

Zeisset Reunion Memorial Service Sunday, July 29, 2012
Leonardville United Methodist Cemetery

Exodus 20:12 (NRSV)

Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

The words of scripture are familiar, but how do we understand their meaning? We hear words spoken to an ancient people in a far away place. But words do not always have the same meaning from one time and place to another. We hear words first recorded in Hebrew, translated into Greek and Latin, translated from Latin or from Hebrew and Greek into English. But words do not always have the same meaning from one language to another or from one time in the history of a language to another. We hear words revised again and again to try to capture their meaning from other times and places and to try to capture their meaning for us in our time and place.

Honor your father and your mother. One way to understand these words is to say, Remember your ancestors. Remember those who came before you. Remember your teachers and mentors. Remember the leaders who made your country the place it is. Remember the people of faith who have passed on the faith to you. Remember your parents and grandparents and great-grandparents. Remember the ancestors who were in Germany: Abraham and Elizabeth Landes Zeisset, Jakob and Magdalena Plaetscher Zeisset, Johannes and Christina Baer Zeisset, Jakob and Johanna Epp Zeisset, Jakob Friedrich and Margarethe Mueller Zeisset. Remember the siblings who immigrated to Leonardville, Kansas: Louise and Bertha and Elizabeth (Lizzie) and Jacob and Barbara (or Bettie, as the family knew her) and Henry Zeisset. Remember all those who have been part of making you the person you are.

That your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. In ancient times these words were not meant for individual people so much as for the family or community. One way to understand these words is to say, Keep alive the story of your heritage throughout the generations. Let your heritage be remembered. Let your legacy be to pass on the story of your heritage to the next generations. Your days are as long as the time your story is remembered.

We gather in this cemetery where so many of our ancestors are buried to remember their stories. We gather to remember what they have passed on to us. We gather to remember our heritage. We gather to remember that our Zeisset heritage is also our legacy for us to pass on to those who come after us. We honor our fathers and mothers when we remember.

[The memorial time concluded with Alex Hoffman playing “Amazing Grace” on the trombone, and the group repeating the Lord’s Prayer.]