

Ecclesiastes 7:1-2

Sunday 9/29/2019

What if it were today? Jesus is coming to earth again. What if it were today? Coming in power and love to reign. What if it were today? Coming to claim His chosen bride, all the redeemed and purified, over this whole earth scattered wide. What if it were today?

Glory, glory, joy to my heart will bring. Glory, glory, when we shall crown Him King. Glory, glory, haste to prepare the way. Glory, glory, Jesus will come someday.

Satan's dominion will then be o'er. O that it were today, sorrow and sighing shall be no more. O that it were today, then shall the dead in Christ arise, caught up to meet Him in the skies. When shall these glories meet our eyes? What if it were today?

Glory, glory, joy to my heart will bring. Glory, glory, when we shall crown Him King. Glory, glory, haste to prepare the way. Glory, glory, Jesus will come someday.

Faithful and true would He find us here, if He should come today. Watching in gladness and not in fear, if He should come today. Signs of His coming multiply, morning light breaks in Eastern sky. Watch for the time His drawing nigh. What if it were today?

Glory, glory, joy to my heart will bring. Glory, glory, when we shall crown Him King. Glory, glory, haste to prepare the way. Glory, glory, Jesus will come someday.

I. Opening and Welcome

Alright, you may be seated. Thank you, Danny. I want to welcome you all here today. This is a great testimony to John and his family, and we appreciate you being here today. We're going to obviously do something a little different today. The last thing that John asked me before he went home to be with the Lord, one was if I would do his funeral, which I certainly would, and then that he wanted to have his funeral service to be a church service on Sunday morning, and that was no problem with me either. This is going to be a great time this morning. We have pretty much dedicated the whole time. We've kind of rearranged our whole service this morning.

What I'm going to do for just a second here before we can get into it is just take care of our business here with our announcements. First of all, just so everybody knows, don't forget to make sure you sign up to help Dale and Rachel. We're going to move them over from where they're at over to the other side of Missouri and help them get this squared up there in Green Valley. Next Saturday is the people ministry for those of you that work with me in the counseling ministry here, and that'll be at 9:30, and you'll know about that. Don't forget next week is Restart, where we go down twice a month and feed all the homeless people and preach on the street down there. So you know all about that too.

We're going to go ahead, and I need to give you some instructions on this. Guys, go ahead and get up here and get set up, ready to go. We're going to take up our offering now, just to get that out of the way. I want to make it very clear that if you're visiting here today or you're coming from another church, please don't put your offering in for us. We just are glad that you're here.

You're going to find out very quickly that this church is not about money. This is for our people under the guidelines of the book of Corinthians, where Paul instructs us to do this. But your tithes and offering belong to your church, so please do that for us. We're just glad that you're here today. We'll be back in just a few minutes and get going.

Let's pray and ask God's blessing on today. Then we'll be back here in just a minute, and we'll do right on with it. Let's pray.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Thank You for all the good folks that are here today. Pray, Father, You'll bless this offering for our people, that it'll be used for the furtherance of the gospel. We thank You for the folks that are here, Lord, from other churches and their love for the Word of God and the Lord Jesus. We pray, Father, that they'll get a blessing today. Ask all these things in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

My soul in sad exile was out of my sight, so burdened with sin and distress. Till I heard a sweet voice say, "Make Me your choice," and I entered the heaven of rest.

I'll anchor my soul in the haven of rest. I'll sail the wide seas no more. The tempest may sweep, O the wild stormy deep. In Jesus, I'm safe evermore.

I yielded myself to His tender embrace, and faith taking hold of the world. My fetters fell off, and I anchored my soul. The haven of rest is my Lord.

I'll anchor my soul in the haven of rest. I'll sail the wide seas no more. The tempest may sweep, O the wild stormy deep. In Jesus, I'm safe evermore.

I'll anchor my soul in the haven of rest. I'll sail the wide seas no more. The tempest may sweep, O the wild stormy deep. I'll sail the wide seas no more.

O come to the Savior, He patiently waits to save by His power divine. Come anchor your soul in the haven of rest, and say, "My beloved is mine."

I'll anchor my soul in the haven of rest. I'll sail the wide seas no more. The tempest may sweep, O the wild stormy deep. In Jesus, I'm safe evermore.

I'll anchor my soul in the haven of rest. I'll sail the wide seas no more. The tempest may sweep, O the wild stormy deep. In Jesus, I'm safe evermore. In Jesus, I'm safe evermore. Thank you, guys.

II. Testimonies of John's Character

I have a few people that want to say something this morning and do John, and I want to just take a time and talk about him for a few moments. The first one is a guy that goes back with me a long ways, and he's certainly one of my best friends, and that's Terry Jove. Terry, would you come and say what God has put on your heart?

Well, first of all, I'd like to explain there's no coincidence with God. I met John the first time in a Monday night Bible study at the invitation. In fact, we went into John Greenbank's office, and

God gave me the honor and the pleasure of leading him to the Lord. I remember as we talked, he wasn't sure if he was saved or not, and I used an illustration for John that caught his attention. I said, "John, Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States. He was born in Kentucky, he wrote the Gettysburg Address, he did all these things. You know all about him, you can tell me all about him, but have you ever met him?" He said, "Well, no, that's silly." I said, "Well, it's like Jesus Christ, John. You can know all about Him, you can talk all about Him, but I promise you the day that you meet Him, you won't be the same." It was that day that John received the Lord.

