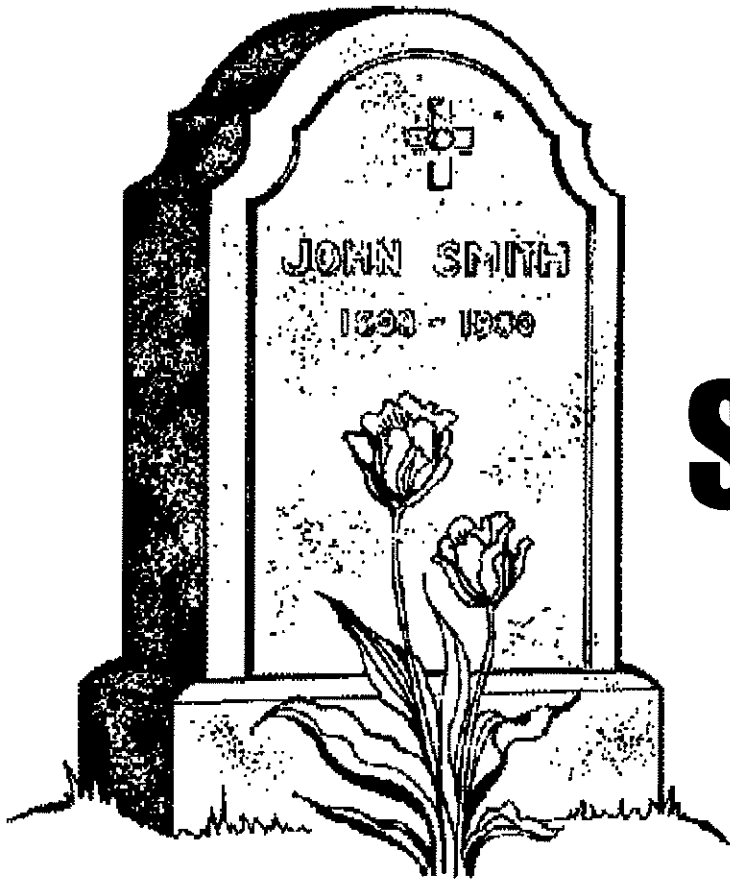




FUNERAL SERMONS

**ASIA PACIFIC EDUCATION OFFICE
CHURCH MINISTRIES DIVISION**



FUNERAL SERMONS

By
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**CHURCH MINISTRIES DIVISION
ASIA PACIFIC EDUCATION OFFICE**

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INTRODUCTION

I hope that these “*sermonettes*” may prove to be blessing. Messages 1 through 4 could be used for a funeral service. Messages 5 through 11 is given as if the talk were being delivered at the funeral of some particular person.

Ministers can change the thought to fit the occasion. If you find some truths repeated in these messages, it is because it seemed that these repeated truths were appropriate for that particular service.

I trust that these simple messages will help you to bring comfort to the bereaved, glory to God, and souls to the Savior.

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1. THE PATHWAY OF LIGHT

“The pathway of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Proverbs 4:18)

This is a tender hour, but in no wise an hour of tragedy.

There is something utterly appropriate about the going of this, our brother in Christ, who has lived a long, happy, and useful life.

He who has put so much of goodness, kindness, love, and service for others and loyalty to God.

This is highly appropriate when such a person goes home, to the Home toward which he has traveled for over 50 years.

This is not a time of darkness, but rather a time of light.

It is not an hour in which to exaggerate grief, but rather an hour in which to comprehend more fully, the measure of our gratitude to God for this life that was and is.

I shall not talk of death, but rather of life eternal.

The harvest of the faith and life of our beloved brother beautifies the landscape for you and for all of us.

He was a consecrated Christian husband and father.

The tenderness of his love for his dear wife and children - his interest in behalf of others in all the ways of God.

All these concerns **are a commentary** upon his graciousness and goodness.

He was always an inspiration to his Pastor and church members who found his confidence in God a benediction and a blessing.

Today we are on holy ground for we pause near Heaven’s gate through which our beloved brother has just passed into the garden of eternal life.

Particularly appropriate to this occasion are the words of Scripture, *“But the pathway of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”*

This promise has back of it the authority of God, the affirmation of Christ Jesus whose life was a demonstration of its validity, and witness of the saints of all generations.

All Scripture and all Christian experience is saturated with this assurance.

He who faces the light walks in a lighted pathway.

Only those who turn their backs to the source of light stumble amid their own shadows.

Long ago, our beloved brother turned his face, his heart, his whole life toward God and set his face upon the *“pathway of the just.”*

*He gripped and held the hand of God,
The hand that led and blest.
And let that peace whose storm is calm,
Hold kingship in his breast.*

The longer he walked on this pathway, the brighter the light became, for he was ever moving toward the source of light.

In his experience, as in the experience of every believer of Christ, evening was not a forerunner of darkness. But rather what some have mistaken for the colors of sunset were for him the beautiful anticipations of eternal dawn.

How truly was his faith revealed in the simple verse by Bishop William Alfred Ouayle:

*Tomorrow I shall die
I feel the coming of my grave
Hereafter I shall fly,
On wings of morning,
Death's cold wave
Afrights me not at all;
I schooled me at the school of Christ,
And when in death I fall,
I answer to a holy tryst.*

Such faith turns evening skies into the glow of morning's eternal dawn.

He knew he was in God's keeping and that the end of his earthly life would only release him from all earthly limitations to the limitless life beyond.

