

For the Journey - Aug. 27/26 - Rev. Dave Crawford



"God has been the anchor of my life — through the highs, the heartaches, the spotlight, and the silence. I wouldn't be who I am without Him."

"I sing my truth. And part of that truth is God. Take it or leave it, but I'm not changing."

"For as long as I'm here, I want to do good. I want to glorify God and lift up other people."

Over the course of my years in ministry I suppose I've written hundreds of sermons. It's almost beyond comprehension to hear that in her lengthy, impressive career, Dolly Parton wrote thousands of songs. She was so good at it, so gifted, that other artists approached her to write for them. Some of those famous artist colleagues had big hits with her songs. Beyond the immense musical talent she possessed, Parton was by all accounts a person of integrity, genuine warmth, and faith.

The stories coming out now after her passing are pretty much united and unsurprising - she loved life, loved people, loved her family, and loved God. She lived her kindness openly and consistently, publicly and privately, we imagine. In a year of notable celebrity passings and the wider impact felt, Dolly's is right up there at the top. A Facebook friend of mine, a classically-trained pianist and atheist, offered these comments yesterday: *"Maybe Dolly can be a new faith system. I mean, she embodied all that was good. The next time I'm asked if I'm religious, I'll say, 'Sure, I'm into Dolly Partonism.'"*

While giving his "Sermon on the Mount", Jesus said, *"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets... You will know others by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."* (Matthew 7:12, 16-18).

You will know them by their fruits. Clearly Dolly Parton was a person whose goodness was obvious for all to see. We knew her by her fruits!

May she rest in peace.

Thanks be to God!