

THOUGHTS FROM THE FUNERAL SERVICE FOR ORNAN MARTIN

CLARE FREY

God has called us together. We will sing a song chosen by the family. # 114

Once more we have been called together by God. We can set the hour but God sets the occasion. God calls and we answer the call. If we can do it willingly then God can bless us.

We are gathered in this Christmas season and we can accept His gift. Let us think of His mercies and great gift. Let us hold to those things that are profitable and enduring.

We are gathered together for a special occasion. Someone we knew for a long time has passed on. The sister worked in our home when I was a small boy. Then her daughter worked in our home helping my wife.

The brother was one who had a concern for his family and the church. As long as his health permitted he would give council.

The brother had an intense knowledge. He knew when things happened in the community and he had the facts. He remembered events and could be expected to have his facts straight.

The brother was content at home but he was not narrow minded. I am

reminded of my grandmother. She had a broad world and cared about people. However, I don't think she was ever farther from home than what her horse would take her. There was a time that I asked the brother if he would go with us to Markham. He said he'll gladly go along and he'll gladly offer the vehicle but he doesn't want to drive. We travelled together to Markham. He did not drive but I believe the brother enjoyed the day just like I did. He was interested in the people there and in the community.

We have to live a good life. Anything we say now concerning the brother will make no difference at the time of judgement. "...where the tree falleth, there it shall be." Ecc. 1:3 It is needful to live a profitable life here. We don't know if we will be here at the second coming of Christ or if we will die. We don't know if we will have good health but be called suddenly or if our bodies will decay gradually. It makes no difference how we die. It matters if we have lived a humble life serving God. In Acts 1 we read of Christ's ascension. "...he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Two men in white told the disciples, "...this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." This is the same Jesus who came as a baby. This same Jesus hung on Calvary's cross. We need not fear Him nor death. We want to live so we can magnify His love 365 days a year. We are to witness for Jesus. This was the brother's desire. He chose to witness His love even though he had faults. This was his desire.

1 Kings 21:1-25 The thought we have on our mind was when the king came to Naboth and wanted to buy his vineyard. He offered to give him a better vineyard but Naboth did not want to sell what he had inherited from his father. The brother also inherited his farm from his father. It had belonged to his grandfather and before that his great grandfather. We know the brother took his inheritance seriously because he took good care of the farm. I thought awhile on the terms-inheritance, heir, heritage-and puzzled over their differences in meaning. What we want to recognize is

the value of an inheritance. Naboth's vineyard was of material value. If we received from our parents something that has only monetary value, we have little. Think of spiritual values. Do we uphold the values our parents taught us? Naboth was ready to give his life. He didn't say what value the vineyard has. He said he inherited it from his father and he wouldn't sell it. (see verse 3) We are not told whether Naboth suspected his death but we know that the result was he lost his life because he chose not to sell his inheritance.

When the Israelites crossed the Jordan and divided the land among the tribes, we learn that this dividing of land was a matter to be taken seriously. God commanded that the land they inherit is not to pass into the hands of any other tribe. After the land was divided a question arose. There was a man who had no sons but daughters. What will happen to this land? The answer was that the daughters can "marry." Num. 36:6 It was important that the inheritance stay within the tribe. What is important to us? We should hold them as valuable and not throw them away for a bit of pleasure. These things were given to us in trust.

Inheritance is more than just giving a gift, much more to it than that. We assume that the farm wasn't just handed to the brother. He probably had to buy it. He maybe had a good deal, though. He took it seriously and took care of it. The brother's desire was to uphold the faith and his desire was that his children would uphold the faith he taught them. As a church we put our faith in God and work and care for the brotherhood. This is a heritage that we should not give up for a movement that goes through the community. We should not give up our vineyard. Thinking this movement has a "better" vineyard but we are not here to pass judgement. The brother sensed the responsibility that was given him.

We looked up inherit, heir, inheritance etc. in the concordance. The following verses made an impression on me: Matt. 25:34, Gal. 5:21-23, Luke 10: 25, Heb. 1:8-10 Heb. 12:16 & 17 If we have the story correct, in Genesis we are told Esau "cried a great and exceeding bitter cry". (See Genesis 27:34) At the time Esau sold his birthright there were no tears. Esau had come in from the field faint from hunger. The birthright didn't mean much to him if he could sell it for porridge. We can see that Jacob valued the birthright. Later on Jacob wrestled with an angel and his thigh came out of joint. We all know that when something in our body is out of joint there is much pain and we soon give up the fight. But Jacob hung on. In fact the angel asked Jacob to let him go. (See Gen. 32:24-26) Jacob had more strength than Esau.

When we study the whole episode we can see that all were at fault. We believe Isaac was in error to send Esau out to the field to hunt for venison and to prepare it prior to the blessing when Esau had already sold the birthright to Jacob. We cannot say that what Rebekah was right either but through her actions God's plan was fulfilled. We can understand that to Jacob receiving this blessing was important. With the blessing comes responsibility. We too, have a responsibility to show good stewardship both materially and spiritually and to pass it on. A few words of comfort. We believe that God who was with the father can be with the family. We know that there was a love between the brother and the sister. There is something I have observed from our visitations. The greater the love, the easier the parting. This great love will help to carry you through this time of parting.