*Think of stepping on shore and finding it heaven,
Of taking hold of a hand and finding it God's,
Of breathing a new air and finding it celestial air,
Of feeling invigorated and finding it immortality,
Of passing from storm and stress to a perfect calm,
Of waking and finding it HOME!*

Such can be your faith and this is your comfort

Your heritage is a priceless one which all the uncertainties of life cannot possibly take away from you.

Yours is the memory of a great man of God.

His felt presence will ever be an inspiration and a challenge.

He waits beyond as he so often waited for you here.

And the way to him has been illuminated by his faith and love, for ***“the pathway of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”***

2. THE GIFT, THE GRIEF, THE GLORY

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job 1:21).

We are gathered to pay tribute to a departed loved one and neighboring friend.

In the perplexity of this decision, we can find our answers, comforts, and instructions only in the Word of God.

Cold and meaningless are the philosophies of men today. Made weak by the breaking burden of grief, we need the strength of eternal wisdom.

In such a dilemma, even worse, Job said, *“The Lord gave, And the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”*

It is easy to go part way with Job in this statement, but if in his deep and multiplied sorrow he could bless God, we would do well to examine what he had that we need today.

“The Lord gave”

God’s first gift is the gift of life.

We are thinking of life today and so we are quick to agree that all life is a gift of God.

All the facts of life and the reality of living is a reminder of the gracious gift of our loving God.

We are not the evolvement of matter nor the accident of nature.

We are created beings of God. What is Job saying God has given? This physical life we so enjoy and yearn to hold is a gift of God.

God’s second gift is the gift of happiness. We recall many hours of happiness with our departed loved one and friend.

The ability to do the things that make for happiness and the capacity to enjoy it is a function of the inner man, which means that this, too, **is a gift of God.**

Happiness adds a quality to life. Happiness helps to make others better. Happy people are the best loved and most sought people.

The third gift of God we think about in this memorial service is **God’s gift of salvation.** *“Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”* (2 Corinthians 9:15)

Of what value is life if there is no salvation? Could there possibly be happiness without salvation?

We know God's gift of salvation through His Son as the Savior of the world is what makes life worthwhile and that which gives us such joy.

Salvation is God's gift to dry our tears. To lift the burden of death from our hearts, and to comfort all who mourn.

Fret not, there is hope!

“The Lord taketh away.”

Hardly have we, like Job, listed the gifts of God than we remember that all these things seem vain today.

God has taken away. There have been many losses and deep sorrow in life, but now has come the greatest loss and bitterest grief.

The Lord has taken a loved one and a home has been broken.

God has taken a life. We believe that He created life and we must confess that he has a right to do with life as is well pleasing to Him.

That which he let loose for a while to function and be called life He has called home for another and more glorious purpose.

It, therefore, naturally follows that ***God has taken back the second of His gifts, happiness.*** We feel with Robert Burns:

***But pleasures are like poppies spread;
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls, in the river,
A moment white then melts away forever.
For there is no happiness in death.
There are only tears and troubled hearts
and puzzled thoughts.***

We wonder if God has forgotten and forsaken us. Like babes we cry and ask God if He does not know how dearly we love the flesh and all the things attached to it.

Then we recall His third gift which he has never removed and which none can take away from us.

As we remember the gift of salvation, hope shines through the gloom in the valley of the shadow of death.

God has taken a life. God has given tears, but God has never forgotten us. In Christ Jesus we have a salvation sure and steadfast, eternal and blessed.

Therefore, we join Job and says, ***“Blessed be the name of the Lord.*** If physical life is taken, eternal life is just beginning.

If joy gives way in this life, we know there are no tears, no grief, no weeping, no heartache in heaven.

Since all life is in the hand of God, eternal life must be so much better. Real happiness is not of the earth, but of heaven.

Our tears wash away the veil of grief and doubt, and by faith, we see a better life, a certain way, a sure hope.

Faith will overcome grief. True resignation to God will bring assurance and peace.

God, with His supreme will, determined our coming into this world and our leaving.

We have nothing to do with the choice of coming, but we may exit either side the stage of life.

Life was not ours to choose. Eternal life, is ours to have or not to have.

Because we are of the flesh, we naturally grieve and sorrow this day. Let us now show the confidence of our faith by our sincere testimony as we say:

Blessed be the hand that gives, still blessed when it takes.

3. WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE IN HEAVEN

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told I go to prepare a place for you.” (John 14:2)

I am always thrilled when I hear someone sing *“The Holy City”* - especially the last portion:

*And once again the scene was changed,
New earth there seemed to be,
I saw the Holy City beside the tideless sea,
The light of God was on its streets,
The gates were opened wide,
And all who would might enter,
And no one was denied.*

*No need of moon or stars by night
Or sun to rule by day,
It was the new Jerusalem
That would not pass away;
Jerusalem, Jerusalem!
Sing for the night is o’er!
Hosanna in the highest,
Hosanna forever more!*

I wish the Bible told us more about our eternal home. It gives us just the briefest of glimpses of that magnificent city.

BUT

This thoroughly tests our spiritual motivation. Why do we serve Jesus? Why do we walk with the redeemed? Is our goal a mansion on some celestial cliff? Are we only after crowns?

Our motivation in serving Christ is not just to get to heaven. Oh, that will be wonderful but heaven is a secondary reason for loving Jesus.

If there were no heaven, no mansions, no crowns, and no eternity with Him, I would still want to be a Christian.

Christ is the center of my life

He takes a life that is torn to pieces and makes something very beautiful of it.

*Something beautiful, something good,
All my confusion He understood.
All I have to offer Him - brokenness and strife
But He makes something beautiful of my life.*

Jesus Himself is sufficient reason to be a Christian. No other motivation is needed. But in His great plan of redemption, he has included a place for us in His Father's house, where there are many mansions.