I say that there's no coincidence because two, three, four years prior to that, Sharon had been going with me to Iola and Osceola, where we would drive down two hours Sunday and two hours back, two hours Wednesday, two hours back. All that time she's down there, and she's ministering to people, she's discipling people, and she's doing all that. I remember when John and her told me they were going to be getting married, I thought God had prepared his helpmeet.

I say that because when I think of John, I think of what Paul wrote in Colossians 1. As he wrote the book to the Laodicean church age, he describes two types of Christians, and he says this to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse. The saints are those Christians that are what I call casual Christians. They end up in life as a casualty of Christianity. Then you have the faithful brethren. The faithful brethren are those that are committed believers. As I watched John grow, and I tried to keep my eye on him while I was in town and on Monday night Bible studies, and we'd visit, I can say this: John was a faithful brother. He was consistent. He was a committed believer and a committed servant. John was never, never casual about his Christianity. His Christianity was real. No coincidence with God. He prepared the man, and he prepared his helpmeet, and they served faithfully.

I'd like to stand with me again. This time, turn to hymn number 146.

Sooner or later the skies will be bright, tears will be all wiped away. Sooner or later then cometh the light, night will be turned into day. Sooner or later cares will have flown, sunshine and gladness will see. Sooner or later God call it His own, with Him forever to be.

Sooner or later our Lord knows the hour, He'll send beloved Son. Sooner or later in His might and power, our battles all will be won. Sooner or later cares will have flown, sunshine and gladness will see. Sooner or later God call it His own, with Him forever to be.

Sooner or later, yes, sooner for some, darkness will all then be passed. Sooner or later our Savior will come, with Him will your lot be cast. Sooner or later cares will have flown, sunshine and gladness will see. Sooner or later God call it His own, with Him forever to be.

154. For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son to die on Calvary's tree, from sin to set me free. Someday He's coming back, what glory that will be. Wonderful His love to me. Let's do that one more time. For God so loved the world, He gave His only Son to die on Calvary's tree, from sin to set me free. Someday He's coming back, what glory that will be. Wonderful His love to me. Amen. You can be seated again.

I first came to Kansas City in 1977, and I started out as a youth pastor. I have been blessed in our church to actually have some of the kids that were in my youth group back then are with me today in the church. Our next speaker, Troy McKinney, asked to say something about John. He doesn't know John like Terry did, but I was excited because of the fact that in the year that he knew him, he made a real impact into his life. Troy McKinney, would you come on up? Believe it or not, Troy was 12 or 13 years old when I first met him, and it's good to have him here today.

I think I know what most of you all are thinking: what can I possibly know about John Gallens? After all, I've only known him about a year, as Bob said. Well, it's true, I don't really know a lot about John. I didn't know his favorite color or who his favorite sports teams were or the kind of music he liked. I didn't know if he hunted or fished or if we had anything else in common. The fact is, I really didn't know John that well, at least not like many of you today. However, everything I knew about John, all of the important things, all of the things that mattered, I learned in less than a year.

Although I didn't know a lot about John personally, I can tell you about what I did know and what John meant to me.

The first thing I learned about John Gallens early on, in fact, in just a few months, was that he truly loved others.

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

As Janet and I began to attend regularly, Sunday after Sunday, during the meet and greet, he would walk across the aisle and personally shake my hand. At first, I thought it was because we set across from one another, but I quickly learned he sought me out and always shook my hand and warmly welcomed me.

The second thing I learned from John Gallens: he was faithful and consistent. Every Sunday, I knew he was going to walk across the aisle and greet me and genuinely welcome me.

Lastly, and most importantly, John taught me what it was to have a servant's heart and attitude.

Galatians 6:9-10 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Sunday after Sunday, week after week, I witnessed John's servant attitude. Whether it was moving tables after Sunday service for Bible study or greeting others or organizing the mowing crew, he showed me through his own actions he was willing to do whatever was needed. He showed me there was always something you could do, no matter how big or how small.

Not many of you may know this, but there was a time just months ago that I confessed to my wife and others that I was struggling with staying here at Old Paths Baptist Church. Although I knew this is where God wanted us, I just felt like an outsider. I know that seems hard to believe since we've known many of you for years: Bob and Barb, the Brokines, John and Jan Hill, the Guy singers, and many, many others. In fact, we had attended here for a short time once before. As I wrestled with this and confided with others, John offered to pray for me and began to hold

me accountable. If I missed a Sunday, and I missed a few, he would lovingly say at the meet and greet, "We missed you Sunday." He began to encourage me to get more involved. "Join a prayer group," he said. "Get to know people," he said. Little by little, Sunday by Sunday, I knew that God was working in my own heart.

That was John Gallens' cell phone number, and it was the very first phone number I entered into my contact list from anyone here at Old Paths Baptist Church. From April 12th to August 21st of this year, we spoke or texted pretty much weekly, always kind, always the encourager. His last text to me was August 21st: "Thank you, Troy, especially for your prayers."

I've learned long ago that many, many people, hundreds if not thousands, will come and go in our lives. Some will be but a short memory, others no memory at all. But then there are some, even for just a short, short while, that will leave a lasting impression on us that will often change who we are. Loving, faithful, consistent, and a servant's heart. All of these things, the things that are important and the things that matter, that was the John Gallens that I knew.

O God, my Father, there is no shadow of turning with Thee. Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not. As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be. Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided. Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their courses above. Join with all nature in manifold witness. To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love. Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided. Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth. Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside. Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness, morning by morning new mercies I see. All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided. Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

One more hymn. I forgot that part. Stand with me one more time. One hundred and forty-nine. And then we'll get back to the Old Paths boys. One hundred and forty-nine, "When We See Christ."