SILENT PRAYER

JOSEPH WEBER

Dear Christian friends and fellow mourners, we wish you the peace that passeth understanding. Jesus came to the disciples through closed doors and said, "Peace be unto you." (See St. John 20:19) The closed doors means that they were locked. In past days the disciples had seen much. Jesus had been crucified and was dead. Now they heard stories that the body was gone and that Jesus was alive. The disciples were frightened. Then Jesus comes into their midst and says, "Peace be unto you." Do you suppose the wish of Jesus for us is any different than he had wished for the disciples there?

Open the precious book. Read the gospel. Here is One whom we can fall upon, One who understands. The widow's life will be different than ever before. To the family, may you have peace as you think on memories.

We say amen to the brother's message on inheritance. While the departed brother was in his prime, he was a man I looked up to. He wasn't a man of many words, nor were they loudly spoken. But he knew his cattle, the soil, and the crops. He and his companion were home people. I am different. I enjoy travelling and getting away from home. It is not that I don't enjoy being at home. I mentioned our differences to him one time and I commended him that he prefers staying at home. His well thought answer was, "There is a down side to that as well." It was later before I realized what he meant. He struggled to give up the farm. We could say that he and I have different values. There are different values in a Christian brotherhood as well. If we don't allow these values to mesh there will be trouble and confusion. Satan desires to have trouble and confusion within a brotherhood. James tells us this is "...earthly, sensual, devilish." (See James 3:15)

We believe his companion feels his loss sincerely. We think of how it was before his death. He suffered. He was unable to speak. Thus he could no longer participate in the conversation. We do not know what temptations confronted him. Finally the brother's hour and minute came. Job questioned death. "If a man die, shall he live again?" Job 14:14 & 15 Would you not agree, fellow believers, that at times you long to be free from temptations but God sees fit to have us wait a little longer? Meanwhile we want to be in gloryland as said at the graveside. St. John 14:1-3 There is going to be a better life beyond. The Son of Man will return. Matt. 25:31, 32, 34, 40, 41, 45 Labour to perform in love a Christian life. Let no one be discouraged and think, "What's the use? I'm going to hell anyhow." This thinking isn't from God.

It is a pleasure to speak to people who believe in the gospel plan of salvation. In these wearying times there is One to speak about. We commemorated the birth of Christ. What can we speak about that brings out Christ's humanity, that He was human like you and me? Shortly after Christ's baptism, He was tempted. "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit..." Luke 4:14 I like that phrase. It is quite possible that Jesus was mentally fatigued. Let's not think Jesus was super human. He "...was in all points tempted like as we are..." (See Heb. 4:15) Jesus' temptations were real. When Satan

challenged Him to change the stones to bread, Jesus was hungry. He had had no food for forty days.

Luke 4:1-5-21 Christ was referring to himself. There were six things Christ came to do: 1. "...preach the gospel to the poor" 2. "...heal the brokenhearted" 3. "...preach deliverance to the captives" 4. "...recovering of sight to the blind" 5. "...set at liberty them that are bruised" 6. "...preach the acceptable year of the Lord". This was His mission.

1. "...preach the gospel to the poor" When John the Baptist had baptized Jesus, his ears had heard the voice of God. Matt. 3:17 Then John was put in prison. There he was day after day. John began to doubt. Finally he became desperate. He sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?" (Luke 7: 20) We are like John. We want things to happen, to change. When John's disciples came and asked the question, Jesus was probably disappointed. He didn't answer right away. He was healing the sick, the crippled, the blind and deaf. At the end of the day Jesus told the disciples to go back and tell John what they saw and heard. Luke 7:22 Before Jesus dismissed them He added, "And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." Was Jesus criticizing John?

Who are the poor? James 2:1-3 According to the Greek and German "vile" means tattered. This man was wearing the best that he had. "But if ye have respect to persons,..." the next is not stately mildly, "...ye commit sin," (James 2:9) James writes hard speech.

Some of the Jews came Jesus and said, "Master, give us a sign." Jesus replied that no sign shall be given but Jonah. (See Matt. 12:38 & 39) At another time He told them, "...the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21) Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor. At times we like "to do" with people of high standing. We tend to ignore people of low standing. This is not Jesus' plan. As Christ died the veil in the temple was torn in two. (See Matt. 27:50 & 51) The holiest of holies was open to the public. Now each one can come to Jesus. No priest is needed.

2. "...heal the brokenhearted" It doesn't mean a literal breaking of the heart, that the heart is in pieces. It means the emotions which overwhelm us like a sea of sorrow because of sudden death. Let's not think Jesus just healed the brokenhearted of two thousand years ago. It is still real today. Teenagers may seem happy but underneath are heartaches. They don't feel understood.

The family saw the casket lowered into the earth. They will see Dad's face no more. At Ephesus Paul preached all night. Later on Paul was going to leave. He told them they would see his face no more. The people accompanied him to the ship in great sorrow because they would see his face no more. (Acts 20:36-38) Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted.