The apostle John was given a brief vision of the celestial city while he was a prisoner on Patmos.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Rev. 21:4)

NO TEARS

All the grief that causes tears will no longer exist. GONE, GONE, GONE!

NO DEATH

No more times of the bereaved standing beside open caskets. Death is such a waste. It is a part of the horrible curse of sin.

NO MORE SORROW- NO MORE PAIN

Nothing will be allowed in heaven to mar your life. All who corrupt, they, too, will have their place, but it will far removed from heaven. (Rev. 21:8)

HEAVEN is going to be quite a place. *“I go to prepare a place for you.”*

Every one of us needs to feel he has a place. Have you ever felt out of place - unwanted? In heaven you will be needed, wanted, enjoyed by others. You will feel at home there.

HEAVEN WILL BE A PERFECT PLACE - IT WILL BE PERMANENT

John saw the Christians gathered around the heavenly throne, praising God. Their voices sounded like a Niagara of sound. (Rev. 19:1-7)

WORSHIP will be one of our primary ministries in the Holy City. It is one of the reasons why we love to praise God right here and now.

Not only does it please God but it serves as a rehearsal for the main event.

SINGING IN HEAVEN

The Book of Revelation contains more songs than any other book in the Bible with the exceptions of the Psalms. There are 14 grand songs in Revelation.

Some are sung by angels but most of them are sung by the saints. Can you imagine millions of millions of people all singing together - voices blended in intricate harmony, accompanied by an orchestra of thousands times 10 thousands?

WE WILL HAVE OTHER MINISTRIES ALSO:

1. We will serve the Lord; doing His will and bidding throughout the universe.
2. We will have delegated authority. (Rev. 20)
3. We will have unlimited potential there.
4. The fellowship will be fabulous.

Paul wrote that we see through a glass darkly on this planet. But in heaven we shall continue to learn and grow.

And there will be eternal rest; which simply means there will be nothing in heaven to sap our strength, drain our energies, or diffuse our minds.

I don't understand it all but I know heaven will be a place of infinite blessedness, beyond all human understanding or comprehension.

I WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR ANYTHING

*“Their toils are passed, their work is done, and they are fully blessed
They fought the fight, the victory won, and entered into rest.*

*Then let our tears cease to flow, God has recalled His own,
But let our hearts in every word still say, “Thy will be done.”*

4. VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.” (Psalm 23:4)

In all Scripture there is no verse more familiar than this one. No Bible figure has made a more lasting impression in millions of cases these have been the last words uttered by dying saints.

See that valley now. It is dark and plunges downward. It has many ravenous beasts. But the child of God does not tarry there, because the Great shepherd went alone and now conducts all His flock to their Home. Thus the child of God passes into the sunlight of God.

This figure gives us some comforting thoughts about death. It is **not** a state, an enduring condition, or an abiding place. It is a passage through which we walk. The valley may be dark and lonely and infested with evil things; but we don't pitch our tent there; we pass through it to our rest. In death the spirit leaves the body and passes out, just as an artisan will leave the workshop at the evening hour, shutting blinds and doors, as he passes out to his home. The workshop is left deserted and still, but the voice of the artisan is to be heard in his home as he makes glad the wistful hearts that have waited for him.

In Damascus there is a long, dark, narrow lane ending in a tunnel. The traveler descends and passes through, but on the other side he emerges into the bright sunlit yard of a palace. This is an example of the believer's death. Dying, to the child of God, is being borne out of darkness into the glorious light and liberty of heavenly life.

Death is the gate to life. Our beloved who have known Christ are not dead. They are living. They have passed through death into the glorious presence of the King. Yet the valley is dark. The pain of this body often depresses the spirit and overcasts it with gloom. But, at the worst, death is only a shadow. A shadow is the exact counterpart of its substance, but it is harmless in itself. The shadow of a dog cannot bite, the shadow of a giant cannot kill, the shadow of death cannot destroy when we know God and He is our own personal Shepherd.

We pass through many a valley of shadow ere we reach even the valley. Every step has been measured for us, even as it has been trodden before is. God is testing us to see whether we can trust Him in the dark as well as in the light.

There is a good purpose in all these shadowed valleys. They test the quality of the soul. They reveal our weak places. They make us follow the Shepherd closely, lest we lose Him.

Listen to the courageous declaration of David: *“I will fear no evil.”* There is not fear in love. Perfect love casteth out fear. Nothing else can do it! Sorrow and dying make Christ's presence real. Have you noticed the change of pronoun? Hitherto the Psalmist has spoken of the Lord in the third person, but now he says, *“Thou—Thou—Thou art with me.”* In the green pastures it was enough to speak of *“He”* but now there is need for the closer, tender address. In this way the death-chambers become presence-chambers.

The darkness is sometimes too dense for us to be able to see Christ. But faith can always be sure that He is there, not because of the evidence or sense of feeling, but because He has said, **“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”** He cannot break His Word. He has not left us alone!

5. FOR A CHRISTIAN MAN

We are always to remember that our funeral services are not for the dead, but for the living. There is no word that we can say which can reach the ear of our friend. There is no music, however sweet, that can touch his heart.

And, although we would pay a tribute to him and his faithful Christian life, this service is primarily for those who are gathered here today out of love and respect for a good man.

The great question that comes to mind when one dies is this: *“Was he ready to go?”* We thank God that our friend settled this matter many years ago when he repented of his sins and trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

And since that time he has served Christ well, always being true and faithful to the Lord, to His church and to the highest and best things of life.

