

A Sermon on the Life and Death of Gypsy

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for March 21st, 2021 (and beyond)

EULOGY: Gypsy was a great dog who lived a very long and happy life. Her life spanned from October, 2010 to March 2nd, 2021. According to PetMD.com, German Shepherds have a life expectancy of 10 years and if a hybrid of larger breeds (she was a German Shepherd hybrid) that average is 8 years. (Source: https://www.petmd.com/dog/wellness/evr_dg_how_long_do_dogs_live) The source linked in the parenthetical provides life expectancy on multiple breeds. She had many toys. Her favorite toy was the tennis ball, which was replaced when needed. Gypsy's favorite game was "Keep Away" and she liked to fake loved ones out by bringing a toy to you and then when you reach for it she pretty much said "sike" with body language and would run around with it in some imagined victory which I found amusing and enjoyed because she enjoyed it so much. She did eat premium dry kibble daily. But, regularly I prepared fresh food for her including steak and chicken. When I did so she would take the dish it was served in after she was finished eating and do what I call "the dish parade" which was similar to what she did during "Keep Away" but clearly pleased with what was for dinner and not just playing. She enjoyed such meals so much sometimes she'd take her dish to the kitchen and leave it by the entry requesting more. On rare occasion we did share eggs with her, what some call "table scraps". And, that led to the most putrid smelling farts. She slept in my bedroom with me and one night after she'd eaten eggs the smell was so bad it actually woke me up. It led me to wonder if they bottled such things for smelling salts to revive those who faint. I saved her life at least twice with what I call "doggy Heimlich" which is just the Heimlich Maneuver performed on dogs when needed. I did learn that when volunteering at animal sanctuaries. The reason she needed it on two separate occasions was the dry kibble mixed with hearing, sensing, or seeing a passerby or car and barking while eating. So, I performed the Heimlich Maneuver and dry kibble sprayed as projectiles on the two occasions that was necessary. I did tell her not to eat and bark at the same time and hoped she learned from experience and believe she did. She also had fun in the snow and to see videos of her you can visit <https://youtu.be/FZHULYhYn1Q> and <https://youtu.be/tVAuJ3L1CEs>. You may wish to learn the Heimlich Maneuver and/or Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) in the event a loved one needs immediate assistance of that nature. For how to perform both on dogs, visit <https://www.bhg.com/pets/dogs/dog-safety/dog-cpr/>. And, the Red Cross offers classes on First Aid (including Heimlich Maneuver) and CPR for people and pets. I will always love Gypsy and believe the feeling is mutual.

THE FINAL DAYS OF GYPSY:

Wednesday, February 24th, 2021: She seemed fine. She was aging and a little slower than when a puppy. But, she was eating, clear eyes, playful, and no sign of need for emergency care.

Thursday, February 25th, 2021: She seemed to be having some joint pain but that seemed to come and go for a while over the last two years. So, we gave her over-the-counter joint support. She didn't seem to have an appetite. I later learned this can be a sign of a

serious medical emergency though often it is nothing to worry about if it doesn't last more than 24 hours. She did eat a little chicken that night but didn't finish it.

Friday, February 26th, 2021: She was having a much harder time walking than usual. It was a marked change. We have stairs leading up to our front door and she really just sat down when we got to the bottom stair on the way back to the house. That was very unusual and the first time it was ever an issue. She struggled to get up again and managed to get back up the stairs. She seemed to have no appetite again, but, was drinking water.

Saturday, February 27th, 2021: She could still walk, but, given the struggle on Friday, we bought Wee Wee Pads so she could relieve herself in the house if needed. And, we gave her dog aspirin and joint support. She urinated but did not defecate. The last time she defecated was Friday. She had also begun vomiting a bit. She vomited 3 times throughout the last days.

Sunday, February 28th, 2021: Gypsy could no longer walk. Her hind legs wouldn't lift. She could sit up with her front legs and not walk at all. We told her it was okay and not to worry about any accidents. She didn't have one. That's how awesome she handled it.

Monday, March 1st, 2021: I was looking to get her medical attention immediately and understood euthanasia might be necessary. I called and e-mailed but there were no appointments open. One of the vets gave me her sympathies after I described the symptoms and she said Gypsy needed immediate euthanasia. She had cancer which weakened the immune system and had septicemia which if not addressed immediately when symptoms start results in loss of tissue, limbs, coma, and death usually within 5 days from onset of first symptoms. The last vet to reply got back to me after 10pm on Monday but couldn't help.

Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021: Gypsy had been sleeping in the living room since Saturday night though had been awake and somewhat interactive during waking hours. I walked out and she was dead, stiff, cold, and statuesque. So, I put her corpse in a sleeping bag I used as a body bag and zipped it up while waiting for my Mom to get up so we could put her in the car because neither of us could lift her without help. I gently dragged her front half onto the spread out sleeping bag and then the back half. Gypsy's body was taken to the nearest veterinary hospital for cremation.