Oft times the day seems long, our trials hard to bear. We're tempted to complain, to murmur and despair. But Christ will soon appear, to catch His bride away. All tears forever over, in God's eternal day. It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small, when we see Christ. One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase. So bravely run the race, till we see Christ.

Sometimes the day looks dark, with naught a ray of light. We're tossed and driven on, no human help in sight. But there is one in heaven, who knows our deepest care. Let Jesus solve your problem, just go to Him in prayer. It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small, when we see Christ. One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase. So bravely run the race, till we see Christ.

Life's day will soon be o'er, all storms forever pass. We'll cross the great divide, to glory's safe at last. We'll share the joys of heaven, the harp of home, a crown. The tempter will be banished, we'll lay our burden down. It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small, when we see Christ. One glimpse of His dear face, all sorrow will erase. So bravely run the race, till we see Christ. You may be seated.

This next song that we're going to play here, we played one day at church service, and as soon as the service was over, John came and found Don and let him know that it was his favorite song. So obviously, we're going to sing it for him.

Just a closer walk with Thee, granted Jesus, is my plea. Daily walking close to Thee, let it be, Holy Lord, let it be. I am weaker, I watch strong. Jesus, keep me from all wrong. Now be satisfied, as long as I walk near Thee, close to Thee.

Through this world of toil and snare, if I falter, Lord, who cares? And who with me my burden shares? None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee. When my life's work is o'er, and time for me will be no more, guide me gently, safely, to Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore.

Just a closer walk with Thee, granted Jesus, is my plea. Daily walking close to Thee, let it be, Holy Lord, let it be.

It was a pleasure for me to meet all of John's family. Many of them I had not met before, some of them I had, but his sister, Carrie Emerson from Georgia, is just a sweet little young gal, and she wanted to come up and say a few words. So, hon, come on up here, and we're glad that you're here today.

Hello. He told me that before. Okay, I had to type this up, and I apologize for that because I just wanted to keep my thoughts straight. First of all, good morning. Like I said, my name is Terry Emerson, and I'm John's baby sister, of which he told me all the time. When my father died, he elected himself the patriarch of the family and told us repeatedly at family gatherings that as the patriarch, we had to mind him and do what he said, and he went ignored.

So personally, first from the Gallens family, we want to thank each and every one of you for the love, support, care, and concern you've shown to John, Sharon, and all the rest of us. We feel like part of your family, and it warms our hearts to know how much you took care of both of them. I thought I was going to make it farther than this.

Now I need to kind of apologize. I need to explain to you that the man you called John was to us Sonny. Don't ask me where he got that name. We all don't know. It has just been what we've called him all our lives. So that's how I will refer to him from now on. He wanted us to break it when he got to be older. Didn't happen. So I'm sorry, Sonny. Everybody knows about it.

Anyway, I just wanted to share a short story, a vision, and a memory of mine. You knew him. He loved animals, and he loved animals all his life, and he had pretty strange animals. He had a pet white rat one time. He had a snapping turtle, both of which my parents made him get rid of. But this was when he was probably 12, and I was about five. So our dad was a pharmacist for the various stores in Kansas City, and at the time of the story, he was working for Katz Drug. So if

any of you are old enough to remember Katz Drug, that's where my dad had worked. They had kept a monkey in a cage in the stores, and I don't know at this point, so many years ago, whether they had had it for sale or it was just to bring the kids in. I don't know.

My dad worked at one Katz store on a Saturday, and he was to work at another one, and he was told that he had to bring the monkey home and bring it with him to the next day. So when he brought it in, of course, my mom immediately said, "Put it in the basement." Sometime in the middle of the night, Sonny had felt real sorry for this monkey and decided to let it out of its cage. Having been caged up for who knows how long, that monkey bolted for freedom, and Sonny got scared and ran upstairs, shutting the door.

So now you got to kind of fast forward to the next morning, and we were woke up to my mom screaming, "John James Gallens, get down in this basement!" And we knew somebody was always in big trouble if they used our full names. So they got us all up, and we ran down into the basement. When we got down there, we just kind of stopped in our tracks. That was a vivid sight I will never forget. There was monkey poop on every square inch of that basement: walls, pipes, floor, etc. You could not walk into the basement. So my mom said, "Sonny, you're not to leave this basement until this place is spotless." Sonny told my parents, "I'm sorry, but I thought the monkey would feel better if he was out of the cage." So my dad had to capture the monkey, put it back in the cage, and took it to the car, and all the rest of us made a quick exit because we didn't want to have to be recruited into the job. Once we got out of earshot of our parents, we just fell down laughing. We thought it was the funniest thing.

So I wanted to share this for you because the sight of how that basement looked, and that's over 60 years ago, is still so vivid in my mind that I can still smell it. But it's a memory that I will always treasure from him. He was my big brother, and I can see how he affected you all, and you all have affected us. Again, I want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all you've done for us. Thank you.

I'm going to sing one more song, and then Bob's going to come on up and speak. You guys know that's not easy for me, but that's my intention. You know, it's funny, I've known John Gallens since I was in high school because when I first started going to the Baptist Temple way back in the day, I knew him, I knew who he was, but I didn't really know him. I didn't really get to know John until a few years ago when you guys started coming here. The time that I had with him made me wish I had known him all the way back then.

John, as everybody has already said, and I appreciate hearing everyone that has talked, he was just a neat guy. I mean, he would have me rolling in laughter with some of the funny things that he would say, some of them I can't repeat in front of you guys. But he just had such a dry way about him. He would say things, and I just would, I can't believe that really came out of his mouth.