I. THE BIBLE SAYS MANY WONDERFUL THINGS ABOUT THE DEATH OF A CHRISTIAN.

We hear these words, *“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them.”* The word *“blessed”* here means *“happy.”*

Not all those who die are going to be happy, but those who die *“in the Lord”* will come to know the supreme happiness that only God can give.

Then we read, *“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”* Now, according to the Bible, every child of God is a saint. And every movement of the Christian’s life is precious in God’s sight.

Then surely, when His people come to die, it is precious in God’s sight. John Wesley said on one occasion, *“Our people die well.”*

Again we read, *“He giveth His beloved sleep.”* Elizabeth Barrett Browning said that to her this was the sweetest verse in the Bible. We struggle and strain, we worry and fret through this life. We become tired and worn out.

And then God puts us to sleep for a while and we wake up in glory. Again we read, *“Absent from the body, present with the Lord.”*

The body is put away in the grave, but the real person, the spirit, the soul is set free. The Christian has simply left his old worn-out body down here and has gone out to be with the Lord. Isn’t that wonderful.

“Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” Frankly, we’ll be glad to get rid of this old sinful, sick, weary body when that day comes

II. WHAT DOES A CHRISTIAN GAIN BY DYING?

Paul said, "*For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.*" Does a man gain anything when he dies? Doesn't he have to leave everything behind, his home, his loved ones, his friends?

Yes, that is true, but if he can say that he has lived for Christ, as Paul said, he can know that he will gain infinitely more in death than he can ever gain in this life.

1. *He gains freedom*

Freedom from all the aches and pains and sorrows and suffering and problems and troubles of this world.

2. *He gains fellowship*

The Christian in dying gains the sweetest fellowship ever enjoyed by anyone.

Fellowship with all the great men and women of the Bible. Fellowship with all the great people of all ages. Fellowship with all the loved ones whom we "*have loved long since and lost awhile.*"

And best of all, fellowship with the lord Jesus Christ, who made heaven possible for us.

*Oh, the dear ones in glory, how they
Beckon me to come,
And our parting at the river I recall,
To the sweet vales of Eden they shall
Sing my welcome home,
But I long to see my Savior first of all.*

3. *He gains fullness of knowledge*

Oh, there are so many things down here which we don't understand. We wonder why sin comes in to break our hearts and blast our hopes.

We wonder why so often some fine and useful person is taken away and another is left who makes no contribution to the world's benefit.

We will never understand these things down here, but someday in the golden glow of that better land we'll sit down beside the Lord Jesus and He will explain it all.

Then we will see that some of the things which caused us so much sorrow down here were simply blessings in disguise, and God allowed them to come to us for our good and His glory.

*Not now, but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears,
And there, sometime we'll understand.*

III. LESSONS FOR THE LIVING

1. *Death is certain*

If the Lord tarries, if He doesn't return in our life time, we shall all die. ***"It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment."*** Death may come soon to some of us, it will not be long for any us.

It may come suddenly or it may come after a lingering illness. It comes to the king's palace, it come to the poor man's cottage. But it is coming and we must get ready for it.

2. *The one way to prepare for death*

There is only one way to prepare for death and the judgment. That is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ there is no other way of salvation.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

IV. YOUR COMFORT IN THIS HOUR

1. *You are comforted in remembering that you did your best for your loved one*

You gave him the best medical skill and nursing care that could be given anyone. Now you can just say with one of old, ***"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."***

2. *You are comforted in remembering that death isn't all*

Beyond this vale of tears there is another life and another land. The grave is not our goal. We look forward to a new home of joy and bliss, which will be ours, when we leave this earthly home.

3. *You are comforted in remembering that you will see your loved one again*

The Bible certainly implies that we shall see and know our loved ones in heaven. David said that he could not bring his baby back to this earth, but that he could go to him.

Heaven is a complete place, but would it be entirely complete if we never saw our loved ones up there? Surely, surely, we shall see them again in a land where we shall know even as we are known.

4. *But our greatest comfort comes from Christ*

One day he spoke to a group of people just like us and He said, ***"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."***

He stands today with open arms and says the same thing to us. Just come to Him, lean your head upon His bosom and He will give you the rest and the comfort and the grace and the courage you need for this hour.

So may God bless the memory of this great man. And may He bless and comfort all of you who mourn today. And may all of us place our hands in the nail-pierce hand of Jesus and follow Him until he takes us home.

6. FOR A CHRISTIAN WOMAN

When Dwight L. Moody's baby died, he said to the minister who was to conduct the funereal service, "*Let there be no sorrow on this occasion.*" He knew that he could trust the Lord and that the Lord had done only what was best.

I am sure that we feel the same way as we come for the last service for this dear woman. She suffered much, but now she has found blessed relief and God has taken her to Himself

While it is a time of sorrow for those who loved her, it is a wonderful day for her. So let us today rejoice with her, for she is a thousand times better off than any of us who must stay a little longer in this old world.

1. THE HOME PREPARED

Before Jesus went away He said, "*I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am thee ye may be also.*" Now Christ kept His promise. He prepared heaven for all who loved and trusted Him and our friend is in that blessed home even now.

1. *Heaven is a place*

Heaven is just as much a place as New York or Chicago. Jesus called it a place and I get comfort in taking Jesus at His word. He prepared the place with us in mind. Everything **there will be for our comfort** and enjoyment. At last we shall be fully satisfied. And on every gate and on every mansion in the city we shall read the word, "**WELCOME.**"

2. *Heaven is a home*

There are no perfect homes in this world. We gather our loved ones around us and think we are going to be supremely and perfectly and permanently happy.

But death comes in to rob us of a loved one. Or one of those near and dear to us decide to move away to some distant city. Our homes are always being broken up. But God's Heavenly Home is a complete and permanent home. When we get there nothing can ever break up our homes or mar our happiness.