I believe even if we'd gotten to a vet in time to prolong her life, she would have lost maybe one or both hind legs, experienced more pain than joy for the remainder of her life even if extended by medical support, and be traumatized by all of it while not getting the joy of recovery because of her already being in the arguable death window of her lifecycle expectancy. So, knowing what I know about what she had and the fact model Lauren Wasser lost both legs due to Toxic Shock Syndrome (similar to septicemia with same cause, but slightly different behavior of the bacteria, see: <https://www.childrens.com/specialties-services/conditions/septic-and-toxic-shock#:~:text=Septic%20shock%20and%20toxic%20shock,exotoxins%20of%20the%20>

[bacteria%20themselves](https://www.today.com/health/lauren-wasser-loses-second-leg-toxic-shock-syndrome-t121266)). (Source on Wasser: <https://www.today.com/health/lauren-wasser-loses-second-leg-toxic-shock-syndrome-t121266>) 270,000 human beings die of septicemia in the US each year. Source: <https://www.nigms.nih.gov/education/fact-sheets/Pages/sepsis.aspx#:~:text=Each%20year%2C%20at%20least%201.7,awareness%20and%20tracking%20of%20sepsis>. It is the 9th leading disease-caused death in humans in the US.

And, this is how I objectively and intellectually make peace with the fact that Gypsy has died. Writing this out does help emotionally as well. But, she and I were very close and I miss her and will love her forever. I did everything I could to make her life enjoyable and as comfortable as possible. 10+ years of everything being pretty great and then a few days of discomfort and efforts to alleviate that, where death was ultimately merciful in context, seems like a better deal or at least as good a deal as 270,000 American humans get each year. Knowing all of the above does make grieving easier. But, I understand how ignorance leads to guessing and hoping which can be literally wasting time you do not have in a medical emergency you hoped wasn't really one when symptoms first presented. The truth is the vets said it would be weeks on their availability and no one qualified to provide the medical services needed could help in time.

To see videos of her you can visit <https://youtu.be/FZHULYhYn1Q> and <https://youtu.be/tVAuJ3L1CEs>. As long as I keep the YouTube Channel or YouTube allows me to keep it, Gypsy will be immortalized and available to those with internet access and I can visit her anytime for a walk or some fun in the snow.

Meditative Questions:

Did this sermon and the videos help you with grief management?

Did it help you appreciate the internet and information accessibility more?

Do you feel inspired to learn more about first aid, CPR, and Heimlich Maneuver?

Are you now going to rush to the hospital every time you lose your appetite in case it is the first symptom of septicemia or are you going to hope your appetite returns in a day or two? You assume the risk either way. One of the leading ways people get septicemia is recent hospitalization. Source: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/septicemia>

Life involves risk and something about death and taxes being guaranteed. The rest is a judgment call and you either trust your own judgment or you don't. If your judgment in an emergency situation is to ignore all available facts and assistance, I don't trust it but recognize you are free to do so in a free country.

And, you may consider this a preview for the Easter sermon, which is part of a larger sermon that will be delivered Easter Sunday.

I believe being a Christian means not being a hypocrite and following the Golden Rule to do unto others as you'd have others do unto you. In other words, I believe being a Christian means doing as Jesus did which is to arguably learn from his own mistakes. I do not believe Jesus died and was then reanimated like a zombie after being buried in a Pet Sematary of some sort for 3 days. I believe Jesus never died or didn't die at all but was merely presumed dead, his loved ones held a showing and wake at the cave, and he came to/regained consciousness after suffering unconsciousness as a result of dehydration, injuries, needing to heal, and sleep deprivation. I believe the same is true of Lazarus. See, medical science has advanced a lot since then and now most people who are declared dead are actually dead and not just presumed dead.

Here is a quote from attorney Matthew R. Osborne from his site at <https://www.mrosbornelaw.com/what-to-do-if-you-are-wrongfully-declared-dead/> :

"It may seem strange to imagine what life must be like as a living person who is presumed to be dead by the US Government. Unfortunately, this happens more often than you might think, and for the people whose lives are impacted by such mistakes, the resulting turmoil can be incredibly stressful.

Laws and regulations that govern the reconciliation of living or dead status of an individual vary from country to country. Here in the United States, it can be especially difficult to navigate a wrongful 'dead' status even after the error is corrected.

For example, having been declared dead and then restored to 'living' by legal means can be viewed as a red flag for employers, lenders, or landlords. They might think the person attempted a kind of financial scam, and as such, they can be denied credit, loans, or other consumer services.

Thankfully, there are some actions you can take if you are wrongfully declared dead. In this article, the legal team at Matthew R. Osborne, PC are exploring this topic and offering some tips to consider if a wrongful 'dead' attribution is ever applied to you or someone you love."

I believe Jesus was wrongfully declared dead and that the law exists and applies to everyone equally, both rights and responsibilities. So, if you wouldn't want someone who harmed you to delude themselves by believing they were forgiven as a result of the death of a righteous son of God and would rather they take responsibility for the harm caused and try to make amends or at least respect your wishes in terms of fraternizing and penalties at law for said harm, don't be a hypocrite and take responsibility. Hold others as responsible for their actions as you wish to be held responsible for your own where everyone has the same rights and legally recognized defenses at law.

That being said, Gypsy did die and has been cremated. I'm certain of her death because I was there by her side as she died and rigor mortis had set in before she was taken to the nonhuman animal morgue and then to the crematorium. It can take 10 minutes-3 hours for rigor mortis to set in and can last up to 72 hours in dogs.

Jesus lives.

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>