and spending eternity with Jesus and Gerald. Amen.