*A tent or a cottage, why should I care,
They're building a palace for me over there,
Tho' exiled from home, yet still may I sing,
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.*

3. *Heaven is a busy place*

The thought of just sitting around in heaven, strumming on a harp, is obnoxious to the average person. We could never be contented in such a place. We want to be occupied. And I believe that God will give us something to do.

He gives us tasks to perform down here, but we can never perform them perfectly. But up there, in our perfect bodies, we will do with ease all that God gives us to do.

4. *Heaven is a place of reunion*

Oh, isn't it wonderful to know that we shall see our loved one again? Today certain families continue to observe the old-fashioned custom of a yearly reunion. The members of the family gather from far and near and have a wonderful time together.

But sometimes these occasions are tinged with sorrow, for one who was present the year before is no longer in the land of the living and he is greatly missed.

But when we all get to heaven there will be no more death and no more separation. We will be reunited forever in a glorious fellowship.

11. SOME THINGS SHUT OUT OF HEAVEN

1. *There'll be no sickness there*

There is so much sickness down here. We build our new hospitals, but it seems that all of them are still crowded. Now our friend has known much sickness and pain down here, but in heaven she is in the perfect likeness of her Lord and these things can never touch her again.

There is a simple statement in Revelation that encourages us greatly. It says that *"there shall be no more pain, for the former things are passed away."*

2. *There'll be no sorrow there*

Every home knows a hush sometimes when sorrow comes. That sorrow may come from the loss of a loved one, it may come from some great disappointment, it may come as a result of sin. But God shall wipe away all of our tears when we get to heaven and our sorrow will be turned to singing.

3. *There will be no lack of anything good in heaven*

Many of our needs down here are never met, but in heaven we shall lack nothing. The One who made heaven and earth will supply every need. We will be joint-heirs with Jesus of all the good things of heaven.

4. *There will be no sin in heaven*

Since the days of Adam and Eve men have been bothered and hurt by sin. Every one of us has felt its effect. Won't it be wonderful when we will be like Jesus and when nevermore shall we be tempted by sin?

5. *There will be no separation in heaven*

Down here the cruelty of death separates a man and his wife who mean everything to each other. Down here the children are often bereft when mother goes away.

The Bible tells us that in heaven there will be *"no more sea."* The sea down here often separates us from our loved ones, but there'll be nothing in heaven to separate us from them.

6. *There will be no death in heaven*

Death is a monster that breaks our hearts and robs us of our dearest treasures. But there'll be no death in heaven and no graves on the hillsides of glory.

111. THE GOOD THINGS IN HEAVEN

1. *We will have perfect health*

Just recall that moment when you felt at your buoyant best and multiply it by a million miles and you'll know something of how you'll feel in heaven.

2. *We will have perfect happiness*

The happiness we enjoy down here is often tinged with trouble and disappointment, but we shall enjoy unblighted happiness in heaven.

3. *We will have perfect contentment*

We are never perfectly contented down here, but in heaven the glow of perfect contentment will never leave us.

4. *We will have perfect fellowship in heaven*

Fellowship with the saints of old, Moses and David and Paul and John and many others. Fellowship with all the great Christians of the ages. Fellowship with this dear one and of all our loved ones.

5. *We will have perfect love in heaven*

Drummond says that love is the greatest thing on earth, but earthly love cannot compare with the perfect love of heaven.

6. *We will have Jesus in heaven*

That's the best part of it all. We have often felt His presence down here. We have heard His voice in the deep recesses of our hearts. But one day our faith will turn to sight and we shall see Him. Oh, glorious, blessed moment when we fall at his feet and thank Him for bringing us home.

Now I have talked to you about heaven today. This is the present home of our beloved friend who has left us. If she could speak to us today, she would say, *"I want this to be your home, too, and it can be if you belong to Jesus."*

So, with Christ's peace in our hearts and Christ's hope in our souls, we say good-bye to this loved one and we shall hope to meet her again one day at Jesus' feet, where the sunshine of his love forever shines and where we shall never grow old.

Soon and very soon we are going to see the King!

7. FOR AN AGED CHRISTIAN

I remember the funeral of an aged man who had never made a profession of any faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. What a pity to go through life like that, neglecting every opportunity of salvation and spurning all of God's offers of grace.

But what a contrast do we find here today. Here is one who gave her life to Christ as a girl, and who has loved and served Him for more than sixty years. Surely all the bells of heaven rang out when she left us and entered into heaven.

We thank God for such people. They live among us for a while, they bless our hearts, they make life sweeter and better, then they go out to be with God and to await our coming.

I. WE CAN JUDGE PEOPLE BY WHAT THEY LOVE

1. *She loved the Lord*

To her He was not some distant person way off yonder in the blue. He was near to her. He was dear to her. He was her daily companion. She walked and she talked with the King. She spoke often of her gratitude to Him for saving her and for blessing her in so many ways.

2. *She loved her church*

Because she loved Jesus, she loved her church. That always follows. He put the church down here for us to live in and serve through. It is the only institution He ever founded. If you love Christ, you are going to be faithful to His church.

Nothing but a serious illness kept her from attending church. She was there every time the doors were opened. She never shone in the social world, you never saw her name in the society column. But she gave her time and her talents through her church and she blessed more people by her Christian influence than any number of society queens you could name.

3. *She loved her pastor*

She always referred to him as "*my pastor.*" She loved him because he represented her Lord. She was interested in every preacher and missionary, simply because they were telling others of the Christ whom she adored and served.

