

Would You Preach His Funeral?

by Tom Wacaster

<http://tomwacasterpen.blogspot.com/2000/09/would-you-preach-his-funeral.html>

When I lived in Ada, Oklahoma, it was not uncommon for me to get a call from the director of one of the more prominent funeral homes in that city, asking me to preach someone's funeral. In the ten years that I was there I preached more than 200 funerals. The request to do so many funerals was due, in part, to the fact that the director and owner of the funeral home was the husband of one of our members. So, as it turned out, when there was no one to "preach" the funeral, I was called upon to "preach his funeral."

Though the circumstances have changed somewhat through the years, I am still called upon from time to time to preach the funeral of someone with whom I am not the least bit acquainted. Most of the time it is the family member of someone I know. Their loved one did not attend church anywhere, nor were they acquainted with any "man of the cloth" (as they are wont to say). My agreement to "preach the funeral" of such a one derives solely from my acquaintance with a family member or close associate. Some time ago a dear, close sister in Christ called and asked if I would preach at a memorial service for her departed brother. I agreed, and would soon meet with the family to do what I could to sooth aching souls in their loss. As the time for meeting with the family drew near, I pondered the situation. What shall I say? Shall I tell them that their loved one has gone to be with the Lord? This I cannot do, for not only had he never obeyed the gospel, he was not a member of any religious organization. Shall I tell the family that God will comfort them, and watch over them? This I cannot do, for most of them are not Christians, as evidenced from the fact that they had to ask our sister in Christ if she knew of a preacher to conduct the memorial service. Can I tell the family that this departed loved one has left a noble example for them to follow? This I cannot do, since the life he evidently led is not the kind of life that will get a man to heaven.

Continued on page 2



Happy Birthday this week:

- Marie Campbell—8/14 (today)
- Jack Cook—8/15
- Madolia Rosette—8/16
- Roger Mays—8/20
- Jonathan Beavers—8/20
- Wes White—8/21

Happy Anniversary This Month to:

- Norris & Velda Gearhart 8/16
- Shree & Raymond Lowe 8/16
- Jeremy & Jessica White 8/17
- Greg & Jo Ann Edwards 8/17
- Jerry & Kay Anderson 8/22
- Ron & Doris White 8/24
- Herman & Norce Lowe 8/26

Continued from page 1

Since I could not speak words of encouragement as to this departed man's spiritual state, I did my best to remind this family that life is short, eternity is sure, and that life's tragedy's should be used as stepping stones to bring us closer to God. I spoke of the frailty of this physical body, the brevity of life, and the reality of an impending judgment. I pointed these things out as kindly as I knew how. But I felt that these things must be said. With the exception of one or two members of that family, I knew that day would be the last time that I would ever see the majority of those who would gather on that solemn occasion to reflect upon the life of their now deceased loved one. So, I preached TO the family, and not ABOUT the deceased.

When it comes your time to depart, will there be some preacher with whom you are acquainted who will joyfully, and in full expectation of seeing you again on the other side of the valley of death, speak words of comfort to your family, holding forth the hope that only the child of God can have? That depends upon how you live now. It is recorded in Numbers 23:10 that Balaam cried, "Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let by last end be like his." But a man cannot live the life of the wicked, and expect to die the death of the righteous (Galatians 6:7-8).

My friend, you cannot live a life in rebellion to God and then expect someone to speak words of hope at your funeral. Why not live a life of submission to Jesus Christ your Lord so that when it comes your time to depart the walks of life and cross that river into eternity, that it can be said of you, "He lived the life of the righteous." Or will you, like untold thousands, simply have someone to "preach your funeral"?

West Side Youth

August 21— TBS @ Teen Center
 September 16-18—RUSH weekend @ FHU
 September 18—TBS @ Teen Center



WOW

Next meeting is **Saturday, August 20 -
 Salad Lunch – Fellowship – Visiting
 Time: 11:00 AM.**

Bring your favorite salad. Prepare to go visiting at Richfield. Sign-up sheet with more details is on the **WOW** bulletin board. **Everyone is welcome.**
 Please join us.

AUGUST ITEMS FOR THE STAFFORDS:

Triscuits/*Thin* Original Flavor
 Envelopes of Dream Whip
 Give these items to Jeanny to be shipped out.



Ty Stricklin is at Balboa Hospital in San Diego, CA.
 Lcpl Harper, Matthew D.; is a Marine from Galax who is now serving in Afghanistan.

WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP MEAL

There will be a Back to School Fellowship Meal on Wednesday, August 24 at 5:45. Menu includes pulled pork BBQ and the fixin's. **Sign up** on the board by Sunday, **August 21** and pay your \$\$ at the door!!

TUESDAY NIGHT TALENTS

Tuesday Night Talents continues **August 16th**. Bring your dinner at 6:00 PM or come at 6:30 and join us for the work.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 12—18—Polishing the Pulpit

August 20 Men's Breakfast @ Anthony's 8 am

September 16-18 RUSH weekend at FHU

October 8—TTT Ladies' Day at West Side

October 16-19—Gospel Meeting with Steve Hall

November 12—Men's w/s planning breakfast

Wednesday Night Summer Series:

August 17—**Batsell Barrett Baxter**- "Analysis of Love" &
"Examining Ourselves"

August 24—**W. N. "Bill" Jackson**- "According to the Pattern"

August 31—**Winfred Clark**- "Teachings of Jesus"

ONLY EIGHT MORE WEEKS!!