But the thing that I wanted to share with you, what impressed me so much at the end, spending time with John over these last couple of months and visiting him in the hospital, that was such a testimony to me, and that I hope will impact me for the rest of my life, and that I will never forget, was John's amazing attitude through this whole ordeal. So here's somebody who you find

out you have cancer, and not only cancer, it's one of the worst kinds of cancers that you can have with one of the worst prognoses around that can just destroy your body so quickly. Every time I went in to see him in the hospital, he just had a smile on his face. I never once saw him, I mean, he had to be physically in pain and feeling miserable, and every time I saw him, he just smiled and he said, "Thank you for coming," and we would just talk.

I just, I thought about all the times in my own life, I thought about the times that I get down and I mope about the dumbest things in the world in life, and I feel sorry for myself, and I'm like, here's a guy who's going through the worst thing imaginable, and he had the best attitude in the world. It just made me think of over there in 1 Corinthians, there's a very simple verse that says, "If any man loved God, the same is known of him." You know, I think there's a lot of things that you could say about John, but for me, the thing is that if you knew John, you knew that John loved God. I hope that that's what people will say about me someday. I don't know, there's lots of things that people will probably say about me that will be true, unfortunately, but you know, when it comes to John, John loved the Lord, and there was no doubt about it. You heard it from everybody that already got to talk about him, and if you spent any time with him, you just walked away knowing that. What a great testimony, and I hope that we can find a piece of that to have in our own lives, that we maintain that kind of an attitude at this church, because John's going to be missed, but you know, the way that he lived his life and the way that he carried himself is something that we can carry on if we learn those lessons from him. So I appreciate it, Bob, thanks for giving me just a minute.

I'm going to sing one more song, and then Bob's going to come on up and speak.

Some glorious morning, sorrow will cease. Some glorious morning, all will be peace. Heartaches all ended, school days all done. Heaven will open, Jesus will come. Some golden daybreak, Jesus will come. Some golden daybreak, battles all won. He'll shout the victory, break through the blue. Some golden daybreak for me, for you.

Sad hearts will gladden. All shall be bright. Two-worse dark night, changed in a moment, like Him to be. O glorious daybreak, Jesus I'll see. Some golden daybreak, Jesus will come. Some golden daybreak, battles all won. He'll shout the victory, break through the blue. Some golden daybreak for me, for you.

O what a meeting there in the skies. No tears nor crying, shall dim our eyes. Loved ones united, eternally. O what a daybreak, that morn will be. Some golden daybreak, Jesus will come. Some golden daybreak, battles all won. He'll shout the victory, break through the blue. Some golden daybreak for me, for you.

III. The Purpose of This Service

Again, I want to take just a moment to thank you all for being here today. I know that your presence here is a great comfort to the family and to Sharon, and I just want you to know that I appreciate you being here today. I want to take just a few moments and talk about the reason why we're really here today. I think that there are some things that we need to understand.

This service can do absolutely nothing for John. No prayers offered now can do anything for him. The offering of money won't do any good, and really, this service isn't really for him. It's about him, but it's really for us. There are some things that we need to accomplish today. My promise to John in his last hours was that we would have a service for him, and he wanted a preaching service in his church, just like he came here. He loved this church, and there's no better place and time. John loved this church. He loved Sunday morning. He loved Thursday night, and he loved the preaching of the Word of God, and this service today is totally dedicated to his life, the life of John Gallens, and his walk and his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray. Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus, and we do love You today. Lord, we do thank You for the folks that have come out today and the testimony that one man's life can have. I know, Lord, that everybody here is here today because they knew John, and probably many more that wanted to be here but could not. But Lord, we just thank You for the time that we have today to just take these few moments today in a place where he loved to hear the Word of God preached, and a place where he gathered the Word of God and grew spiritually, and where he ministered to the people of this church. We thank You today, Father, that may we leave here today a little richer, a little closer to You, understanding maybe a little bit better what the Christian life really is all about. We'll be careful to give You all the honor and the glory and the praise in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

198. That's the number this morning. Almost 49 years of ministry, I've done 198 funerals. I keep track of each one. In all those years and all those funerals, I've never had one to do for someone who was as close to my heart and life in ministry as John was. Most times, they're somebody's grandma or grandfather or mom or dad or somebody that doesn't have a place enough, and that's great. I always try to do a good job.

Danny talked about John's dry sense of humor. John and I would talk a lot, and he'd always ask me questions. He asked me one time, he says, "Bobby," he says, "You do a lot of funerals, and you do a lot of weddings." He says, "Can I ask you a question?" I said, "Sure, John." He says, "What do you prefer to do, weddings or funerals?" You know, I know the standard answer, but you never gave John the standard answer. I said, "John, well, I'll tell you, I really enjoy funerals more than weddings." He said, "Really, why is that?" And I said, "Because I've done hundreds of weddings, and many of them didn't stick, but every funeral I did stuck."

In all those years, nobody, I've been lucky, I really have. I've had to bury friends and people that I loved and my own mom and my dad, and you know, and all of that, and you know, that's a family thing, I get that. But you know, John was something special, as Sharon is something special to our church here. He had and he understood my heart for ministry in a very unique way. John had been with me for many years. I've known John and Sharon for probably close to 35 years, and he was always there for me, and he was always there for my family, and he seemed to know what I needed and just stepped in and got it done. John was the kind of guy that you never had to tell him what he needed to do.

John loved people, as has been stated here many times today, and was always willing to give them what they needed from the Word of God. Make no bones about it, John knew his Bible.