4. *She loved her Bible*

Even during her last illness her Bible was always by her bedside. You sometimes see Bibles twenty-five years old which are as clean as they were the day they were bought. They had not been used. But her Bible was stained with use. Many a tear had fallen upon its pages. Many a passage was underscored.

Her Bible was a lamp unto her feet and a light unto her pathway. It was her guide from grace to glory. It was her comfort and strength.

5. *She loved prayer*

She believed in all the prayer promises of the Bible. She spent hours in intercessory prayer for many people. She believed that prayer changes things and people. Oh, how blessed are those who have someone like this to pray for them. We would do well to take her as an example in the matter of prayer.

6. *She loved her friends*

That is the reason why so many of you are present today. She loved you and you know it. Many of you can testify to the strength you gained through that love. Many of you can remember the sweet things she did for you because of that love.

7. *She loved her family*

She had many children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. And she loved them all and prayed for them all. She rejoiced when you did well. She wept when you failed to live up to her teaching.

II. SOME WORDS TO THINK ABOUT

1. *Rest*

She has suffered much in recent months. She has often been tired and exhausted. But now God has given her rest. *“There remaineth a rest to the people of God.”*

2. *Reunion*

Those who love God never part for the last time. In the vocabulary of God there is no such word as *“good-bye.”* Because Jesus lives, we too shall live. And in that life which never ends we shall be reunited with those whom we have *“loved long since and lost a while.”*

3. *Reward*

God not only promises to take us to heaven, but to reward us at the end of the way if we have served well and for His glory. She certainly did just that and Christ will reward her generously. She built her life on genuine things, not the passing things of this earth. He will give her the best things of heaven because of her faithful service.

4. *Remembrance*

You loved ones will never forget her. Her memory will always grow fresh and green in your heart. Remembering her and her sweet Christian life you will from henceforth want to be better Christians and better people.

So let this be your comfort, that she has just gone out to be with God, where sickness and sorrow can never touch her, and where someday you will see her again and be at home with her and her wonderful Savior.

8. FOR A GODLY WOMAN

A busy pastor conducts many funerals. The minister must always keep a tender and sympathetic heart. Funeral services must never become mechanical or matter-of-fact with him.

But some funeral services come closer home to the preacher than others. Such is the case on this occasion as we come to say our farewells to this consecrated Christian woman, whose life meant so much to the church, to others, and to ourselves.

I. THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS

When you come to the end of the way there is only one thing that counts. It doesn't matter how much money you've made nor how high you have risen in the social circle. It doesn't matter how large a house you have lived in. It doesn't matter how many friends you had or how many flowers bedeck your casket.

The only thing that matters is your relationship with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If He is your Savior, all is well. If not, there is no hope for you. It is a tragedy to be born into the world and not to be born again through faith in Christ.

Now our dear friend settled this matter long ago. She gave her heart and life to Christ and she served Him well unto the end. She was never rich. She didn't live in a costly mansion. She never rose to a high social position.

But the true riches in Christ were hers and at the end of the way she inherited greater possessions than any man in this world ever had.

11. WHAT SHALL I SAY OF HER LIFE?

1. *It was a life of helpfulness*

Like her Master, she went about doing good. She touched many lives with her good deeds. She blessed many hearts because of her kind words. She lifted many people closer to God through her own consecrated life.

2. *It was a life of humility*

Although she went out of her way and beyond the call of duty to help others, she never boasted about it. She always kept in the background, willing always that others should have the credit and that God should have the glory

She could say with John the Baptist, "*I must decrease, but Christ must increase.*"

3. *It was a life of faithfulness*

Jesus said, "*Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.*" She was that faithful

and now she has gone out to receive that crown. The Lord and her church could always count on her. She was always at her place in every service of the church. It can be truly said of her that she sought first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

She engaged in the work of other fine and worthwhile organizations, but always the work of her Lord took precedence over everything else. When you have said that a Christian is faithful, you have said the best thing that can be said. She was faithful, faithful to all that is highest and best.

4. *It was a life that leaves a precious memory.*

During all the days that are left to her loved ones, they will be having many sweet memories of her. These memories will bless and enrich them forever. They will remember the worthwhile things she said and the unselfish things she did.

Their lives will be richer and they will be drawn closer to God because of these memories.

5. *It was a life that tells of a blessed hope*

When a Christian leaves us, it is not forever. We have a hope; a hope backed up by the Word of God. It is the hope of another life, where we shall be with Jesus and where we shall see our loved ones again.

“If in this life only, we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” But we have this hope, a blessed and wonderful thing. If this life is all, it isn't worth the candle. So we thank God for a hope that is steadfast and true.

III. THE MYSTERY AND MEANING OF DEATH

Surely we can never understand why God takes away someone so noble and useful as our friend, but we know His way is the best way. The death of His saints is precious in His sight.

“All things work together for good to them that love God” If a Christian lives for Christ, it is gain to die. This is just God's way of translating His children from a world of sorrow to a heaven of bliss.

IV. THE ASSURANCE NEEDED IN THIS HOUR

Many people have no assurance that all will be well when death comes. But in Christ we have this assurance. We know he'll be with us in the hour of death and take us safely across the river.

We can say with David, *“Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”*

There is only one way to obtain this assurance. It must come from our faith in Christ. It must come from living for Him and for the things that really count. Too many people are giving their lives for the things that die with the setting sun.

Those who trust Christ and live their lives for Him will have the needed assurance when they come to the dark valley.

A little girl said when she lay dying. *“I don’t see a valley, I just see Jesus.”* That’s where our assurance lies.

So let us be thankful for a life well lived, a life devoted to goodness, to faith in Christ, to unselfish service. And let us be thankful for a God of all grace, who is with us in life and in death and throughout all eternity.

