

ONE BREATH

By Rev. Will Nelken

Presented at Trinity Community Church, San Rafael, California, on Sunday, April 21, 2019

On average, a person at rest takes about 16 breaths per minute. This means we breathe about nearly 1,000 breaths an hour, just over 23,000 breaths a day, almost 8.5 million breaths in a year. Unless we get a lot of exercise. The person who lives to 80 will take about 672,768,000 breaths in a lifetime. Two-thirds of a billion!

Out of so many breaths, one single breath doesn't seem so significant. Unless it's that first breath, that signals the lively birth of your child.

You see, when God first formed a human being, He formed him from the dust of the ground. And there he lay, a marvelous creation of God. But it wasn't until God breathed His own breath into the man that he became a "living soul."

One single breath doesn't seem so significant, unless it's the one you cannot take because a large piece of food has lodged in your throat, choking your windpipe. That happened to my brother, when he was visiting. I was able to dislodge it for him, and he still credits me with saving his life.

One single breath doesn't seem so significant, unless it's the final breath of your aged parent. My father-in-law shared his final year in our home, and I had the privilege of holding him in my arms when he drew his last breath. It was a transcendent moment I will never forget.

One breath.

Last Friday evening, a dozen Marin churches gathered (as a standing-room-only crowd) to worship the Savior who had given His life for us on a cross. We worshiped and we prayed and we shared in the Table of the Lord (communion). The worship team introduced a song I had not heard, a new lyric with an old title: All Hail King Jesus.

The first part says:

There on a cross they made for sinners

For every curse His blood atoned

One final breath and it was finished

But not the end we could have known

For the earth began to shake

And the veil was torn

What sacrifice was made

As the heavens roared