Over the years, he had put it together, and he had a depth to him that nobody really saw maybe until you got close to him. John was a very quiet man. He wasn't someone who would like to walk around pretending he was in charge. He didn't say much, but when he did say something, it was always worth listening to. He wasn't flashy. He really was at his best behind the scenes, making other people look good and helping them to be better. He was a very humble man, yet I tell you this morning, he was one of the most courageous men that I have ever met in my life.

You know, we talk about funerals today, 198 of them or so, and I see it all the time. It's always about the celebration of somebody's life, and I get that. I don't have a problem with that at all. I mean, every one of us could take the rest of this day and talk about all the things that John taught us and that we learned from John in his life and all of the things that came about because we knew him in life. But you know, for a child of God, it's not just about life, it's about the lessons that we learned in their death, and we can't miss those today. For a child of God, it's not just how he lives his life, but how he goes home at the end of his life.

Psalms 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

I want to focus on that for just a few moments this morning: what John gained when he left this world. I don't necessarily want to talk about the pain and the suffering and the heartache, the struggles, the disappointments in life, but I want to focus on the victory that he gained in his relationship with Christ at the moment of death. There are some lessons here for all of us today. If John could come back and speak to us, and I know he can't do that, I know what he'd say. It's one of the reasons why I enjoy funerals more than weddings, not that I don't like weddings, but funerals are unique unto themselves because I always feel like the person that dies, they're on the other side now, and the Bible says in this life we look through a glass darkly, but then face to face. They're on the other side now, and they know it all, they understand it all, but now they're in a position where they can't come back and say to us what they would. I've always taken that responsibility that that's my job. I know what John knew in life, and I know what John understands now, and if he could speak to us, I know what he'd say, and he can't do that, so he asked me to do it for him. His last words to me was that he loved me, and he wanted me to have a preaching service, and I told him that I would do that, and he told me what he wanted me to say.

IV. The Wisdom of Death

In the Bible, Solomon was the wisest man that ever walked the earth. In our Bibles, he writes three of the five wisdom books, and in Ecclesiastes 7:1-2, he makes one of the most incredible statements of truth that you'll ever find throughout life.

Ecclesiastes 7:1-2 A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

In 49 years of ministry, going through my Bible and building my own relationship with God, somebody asked me one time what was the greatest truth that I ever learned in all my time in the Bible and my walk with God, and it was easy for me to answer: the greatest thing that I ever learned in life about me and God is that we don't think alike. He lives on another whole spiritual plane than we do as human beings. The Bible is not a complicated book. The Bible is just a book that contains God's thoughts on everything in life, His viewpoint, and how He looks at everything in life and what He thinks about it. The Word of God completely goes against the natural way that we think, it really does.

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

In life, we try to get ahead in everything and get ahead of everybody. Being number one seems to be the goal of so many people, yet the Bible says in Matthew 20:16 that the first shall be last and the last shall be first. God doesn't look at it the way we do. In fact, the more I got into the Bible, the more I saw the Bible was a great book of contrast: the way God looks at things and the way we look at things. In life, we try to get all that we can. We try to get money, we try to get possessions, we try to get status, we try to get power, all the things that we actually think are going to make us happy in life. Yet the Bible teaches that if you want to keep it, you got to give it away.

In this world, we put such a value on life, and I'm not saying that we shouldn't try to live as long as we can, hold on to it as long as we can. Yet the Bible says in Matthew 10:39 that he that loses his life shall find it. In life here today at a funeral, everybody wants to put the emphasis on the celebration of life, yet the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 7:1, "the day of one's death is better than the day of his birth." Now, why is that? What is that all about?

The Christian life is about getting the right perspective, getting the right understanding, getting the right priorities. The Christian life is not hard to understand. It's simply you and me getting saved, getting a Bible, which is God's mind, and then letting this mind be in us which was also in Christ Jesus. As you grow, you change through life, looking at things the way humans look at it, the way we do, and begin to look at it the way God sees it. That's what made John so valuable to me in our ministry together. He saw it completely the way God sees it.

If John could speak to us today, I know at Ecclesiastes 7, there are four things that he'd want me to tell you. Four things about God, the Bible, life, death. Four things that most people will go through their whole life and never see and understand.

V. The Reality and Certainty of Death

The first thing that he would have me to say is found in Ecclesiastes 7:2, where it says, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting." Now, that's a contrast, it really is. We don't look at it that way. We don't think about it that way. I mean, let's be honest, nobody really wants to be here today. We're here because of Sharon, we're here because of the family, we're here because we love John, but we don't go through the paper to see who's dead and

we can go visit this afternoon. We don't, we don't like being here. We're here because we have to be.

1.) There is a reality of death.

Nothing brings that home closer than being here today, and we don't like that. Death is a reality of life. Death is just as much a part of life as being born, and we try to put that thought as far away from us as we can. Somebody asked me a couple of weeks ago, "Isn't it strange how that in marriage relationships that men seem to always die before the wife does?" And I said, "It doesn't seem strange to me at all." "What do you mean?" I said, "Because most husbands, most men won't go to the doctor. They don't want to know what's wrong with them." I've met people that say, "I don't go to the doctor. If I got something wrong with me, I don't want to know it," because having something wrong with us can lead us to a place where it may be serious, and we just don't want to face that fact. It's a truth that I see over and over again.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 talks about the cycle of life.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

He says, "There's a time to be born, but there's also a time to die." He says, "To everything there is a season." Your life and my life are the same. We have a springtime in our life, we have a summertime in our life, and we have a fall time in our life, and then winter comes. There's a reality of death.

