

Write Your Own Funeral

Have you ever wondered what the preacher will say at your funeral? The life that you live will determine what the honest preacher will say when the time comes. Make the correct selections below and see what your funeral sermon will sound like.

- The deceased (was, was not) a Christian, and we therefore (have, have not) a reasonable hope for him.
- His family (knew, never knew) him to be a man of prayer and sincere devotion to God.
- He was a person who regularly (attended, ignored) the worship services, and (could, could not) be counted upon to serve to the best of his ability for the Lord.
- He was (concerned, unconcerned) with the lost, the poor, the afflicted, and the homeless.
- He (loved, did not love) his fellow man, and it was evident in the way he treated him.
- He was (a true friend, two-faced) to those who trusted him and always made a real contribution to the (happiness, unhappiness) of people wherever he went.
- He (possessed, did not possess) honesty, integrity, humility, sincerity and dependability.
- He knew the truth and (tried, did not try) to obey it.
- He (was, was not) an asset to the church, his family, and God.
- We (will, will not) miss him very much because he (was, was not) the type of person everybody loved.
- He (did, did not) "fight a good fight, finish the course, keep the faith; henceforth there (is, is not) laid up for him a crown of righteousness."

Honestly, how would your funeral sermon read?

- by H. L. Collett

"Fellowship Halls"

Many churches today build what they call "fellowship halls" or "fellowship buildings" (and now "family life centers") to accommodate their social and recreational activities, and even hire "fellowship ministers" to plan and supervise such activities. But such activities fall outside of the realm of scripturally authorized congregational work. The Greeks and the Romans were very much into feasting, games, contests, exercise, and entertainment, and they built baths, pools, gymnasiums, theaters, and stadiums to accommodate such; but churches of the Lord were into assembling together for worship, teaching, exhortation, edification, and they provided places to accommodate such. They were primarily interested in glorifying God and saving lost souls. They did not resort to gimmicks and carnal means to attract or keep the people. The gospel of Christ and the blessings that come through it were all they had and all they needed to offer the world.

Churches in the New Testament did not employ such things, but how they grew! Theirs was a spiritual mission with eternity in view. All they had with which to attract the lost was the gospel of Christ, themselves as living examples of that gospel, a Savior who was willing and able to save, fellowship with God and the children of God, and the hope of eternal life in heaven. They did not resort to material gimmicks to attract and to hold the lost, nor should we. They knew the difference between their fellowship in Christ and what passes for "fellowship" in religion today. Let us emulate them.

- by Bill Crews

God Expects Man to Understand His Will

In Matthew's account of the Great Commission, Jesus said, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations..." Why would Jesus, the Son of God, tell his apostles to go and teach people if what they were going to teach could not be understood? Did not Jesus, in the command, necessarily imply that the material to be taught was simple enough to be understood and that those to be taught were capable of understanding?

One of the answers to our present-day situation was given by Jesus a long time ago in Matt. 13

:15:

“For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

Jesus placed the blame for not understanding squarely at the feet of those who heard the teaching. They closed their own eyes, stopped their own ears, and hardened their own hearts so that they did not understand!

Incidentally, had you thought about the fact that if a thing is understood by two individuals, they necessarily will understand it alike? If two people disagree on something, one or the other (or both) did not understand!

If one person “understands” baptism to be sprinkling, and another “understands” it to be pouring, then neither of the two really understands what the New Testament teaches. Even the Greek word for baptism means “immersion.”

In other words, it is impossible to “understand” baptism incorrectly. So if you and I disagree over something the Bible teaches, we both need to keep studying. When we both really understand we will agree.

- by Aude McKee

Congregational Loyalty

I feel a sense of deep loyalty to my brethren in the local congregation because:

- We are a spiritual family. In a physical family we love one another and go to great lengths to maintain peace, resolve issues, express our love, take care of one another, etc. I never give up on my physical family. It should be the same in our congregational family.
- We share a common devotion to God and His truth. While the majority of the religious world is sharply divided over doctrinal issues, we are of “the same mind and judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). What we have in common binds us together and should never be taken for granted.
- My brethren have done great deeds of service for me and my loved ones. These things range from the mundane (I remember those guys who helped me fix my broken down car) to their priceless help in times of deep need (When I’ve been weak and discouraged they lifted me up. And I think about those long hours when they sat with me at the hospital, funeral home, etc.). How can I ever forget the sacrificial acts of kindness they have done? Truly, I ‘owe’ them!
- I know that, should I turn my back on them, it would cause great harm and discouragement. I know this because it has happened too often. Others, on a whim, have just ‘up and left’. We were devastated, heartbroken, downcast. How could I do that to my brethren, my family, my friends?

There may come a time when unavoidable factors like work, or physical health, or other compelling duties might call me away from this good church. Or, God forbid, it might be some issue of truth and righteousness that might cause a rift. But, these things notwithstanding, my decisions on a day to day basis – not to mention in my long range planning – should take into consideration the deep loyalty that my local brethren deserve from me. Think!

- by Greg Gwin