God did not see fit to go into detail about heaven. Rev. 22:1 & 2 There is no drought in heaven. The tree constantly produced fruit. The leaves were for the healing of the nations, for the brokenhearted. Why is there so much war? Think of the Mid East. Don't just shake your heads and think how terrible it is. Yes, pray for those people but is there peace in your hearts? Is there peace in the church, in your family? Is there peace in your marriage? Over the top we appear to be in harmony with the community and brotherhood but deep down in the heart, is there peace?

3. "...preach deliverance to the captive" In our school years we memorized Isaiah 58. We didn't know then what we were saying. Isa. 58:1-3 Part of the time God is speaking. Part of the time the people are speaking and part of the time Isaiah speaks. Isa. 58:4 & 5 What does fasting mean to you? What does it do for you? Isa. 58:6 & 7 I think that fasting means devotion to God. Isa. 58:8 Blessings will follow a devoted life.

I know that people fast as in abstaining from food. I am not saying that this fasting is wrong. I worked in a home where the boss fasted on Good Friday morning. This was new to me. I asked the boss why he fasts. He was slow in giving a reply as he did not wish to make a big ado. His companion then mentioned that fasting is in the scriptures.

Paul had struggles to teach the Jews and the Gentiles. There were many areas where there differences. Paul had a challenge to keep them from both sides of the ditch. Apathy was a problem. Apathy means without feeling. The Jews had become apathetic. Matt. 23:23 There is no room for the apathetic.

I will relate a story to give an example of being apathetic. It is to my shame. A young daughter came to her young father with a silver in her hand. It was painful. The father reached into his pocket and got out his jackknife. The jackknife was rather dull. With this the father tried to dig out the silver. The daughter whimpered in pain and tried to jerk her hand away. The father only held on tighter. Then he said that children should obey their parents. This is apathy. To my shame I said nothing. I should have spoken to the young father in love about being apathetic.

4. "...recovering of sight to the blind" At times we can't understand Jesus' motives and actions. Mark 8:23-25 Why did Jesus take the man by the hand and lead him away from the town, the people? Why did Jesus spit on his eyes? We would say that is awful. It is unsanitary. Why did Jesus not return his full sight at once? It seems Jesus was teasing him by giving partial sight. Sometimes when we come to Jesus Christ he takes us in solitude and slowly opens up our eyes. The spitting is like an unpleasant experience, the valleys of our life.

5. "...set at liberty them that are bruised" God's patience is limitless. "A bruised reed shall he not break..." (Matt. 12:20, Isa. 42:3) We think of the genuine new birth. We feel as though we are on eagles' wings. Later we feel farther away from God. It is not God's fault.

When we move our machinery down the bush lane some seed may fall. Later on in the summer we see these plants struggling to grow in this hard dry ground. They can hardly produce fruit. They look sickly and stunted. Then we drive over them and they are bruised and broken. God will not knock down someone who doesn't come up to potential.

6. "...preach the acceptable year of the Lord" In Old Testament times every fifty years was called the year of jubilee. All past debts were cancelled, slaves were freed, land which had been sold was returned to its former owner. We can imagine that for slaves the year of jubilee was a highlight. It meant that they were set free. God expects us to forgive each other.

I will tell you a story. There was a slave for sale at an auction. He was a big man in shackles and chains. He had sores on his body from struggling to free himself from the shackles. It was because of his violent behaviour that he was in chains. Thus he

was sold at a cheap price as no one really wanted a slave of such a nature. How could he work if he must be constantly restrained? This slave's new master removed the shackles and chains right away and dressed the wounds. This was a new experience for the slave. No one had ever done this to him before. The master showed empathy, not apathy. After this the slave and his master set out for home. They walked. After a while they came to a fork in the road. The master had another errand to look after so he explained to his slave in detail how to get to his new home. He told his slave to go on home alone as he needed to do some other business first. When the slave gets home he was to tell the other workers who he is and they would give him work to do. As the master and slave were parting the slave who had still been carrying his shackles and chains asked what he is to do with them. "Oh," replied his new master, "throw them away. We don't need them." The slave threw them away. Then he walked on towards home and found it as his master had directed. He was overcome with the manner in which his master treated him. It resulted in a deep trust. He became a loyal slave who worked faithfully for his master. Years later his master gave the slave legal papers stating his freedom. Now he could go wherever he wished and do whatever he wished. What do you think this slave did? He continued working for his master. This man had freed him from his shackles long before. We are of all people most blessed. We live in a country of religious freedom. Yes, Christians will suffer but deep down we are free from bondage. Christ came to give us freedom.

Luke 18:10-13 The Pharisee is an example of apathy. A truly contrite broken spirit brings freedom. I was in a court room where I witnessed a man receiving a sentence. He was sentenced to a term in prison. Then the tears flowed. I have often wondered whether the tears were tears of repentance or because he had been found out. Let us keep on serving Him and trusting Him.

AUDIBLE PRAYER

Let us close with another hymn selected by the family. # 65 in the appendix, the last song in the book.