The second thing that he'd tell us this morning, he'd tell us that not only is there a reality of death, but there's a certainty of death.

2.) There is a certainty of death.

Ecclesiastes 7:2 says, "for that is the end of all men." Life is so short, life is so fragile. I saw John when he went into the hospital just several months ago. He had probable breathing, found out he had congested heart failure, his blood count was off the charts. They did some tests, found out he had acute leukemia, and just that short period of time, he's gone from us.

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Proverbs 27:1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Hey, we all got an appointment with death, and you may cancel the appointment with your dentist, you may cancel the appointment with your doctor, you may cancel the appointment with whoever, you will not cancel that appointment. We all will make that appointment.

Psalms 90:9-12 is one of the great passages on life and death.

Psalms 90:9-12 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

It says, "Man lives to be threescore and ten," that's 70, and then he tells us to number our days and apply our hearts unto wisdom because we need to stop and realize that there is a reality of death, but there is a certainty of death. You know, there's not a funeral that I preach that I don't know and understand that if Jesus doesn't come someday, somebody's going to preach my funeral. There's a reason why it's better to be here today in the house of mourning than in the house of feasting, because this is the end of all men, and the living, you and I, need to lay it to our hearts and understand that.

VI. The Hope and Comfort in Death

The third thing that John would tell us is that there is a reality of death and there is a certainty in death, and then John would have me to tell you that in spite of all that, there's a hope in death.

3.) *There is a hope in death.*

That hope will only be found in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary for you and for me. Jesus paid our sin debt, and on the cross, redeemed man by dying in his place. At a time in John's life, as Terry talked about this morning, John saw the need for his Savior. He saw the need that he was a sinner, that on his own he could never merit salvation with God, that all the good works that he could do, all the things that he could do, his life would not count against his sin debt, and he trusted the Lord as his own personal Savior.

There's a reality of death, it is a certainty of death, and you don't like to hear this much anymore, but there's a reality of hell and there's a reality of heaven, and man makes his choice based on what God did for him. John understood, he understood Romans 6:23.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

That's a terrible part of that verse. The wages of sin is death. That's true, brother, our sin is going to put us in the lake of fire, death, eternal separation from God. The wages of sin is death, but I am so glad that God didn't stop there. It says, "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

John found that. John realized in his life, as Romans 3:23 says, that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. He realized the Bible said in Romans 3:10 that there's none righteous, no, not one. Somebody pointed out to him Romans 10:9-10.

Romans 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Somebody took up that old black Bible and opened it up to Romans 10 after laying all that out to John and showed him Romans 10:13.

Romans 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

That's how John got saved. That's how I got saved, because that's the only way to get saved.

I had a great conversation with Jamie and his lovely fiancée, Diana, and we had a good talk this week. He told me one of those amazing stories that he wanted me to relate to you today about his own salvation. He was in jail at one point a long time ago in life, and he said he was in the county jail. They locked you down 23 out of 24 hours. You only get out for an hour, so you'll want to beat that system, so everybody signs up to go to church just to get out. I get it. So he went to church, kept going to church, and one day he found the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior. I was impressed, Jamie, how you opened up your Bible, and you still had the verses that your dad had showed you and given you. I mean, I'm looking forward for both of you maybe to help in your life to learn it even better, and you got a great gal there to help you guys. I'm just excited about that.

But he told me this story: after he got saved, he got to the phone and called John on the phone. John answered the phone, and he says, "Dad?" And he says, "Yes, son." He says, "I got something really important I need to tell you." And John said, "Well, wait a minute, son, because I got something really important to tell you." And he said, "Okay, Dad, you go first." And he said, "Son, I just got saved." He had gotten saved. Well, Jamie had gotten saved. Boy, if you can't see the hand of God in all of this, God is incredibly always in charge, as Terry said.

John found and understood that the only hope that man has is the Lord Jesus Christ. Their lives, our hope today, our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. John never looked back. He never did. Nothing and nobody could ever stop him. He had some tough times in his life as a Christian. He had disappointments like we all do. He had things that didn't go the way we all in Christianity get the short end of the stick at some point in life, but it never stopped John. He just kept on going because he knew that ultimately all things work together for good to them that love God, who are called according to His purpose. His life was never the same. God brought him out of the darkness and into the light of God's glorious Word, and he'd tell you that that same salvation can be everybody's here today. If you don't have it, it isn't just reserved for certain people. You don't have to live in an income bracket. The Bible says that God died for every man, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." John found that unique salvation that changed his life.

The world will do a lot of things for you, none of it any good. But the world will conform you, the world will inform you, the world will misinform you, and the world will try to reform you. But the Bible does something that the world can never do. Where the world may conform you, inform you, misinform you, or reform you, the Bible will transform you. It'll transform you into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ at the instance of salvation.

Then the last thing John would tell us today if he could, it was all that we've heard so far today: the fact that it's better to be here than a house of feasting because this is the end of all men, and then the living, us, must lay it to our hearts. The fact that there is a reality of death, a certainty of death, but also a hope in death.

4.) *There is a comfort in death.*

Paul told us in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

He said that Jesus is coming back someday, and Jesus is going to reunite all of us, all the ones who get taken up in the rapture of the church, some future event, hopefully before I finish the service. All of us that go up in the great rapture of the church will meet all the ones that died and went home to be with the Lord. What a great day that's going to be as Danny sang my favorite song, "Some Glorious Morning, Jesus will come, school days all through, some glorious morning, He's coming for me and you." Wow, yeah, that's where it's all at, my friend, I'm telling you.