9 good minutes at 5:49 on October 9th

SYMPATHY

Our prayers and thoughts go out to the families of West Siders Willard Campbell and George

Mellon who have recently lost loved ones.

Also remember the family of Michael Lerro, a gospel preacher in New Mexico.

Friends and Family Day
coming up on
Sunday, September 18.
Fellowship meal afterwards
Team duties will be assigned



Senior Servants

Lynn Anderson Norma Biller
Betty Buckner Jim Dorsett
Martha Keith Margaret Kratz
Miriam Majors Jo Musgrove
Evelyn Scott Elsie Smith
Ruth Stanton Evelyn White
WJ Wood Grace Myers
Al Furrow



- ◆ Evelyn Scott was sick Sunday.
- ◆ Pauline, mother of Chyrl Pennington from Rural Retreat c/C, is now in hospice care.
- ◆ Bradford Durham has a doctor appointment Wed. to hopefully get his neck brace removed!!
- ◆ Ron White plans to consult a doctor soon concerning knee problems.

Continue in Prayer:

Ruth & Glenn Hartman, Sr.

Kevin Bernard

Sandra Speir

Dale Janosik

Marla Mobley

Bertine Vandercroys

Richelle Williams

Corey Ryan

Tom House

Willard Campbell

Eloise Faw

Ron White

Jack Cook family

Samantha Beavers

August 2011

Our 14th Year Together

Announcements: Jeff Durham

Song Leader (AM): Charlie Gwaltney

Opening Prayer (AM)

8/7 Tom Rogers

8/14 Bob Martin

8/21 Charles Maness

8/28 Don Pettit

Preside at Communion: Bob Garby

Serve Table

Jeff Williams Sam Valentine
Mark Brooks; Herb Baker

Closing Prayer (AM):

8/7 Garrett Durham

8/14 Glenn Gabbard

8/21 Gene Benefield

8/28 Squeaky Valentine

Song Leader (PM): Josh Whitlow

Opening Prayer (PM)

8/7 Barry White

8/14 Herman Lowe

8/21 Mike Durham

8/28 Danny Guard

Scripture Reader: Andrew Gibson

Closing Prayer (PM)

8/7 Wayne Dixon

8/14 Ethan Rogers

8/21 Greg Edwards

8/28 Mitch Jearls

Serve Table (PM)

Dylan Tyler; Jimmy Harrington

Song Leader (Wed): Paul Mays

Prayer (Wed)

8/3 Harry Higgs

8/10 Jeff Durham

8/17 Eddy Gilpin

8/24 Jim Bush

8/31 Mark Brooks

Open/Close Building: Jim Harrington

Greeters: LaPlantes/Garbys

Nursery Attend: Velda Gearhart (am)
Alecia White (pm)

Ushers: Curtis Oakes; Herman Lowe

Handouts: Noah ; Chandler

Prepare communion: Jessica White
Hazel McFalls

Baptismal Garments: Shirley Baker

Cards/Pencils: Connor, Harrison

Last week's attendance 8/7/11 & 8/10/11

Bible Class-155 Worship Service-154

Sunday PM-136 Wednesday PM-148

Contribution- \$6440

This week marks the fourteenth year of our being together. On August 8, 1997 (the second Sunday in August), the Gilpins officially began our work with West Side. Our family has "grown up" here. The two boys we brought with us (ages 13 and 9) are now adults and living on their own in different states. The young married couple (about to celebrate their 15th wedding anniversary) which began their work here is now looking forward to their 29th.

Not only have there been changes in our family, but also in all of yours. Sadly, there have been deaths. Many stalwart and long-time members of this congregation have made that journey down the valley. We continue to miss them. Sadder still, some have departed from the faith. Others have moved away for various reasons. Many of your children, also, have grown up and launched out on their own. On a positive note, many have been converted to Christ and become very active for the Cause here. Others have moved here from other places and fill vital roles. There have been many changes in our spiritual family over the past fourteen years.

This time period has seen changes in the physical plant of West Side as well. We have added some land and the teen center. We have added on to the building and made changes within the building. We have upgraded and refurbished and made the facilities more accommodative (and additional plans are in the works).

Although there have been many changes in many areas through these years, the one thing that has remained constant is our love and stand for truth. Changes will take place in people and places, but truth remains the same. The old adage "if it is true it is not new; and if it is new it is not true" certainly has merit. The consistent message of truth will stand the test of time. Thank you, West Side, for your consistent stand for truth and your love for its proclamation.

Jeanny and I thank you for allowing us the privilege of serving with you for these fourteen years. You have treated us like family. What more could we ask? It is our prayer that we will have many more years together, enjoy many more positive changes and assist each other through the inevitable negative ones. After all, that's what families do. Thank you, dear brethren, for supporting us, loving us and allowing us the privilege of being a part of this family. We love you all.

With admiration, appreciation and love,
Eddy & Jeanny

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