

Light and Life

Not Sorrowing As Others

I worked in a funeral home as a summer job for seven years. Over that time, I witnessed a lot of different kinds of funerals.

I cleaned up whiskey bottles and cigarette cartons after the funerals of those who embodied the philosophy, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (I Cor. 15:32). I listened to memories about those who made it their life’s goal to create social reform, while failing to realize that “keeping the commandments of God is what matters” (I Cor. 7:19).

Comments were made on the longevity of an elderly person’s life – without understanding that “all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever” (I Pe. 1:24-25). I observed the tragedy of parents laying an innocent child to rest who did not share the comfort of David’s hope in the resurrection (II Sam. 12:23).

Overwhelmingly, most of the funerals I witnessed were for those who died with a false hope. It seemed that many had been “deceived by empty words” (Ep. 5:6), “cheated through philosophy and empty deceit” (Col. 2:8), and led astray by “foolish men” to believe a “different gospel” (Jas. 2:20; Gal. 1:6).

Nothing is more tragic than a funeral of one who has no hope. How thankful, then, we must be when a Christian dies and we do not “sorrow as others” (I Th. 4:13)! Rather, we rejoice as those who understand that “to depart and be with Christ” is far better than to “live on in the flesh” (Php. 1:21-23).

When Christians die, it is a sad thing for those of us who remain. But it is cause for rejoicing when we remember that those who are His will be together with Him forever (I Th. 4:17)! Our sorrow is temporary. Our joy shall be eternal!

- Sam Bunyard

(from pg 1) some insight in 1 Corinthians 15 when revealing what will take place when the last trumpet sounds: “In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye... the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.”

In the early morning hours of February 6, 2025, my dad’s spirit left his tent and made a journey to be with his Lord. There were no chariots of fire, no horses of fire, and certainly no whirlwind. His coat did not fall from the sky. But he was at peace because he was a child of God and God knows him! My dad was no Paul or Elijah. God chose to use my dad during his time on this earth in a different way. But like Paul and Elijah, Dad had confidence in his God and trusted Him. He did his part to prepare his sons for the continued work in the kingdom. He instilled in us the importance of putting God first no matter what. Even if that meant we missed baseball games or practices to worship with the saints. I think back on all the times we left a baseball game early, or arrived late, or not at all, because of a gospel meeting. I have no idea what was preached on those occasions, but I know where I was! I was with the saints worshiping God, not on the diamond – and that made a huge impact! My dad saw to it that we attended training sessions designed to teach kids how to lead singing, prayers, read scriptures and give talks. He encouraged us, taught us, corrected us and loved us! My dad was a soldier in the Lord’s army. By his example he prepared three boys to be soldiers in the same victorious army. Because dad was a child of God, when the moment came, he, too, could confidently say, “O death, where is your sting? ...thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

Losing a loved one is difficult. God knows – and provides comfort. He did for Elisha. He did for Timothy. He will for us. In Habakkuk 3:17-19, the prophet reminds us that no matter what happens in this life, whether it be because of time and chance, or by Satan’s cruelty, or even the passing of a loved one, we can rejoice in the God of our salvation! What an amazing God!

Lord, thank You for the physical life You gave to my dad, for his example, his conviction, and his love. Lord, thank You so much more for the eternal life You provide to Your children, for the hope You give, and for the comfort this hope provides! Even in times of sadness and loss, Your children find great comfort and joy in knowing that heaven awaits! Help us draw strength from the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us – and help us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

– Lucas Griggs, on the death of his father, Owen

ASSEMBLY TIMES

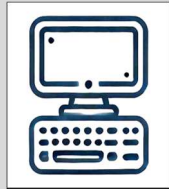
Sunday

Morning Bible Class 9:30
Morning Assembly 10:30
Evening Assembly 5:00

Wednesday

Evening Bible Class 6:30

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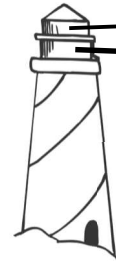
A man with no
purpose is easily
distracted by pleasure.

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GW Walsh

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DOWNTOWN GOSPEL BEACON

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A WHIRLWIND INTO HEAVEN

“And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Ki 2:11). In the text preceding this statement, Elijah knew that God was about to take him, yet he continued to go about the tasks God had for him and saw what he could do for his successor.

Paul wrote in 2 Ti 4:6-8, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” Paul knew the end was near and had confidence in his God! Paul used his final epistle to encourage Timothy to continue to “preach the word”!

Elijah and Paul knew they were simply sojourners on this earth. They trusted in God’s promise of something better and eternal. And when their end drew near, they were at peace and ready to go home. Yet, understanding there was more work to be done in the kingdom, they prepared their successors!

In Elijah’s departure, I wonder how awesome that ride must have been for him – to be taken up to heaven in such a powerful manner! God is mostly silent on how this transition from mortality to immortality occurs. Paul gives pg 3 >

FAMILY NEWS

PRAYER LIST –

Preachers we support: Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Canada, Mexico, Peru, & U.S.

Sick: KFletcher, Swims, JMarshall, RStarr, MiBader, JTerrell, ACorder

Shut-ins: BPennington, SCole, SWiese, VCarter, KHeilighenthal, AHopper

Military: Kyler Sullins, Sean Potter

OUR SYMPATHY – We extend our sympathy to the family of Owen Griggs who recently passed away. Remember the family in your prayers – & deeds.

WELCOME! – We welcome Evan Williams as the newest member of our Downtown family! Do all you can to make him feel at home!