It's a thing where Paul said that Jesus is coming back. We'll all be together again, never to be separated. We'll be together for all of eternity. Then it says in 1 Thessalonians 4:18.

1 Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

It's an incredible concept, and this is what the world can never get to. Sometimes even God's people can't get to it. This is why they have to have a celebration of life. Again, I'm not fighting it, but to have that and completely miss the blessing of a child of God going home.

Years ago, I did a funeral, and it was pouring down rain. We had to do the funeral inside, and we had to go to the graveside. This guy that I was doing the funeral for, he was a great guy, he loved the Lord, and it's one of those things that you just do what you got to do. I'll never forget this, as I was walking out there, rain was just pouring down, and a lady coming out of it, she looked at me, knew I was the preacher, and she says to everybody on me, she said, "What a terrible day for it to have to have a funeral." I didn't say anything, I understand what she was saying, but I

thought about that for a moment, and the Holy Spirit of God spoke in my heart, and I just kept it to myself, and I never forgot it. I said to myself, "You know, that's not right. Any day a man goes home to be with the Lord is a good day for a funeral." That's John.

Solomon knew that. Solomon knew that there was a reality of death. Solomon knew that there was a certainty in death, but Solomon also knew that there was a hope in death. Today, that hope of Jesus Christ is our comfort in death. It's the perfect peace that Isaiah 26:3 talks about.

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

It's the peace that passeth all understanding that keeps our hearts and mind at Philippians 4:7.

Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Now today, here in this time that we have for John, what he wanted for us to have, now we the living must lay it to our hearts.

VII. Death and the Rapture: A Divine Perspective

It's a funny thing, as Christians, we all look forward to the rapture, but none of us really look forward to dying. I mean, we all want to go to heaven, we just don't want to go through that process of dying to get there. The rapture to us is such an easy elevator ride to the top. I mean, you know, you just wake up some morning, you have no choice, you're gone. That's a lot better than being in a hospital and dying or being in a car wreck and dying or being shot and all those things. We think that the rapture is such a great thing, but the death and dying is such a terrible thing.

Yet Psalms 139:1-12 is probably the greatest passage in all the Bible on death and us missing the rapture. I just want to read it here for a moment.

Psalms 139:1-12 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

He's saying here in verse 9, "If I take the wings of the morning, even there shall thy right hand lead me." There's the rapture of the church. We talk about it, "I'll fly away, some glad morning when this life is over, I'll fly away." That's the rapture, that's God taking us out, and everybody's

so excited about going in the rapture. But, "Oh, I don't want to die. I don't think a funeral home, I don't want to have a funeral, a casket, all those things that go along with it." Dying seems to be such a terrible thing.

But yet, verse 11 says, "If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me." That's somebody that misses the rapture. That's somebody that lays in a hospital bed. That's somebody in room 6318 at KU going home to be with the Lord at 6:38 in the morning. That's somebody that doesn't make the rapture. That's somebody that dies in this life, never having the exciting time of taking and being part of the rapture. Yet the Bible says, "even the night shall be light about me." I'm telling you something, the rapture is not such a glorious thing that we all go through, and God made death such a bummer. I'm telling you, the Bible talks about it just like closing your eyes to sleep and waking up in God's presence. The Bible says, "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: and in death the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." I don't believe for a moment that the rapture is a great thing and death is such a terrible thing.

Jesus said in 1 Corinthians 15:55 that God took the sting out of death.

1 Corinthians 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The message for all of us is to lay up into our hearts today is that death is the end of all men. There's a reality, there's a certainty, there's a hope, there's a comfort. 189, and the number will just keep getting higher if Jesus doesn't come, and Jesus is our only hope.

VIII. John's Enduring Legacy

Sharon, I'm so glad today that evolution is wrong. I'm so glad today that we're not all just a biological accident, crawled out of the creation someplace back there and then evolved up to what we are today, and that when you die, that it's all over, there's no afterlife, there's no ever see. If that was true, then it would truly be goodbye today, that we never see John again. I'll tell you what, I'm glad that the atheists are wrong today. I'm glad that the agnostics are wrong today, the fact that there is a God, and He cares, and He loves, and He died for us on the cross. Maybe they can never get to that. My prayer is someday that they will, but I'm telling you right now, we'll be together again, and there is our hope, and there, honey, is our comfort of what God has given us, the promises in the Word of God.

This is what John would tell us today if he could, and yet he did, because through his life and through his testimony and by allowing God to use his life, and yes, even his death, that we not only celebrate the things that we learn from him, but we celebrate what he gained in going home to be with the Lord, and the incredible courage he had, courage in life and courage in death, that death that is the end of all men, and we are the living, need to lay it to our hearts.

Sharon, I got something that I want to give you today, and I wanted to do it publicly. The first thing I want to do is I do this on occasion, the Bible that I preached his funeral sermon out of, I want to give this to you. I've marked all the verses in it that I used in the sermon, and they're listed in the front, because I know that there's going to be some tough times down the line, and there'll be good times and bad times, and you know as well as I do, darling, that the only source

of comfort you're going to have is the book that God's given you, and I wanted this to be yours. I wanted you to have it.

Then I got something else for you. Years ago, when we first started our church, we started our website, and I put a lot of material on it that I knew that after I would be gone, that could go on as a legacy to help people continue to grow. One of the first things I did was I took on a Sunday morning, and I outlined every book of the Bible. I wanted people to have a source where if you really wanted to learn the Bible and put it together, that you could go to it, and you could actually one at a time, you could get every book of the Bible. I would break it down in all the natural divisions, I'd give you the themes, I'd give you the key verses. I just laid everything out for you.