May God help us all to find comfort and our strength in Him until at last we see Him and our loved ones face-to-face.

9. FOR A BABY OR YOUNG CHILD

We read in God's Book that "*Jesus called a little child unto Himself.*" That was long, long ago when He walked here among men. He wanted to teach a lesson in humanity, so He took that child in His arms and told His disciples that one must become as a little child and be converted before he could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

I can imagine Jesus, with His loving arms around that little child, fondling its pretty face and smiling down into its eyes. You see, Jesus loved little children so he called this one to Him.

And last Monday morning Jesus came to our city and again he called a little child unto Himself.

I. HE LOVES LITTLE CHILDREN

You loved this little one. She has been a joy to your hearts. She has brought a bright light in your home. But Jesus loved her, too, and now she has gone to light up His heavenly home and bring joy to His heart.

We will never think of her as being in a cemetery, but up there in heaven with the One who loved this little child and who said, "*Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.*"

Life can be compared to a rose garden. In this garden there are many varieties and sizes of roses. Some of them are full-blown, while some of them are just little buds.

Now when the owner of the garden wants a bouquet for his table he goes out into the garden and plucks those roses which will make the loveliest bouquet. He may pluck a full-blown rose or a little bud. The choice is his.

And when God wants a bouquet for the heavenly table, the choice is up to Him. He owns the gardens and he picks the flowers as he chooses. Sometimes it's the full-blown flower of an aged person, but last Monday He picked a bright little bud to beautify the heavenly table.

And life can be compared to a school. Some people finish only the elementary grades, while others go ahead and finish high school and college and university. And some people in life's school finish only a few years of life and God calls them home, while others live on and learn many more of life's lessons before they graduate into heaven.

David had a sorrow like yours. When his baby boy died his heart was broken. But he did not weep as one who had no hope. He said that he couldn't bring the baby back but that he could live for God in such a way as to be able to go the baby someday. Maybe that's God's message for someone here today.

Dr. W. Herschel Ford was called to conduct the funeral of a four-year old boy who had been killed in an accident. He learned that neither the mother or the father was a Christian. In the funeral service He tried to be of comfort to them.

He told them that maybe God had called the lamb to Him that the sheep might follow. He tried to say that maybe God in this way was calling them to Him, He told them that surely God had some purpose in it all.

Later, as he turned away from the freshly-made grave in the cemetery, that mother came and said, ***“I understand it now. I know why God took my little boy away. I have not been a Christian, but now I am going to church. I am going to give my heart to the Lord. I am going to live for Him. I want to see my baby again one day.”***

II. GOD’S SECRET PLANS

We don’t understand why God took your baby, but we know He never makes a mistake. He has His secret plans that go on for you and me. And His plans are always best. So this is not the time to question His judgments.

It is the time to trust Him, knowing that He wouldn’t do anything that would permanently hurt you. The hurt is now, but someday, when all things are clear and plain, you will know that ***“all things,”*** even this, ***“work together for good to them that love God.”***

When you look at the back of a tapestry you see many colored threads in a maze of confusion. But when you turn the tapestry over you see all the colors gathered together and blended into a beautiful picture.

Today we are looking at the backside of the weaving. There are some black threads mingled with the others and we see no beauty there. But someday, when we are with Jesus, we will see that God was working everything together for our good and his glory.

You who loved this little one cannot see this now, but I am sure that you will see it in the sweet by-and-by.

III. YOUR COMFORT IN THIS HOUR

1. You are comforted as you remember that you had her for a little while if not for a long time

You are happy that she brightened up your lives for a few years if not for many years. You are saying that it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.

You are surely saying that you are going to love Christ more and live closer to Him because He lent you this little one for a little while.

2. You are comforted in remembering that you did your best for her

You gave her the best medical skill that could be found. But it seemed that this was the time for her to leave you, so we will just say with one of old, ***“the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.”***

3. You are comforted in remembering that you will see her again

So I bid you come to Jesus with all your sorrow today. Come to Him who loved your baby and took her to be with Him. Come to Him who wept with Mary and Martha and all who still sympathizes with those who have a broken heart. Come and let Him put His loving arms around you and comfort you.

10. FOR AN UNSAVED MAN

As we come today to this solemn occasion we are reminded anew that our funeral services are not for the dead but for the living. If the preacher has a mission at this time it is to try to bring a measure of comfort to those whose hearts are heavy. Mr.....never joined a church, but we are not to judge the inner aspects of any man's heart. We know not what emotions stirred his soul nor what secret communion he might have had with God.

However, we know this. We know that our God is a great loving God who never makes a mistake. He always looks upon the heart and He does always that which is right and best. So with confidence we leave our friend today in the hands of a merciful Heavenly Father, knowing that God's way is the best way and His thoughts far above ours.

I. LET US THINK OF DEATH

1. *Death is certain*

The Bible teaches us that if Jesus tarries, every one of us must go through the experience called death.

But we know this fact from daily observation. Every day we hear of the inroads death makes. Every newspaper carries an obituary column. Every funeral director is kept busy. Graves are constantly being opened in all of our cemeteries.

Death stalks the land. Disease kills in spite of the advance of modern medicine. Accidents of all kinds rob us of our friends and loved ones. Death is all around us.

Death comes to the palace and to the hovel. To the good and to the bad, the young and the old. Royal doors cannot block his entrance and wealth cannot hold him back.

On every side we see signs of approaching death. The leaves fade away and die and fall from the trees. And day by day we are fading away. As the years go by our eyes grow dim and our steps grow feebler and we know we are on the way to death.

