

## **Saying Goodbye**

A Sermon by Rich Holmes on Romans 8:31-39

Delivered on October 11, 2020

Well, I know that preachers talk too much, and so you will be relieved to know that I don't have much to say today, but in the immortal words of Bob Hope, thanks for the memories. As I leave all of you, I carry so many good memories with me—the time I had my two surgeries back to back in a matter of a few months and so many of you brought me so many delicious meals—the times when Fred Worrell would take me out to lunch and we had all these deep theological and philosophical conversations—the time when I was first here and I drove back from Hartville and got so lost I ended up in Brimfield—the time when Jeff Weltman first took me kayaking and I saw all the purple martins. There was the time all of you came to my surprise party and I was completely surprised. I didn't have a clue—the times we went up to Jerry and Susan Hill's house on the fingerlakes in upstate New York including the time when I foolishly jumped in the lake with my sunglasses on my head and they floated to the bottom of the murky lake, now they're being worn by some trout—the time Chuck and Ginny West let us use their condo down in Hilton Head and we had the time of our lives. There were the times when Clare Van Atta tried to teach me how to knit, and she was very, very patient with me, I might add. There was the time we had our retreat at Camp Wakonda and we all tried to walk that labyrinth with our flashlights when it was pitch black and I mean pitch black outside. And then there were all the Hoover football games, the hot dog roasts, the trips out to the pumpkin patch, the spaghetti dinners, the weddings, the pig roasts at Jayne Kidder's house, more memories than you can count. Thanks for the memories.

So I leave you all with a quote from Bob Hope, but I don't think my goodbye to you would be complete if I didn't also leave you with the Beatles. And what did the Beatles say? All you need is love. As I leave you, my prayer is that I gave you all as much love as you gave to me. Whether under my tenure you learned something new and interesting about the bible or you thought my preaching was sound or unsound, or whether you thought I was a good administrator or a poor one. All of that, in time, will be forgotten, and all that will be left I think is whether I gave as much love as I got. I hope I did. I hope I lived worthily of the love you gave to me.

And finally, there is this. Bobby McFerrin. Don't worry, be happy. God will take care of Calvary and God will take care of Northminster. I promise he will. God has seen both of these churches through much bigger things than the departure of any one pastor and God will see you through my departure too. Paul wrote the words I read to you today from Romans about nothing separating us from the love of God, and the churches in Paul's time went through much worse than anything we've gone through, including a pandemic. And the churches in those days didn't just survive, they flourished, and so will you. Mark my words. Come out to New Mexico in three years and tell me I was wrong. You won't because I know God will take care of you.

Thanks for the memories, all you need is love and don't worry, be happy. I think there is much wisdom in the music of our times, and that is what I give back to you for all you've given to me.