Years later, and it's been on there for a long time now, people were wanting to have it in a book form, and we have a number of books that we do, and all my books have sold well under a million copies, I want you to know that. It's a thing where John Bougette, who does all of our publishing here, and many of you help him in the proofreading, he began to do that, and with all the other things he's got going, church history and everything else he's trying to get out, he just couldn't get it all done. In the last year of John's life, John wanted to finish the books of the Bible, so he took it upon himself to finish out and lay out out of what I did on that deal, taking it and using it and putting it into a book form. He finished every book of the Bible for us, and he gave it to John up in the hospital about two weeks, maybe, before he died. We have worked feverishly, John's work feverishly this week, to put it in a book form, and we found out that it's going to be like four volumes, but we got Volume One done today of the first edition, and I want to present that to you along with this Bible. I'll have one for every head of the family here. They'll be in our bookstore.

We wrote a dedicatory in the front of it for John, and I want to read that to you before I give it to you. You know, most people when they're dying, they don't think about anybody else. They think about themselves. They think about what they're going to lose. They're thinking about what they can't do anymore. But John wasn't that way. John always thought about people, and that's why some of you here today that knew him and loved him, you need to be for him what he can no longer be for himself. If he touched your life, then you live your life as being part of his legacy based on what Christ has done for him and for you.

Here's what it says: "This book is dedicated to the life of John Gallens. It was because of his labor of love that it is in your hands today. As a person gets older, if they have any sense, the shiny things of this world tend to lose their luster. A wise man wants to leave something behind that's going to last. David Brainerd, the great missionary, died after only three years on the mission field, yet his diary that he left behind inspired countless young men and women to go to the mission field with the same burden that David Brainerd left behind in the words of his diary. David, the greatest psalmist of Israel, left behind countless psalms that we still read and enjoy over 3,000 years later. David, despite any problems he had, left behind such a legacy of godliness and holiness that every king after him was compared to David because he became the standard for what God's king should act like. This book will help countless people not only to learn the Bible, but understand the Bible as a whole. That legacy will pass from discipler to disciple, from father to son, from mother to daughter, and on and on, all because one man chose to use his free

time to put in available information about the Bible in an easy to understand format that he could put into a book for others to use and learn from. How many lives will this affect for the glory of God? John Gallens did this not knowing it in the last year of his life."

Proverbs 27:1 Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

"When John volunteered to work on this, he had no idea the time that he had left on earth. This labor of love emulates the type of man that John Gallens was. He did what he did because of who he was. Despite any problems and ups and downs in life, his whole life as a Christian was a labor of love for his Savior."

Then I put a little verse underneath that.

John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

I want to give these to you today, sweetheart. I love you very much.

One final thing that I just want to say from a personal note. John was my brother in Christ. He was my friend. He was my co-laborer. He was my fellow soldier. He was my fellow part of this band of brothers in this church that hold the line with the Word of God, and I loved him and will miss him terribly. He not only left a hole in my ministry, but he left a hole in my heart.

I talked to Carolyn up in Lincoln this morning, Miller, and as most of you know, we have a church up there of about 30 or 40 people that don't have a pastor, and they're part of our church, and we send teams up there to minister to them, and John had a team, and they love John. She told me this morning they wanted to get down here, but the weather is so bad that they couldn't, and she told me, she said, "You know," she said, "I just want you to tell those people that John touched people's lives up here. He always would call and ask about this and pray for this and want to know what needed to be done before he got there." That's the kind of guy John was.

Somebody asked me the other day, "How do you replace a man like John in your life and in your ministry?" You don't. You just retire his number. He was something special. Going right up to the Eastern Gate with him, as I was with him till he slipped into that final sleep that he never woke up from, I learned a great truth that I never want to forget in my own life. As I laid there or sat there with him as he laid there, and I hummed some songs to him and held his hand and watched him come in and out, and finally they sedated him enough that he dropped, God really touched me with something that I never, never want to forget, and I want to leave it with you today, and then I'm finished.

The people that God will give you in life, people that God will bring into your world in ministry, your family, your friends, just your relationships, the ones who get your heart and soul for God's work, that God will give you, that they'll be there with you and for you. I learned coming out of this that the people that God gives you, that we need to love them. We need to take care of them. We need to tell each other that we love each other, because even though God gave them to us, I'm telling you right now, there will come a time when God will want them back, and don't find ourselves standing at a casket or standing at a graveside saying the things that we should have said when we had the chance to say it. I think Paul said it best at Timothy when he said, "Do thy

diligence to come before winter," because there's a winter time coming in all of our lives, and I never want to forget the people that God has given to me to be in my ministry with me. I never want to forget that God gave them to me, and they're special to me, and I need to take care of them because there's going to come a day when God's going to want them back, and they won't be here anymore.

If you're here this morning and you know the Lord as your own personal Savior, my advice to you, if John touched your life, make your life count for him. I guarantee you, every one of you that he touched your life, his prayer for you was you to be better and serve the Lord. His legacy will go on in the people of the lives he touched if we carry on that legacy by doing what we need to do for the Lord.

If you're here this morning and you've never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, I want you to know that that salvation can be yours. I'll be here, I'll be upstairs, I'll be around if you want to know how for sure you can know that your sins are forgiven and how you can know for sure that if you die today, you'd go home to be with the Lord. I'd be glad to open up a Bible and show you what Terry showed John, what John has showed many, what you can see today, and that is that God loved you, He died for you, and the thing that He wants you to know that there is a reality in death, there's a certainty in death, but there's a hope in death, and in that hope lies the comfort in death.