Now, knowing death is certain, the most important thing in life is to get ready for it by putting all our faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

2. *Death is sometimes sudden*

Death could come to some of us before the day ends, although we enjoy good health at this moment. So you see how important it is to prepare for the coming of death.

3. *Death is never welcome*

When Sidney Lanier, the great Southern poet, lay dying, he said that he had a thousand unwritten songs in

his heart And when you and I come to the end of the way there will be many things unfinished, things that must forever go undone.

There are a few people who have been sick so long and who have suffered so much that death comes as a welcome release. But to most of us death is never welcome. But, even though it surprises us in the midst of life's activities, we must remember that it is coming and be ready for it. We must live for God each day just as if we knew that would be our last day.

II. LET US THINK OF LIFE AS A PREPARATION PERIOD

Life is short compared to eternity. But we have plenty of time in life to prepare for death As the American astronauts prepared three years for a flight that blasted only a few hours, so must we prepare for the great Adventure into the Beyond.

And God has been so good to us in this respect. He surrounds us with every influence to direct us and lead us to Himself.

1. ***He gives us an open Bible***, in which we learn the way of life everlasting.
2. ***He gives us the church***, where we hear of a hope in Christ, and whose spires point to heaven.
3. ***He gives us a conscience***, which points out our sins and nudges us to a better life.
4. ***He gives us the prayers of friends and loved ones***. Surely every man who goes to heaven or hell has at some time had someone praying for him.
5. ***He gives us sorrow to bring us to Himself***. Often it takes a sorrow to make us realize our desperate need of God.
6. ***He gives us the Holy Spirit*** Before Jesus went away he said that He would send the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin, righteousness and judgment to come. And that blessed Spirit comes to point out our sin and point us to Christ.
7. ***He gives us a cross***. The Man who died on that cross for you and invites you to Himself, saying, ***"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."***

Yes, God is good to us to give us all these things to lead us to salvation. You must climb over them all to be lost.

The hour is coming for you and me. It can't be long, it may be soon. So let us remember this fact and apply our hearts unto wisdom. Let us remember that ***"it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment."***

And knowing these things, let us put our faith in Him whom we know is eternal life, giving unto his keeping our lives and souls for time and eternity.

Now may God bless and comfort the family and all those who are gathered here today. May you feel

the loving arms of Jesus around you and may his peace fill your heart today and in all the tomorrows which are to come.

11. FOR ONE WHO MET A TRAGIC DEATH

This life is filled with many mysteries. It is not meant for us to understand everything. We would be as wise as God if we did. The tragic connected with this funeral is fresh in our minds.

We have been saying, ***“Why did this happen?”*** I cannot give you the answer. We’ll never understand it in this world. Maybe God is saying to us, ***“Not now, but later. Someday you’ll understand that even this was a blessing in disguise.”***

David’s baby lay desperately ill. So David fell before the Lord and pled with God to spare the child. But God saw fit to take the baby away. Then David cleansed himself, put on his best clothes and went to church and worshiped God. He then returned home and sat down to eat.

His servants wondered why he could so soon return to the normal routine of life and he said, ***“I prayed for the baby, but for some reason God permitted him to die. Now I don’t understand it all, but I must accept God’s will. I can’t bring the baby back, but I can go to him.”***

You need to do what David did. He went to church and worshiped God. Some people quit church altogether when sorrow comes. But in doing so they rob themselves of their sweetest source of strength and comfort.

David also prayed. Sorrow ought to bring us to our knees. If there is any time when we need to pray and seek God’s face, it is in the hour of sorrow.

Then David submitted to God’s will. He said in effect, ***“I don’t understand it, but I humbly bow to the will of God. Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.”*** And David returned to his activities knowing the comfort that comes to one who is busy for the Lord.

1. THE ACCEPTANCE OF MYSTERIES

We accept many of the material mysteries of life without question. We don’t understand how a picture and a sound can travel through a small wire into our living rooms, but we don’t throw out our televisions, although we can’t understand them.

We don’t understand how a man can travel in orbit around the earth at a speed of more than 300 miles per minute, but we know it has happened and we accept it.

Now why can’t we accept the spiritual mysteries of life? Why can’t we trust God when we don’t understand? After all, that is what we need to do most of all today.

11. ALL THINGS WORKING TOGETHER

Paul says that ***“we know all things work together for good to them that love God.”*** This doesn’t mean that all things are good. Some things are tragically bad and heartbreaking. But God knows how to mix all the ingredients of life. He puts them all together, the good and the bad, and he causes it all to work out for our benefit and blessing.

I know it's hard to see this today, but in God's own good time He'll make it clear and we'll understand.

III. CHRIST'S GRACIOUS INVITATION TO ALL

He invites us all to come unto Him. The word "come" seems to be God's favorite word.

1. *Come to Him for salvation*

We can find salvation nowhere else except in Christ. ***"There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved."*** He promises that He will cleanse and forgive and save us if we come to Him. This is the first and most important duty of life. This matter is the first and most important duty of life. This matter must be settled before any other matter in life.

2. *Come to Him for comfort*

He said, ***"Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."*** Surely He is speaking here especially to those who are in sorrow.

This means that He is talking directly to you. The tender Shepherd, the God of all grace, opens His loving arms and invites you to come and find comfort in Him.

3. *Come to Him at the end of the way*

If Christ is yours, you need not fear death. He'll be there waiting to carry you home. You will hear Him say: ***"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."***

Jesus invites all who mourn today to come to Him for comfort. We'll do all we can to help you. But we are only human. Only Christ can help in this hour. Let me urge you to turn the whole things over to Him.

May God bless you in this hour and lead you into the peace which passeth all understanding.