

Prelude Music and slide show: pianist (Kaleigh Stroink)

Be Still My Soul — 296 (Brendon Johnson)

Reading: Our Final Journey (Bruce)

Day by Day — 448 (Brendon Johnson)

Scripture reading: 1 Corinthians 15.35-57 (Bruce)

O That Will Be Glory — 556 (Brendon Johnson)

Testimonials: (Family members)

The Lord's My Shepherd — 508 (Brendon Johnson)

Text: Jn 3.16

Over seven years ago, Joanne gave me a letter with her requests for her memorial service. At that time, she had already experienced health declines and expected to go to heaven “any day.”

“Any day” took more than seven years!

In her letter, Joanne said this to me:

“I would like you to preach a good gospel message to those attending at the church service. There will be [many] attending [who] need to hear this, and [I] hope the Holy Spirit will bless it to their heart and souls.”

I am happy to have a commission like this, even though I always try to preach the gospel at a funeral service. I thought I'd share her words to me so that you could get a sense of the burden of her heart for this day and this service.

No one is perfect, but Joanne wanted more than anything for you who are here to think more of her Saviour than of herself. That's what we will try to do today.

One question I always ask myself for these services is, “What text should I use?”

For this one, the most famous verse of the Bible came to mind:

Jn 3.16 ¶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Proposition: The gospel offers one thing all men need, but can never gain, and most men reject despite its value.

My title for the message is this:

You Can Have Everlasting Life

I. The gift of eternal life

- A. God offers eternal life because it is something we do not have
 1. Many services like this one — every day
 2. Everyone knows, someday I will come to my own end (even if I don't like to talk about it)
- B. God offers eternal life because it is something we can't get on our own
 1. You can't buy it
 2. You can't earn it
 3. You don't deserve it

All of this is because you are a son or daughter of Adam, who forfeited eternal life thousands of years ago. He passed on his sentence to every generation.

- He sinned
- We sin

Ezek 18.4 “Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.”

- C. God offers us something good when he offers eternal life
 1. A study of “eternal life” in John shows there are two aspects
 - a. A new quality of life in this world (one rightly related to God)
 - b. An undying life in the future, in the presence of God forever
 2. The Bible describes that place, the presence of God, as blessed and full of joy

Ps 16.11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

ILLUSTRATION: Charmaine Laub, “I’d like to live forever!”
God’s answer, “If you believe, you can.”

II. The offer ignored or rejected

A. The thing is, despite the offer and its value, most people don't receive it

This is a curious thing: Is eternal life, free from sickness and pain, filled with energy and joy, something that is unattractive or undesirable?

- Yet most people don't have it. Why?

B. The reasons men and women don't have eternal life

1. "I don't believe in God!"

a. Whether you believe or not doesn't make something true or false: reality doesn't depend on your belief system

There are people who believe men never went to the moon, but Neil Armstrong's footprint is still there.

b. You are aware of your own soul: the "you" that is not just "chemical reactions in your physical body"

1) Do you believe that at death the soul just disappears?

2) Do you believe that the soul just endlessly recycles into new forms of life?

3) Do you believe that your soul sleeps in some special place of the dead?

These and many other answers, some stranger than fiction, can be found on the internet.

c. If you have a soul, justice demands there be some accounting for how your soul lived

1) Should you "get away with" bad deeds you've done?

2) Shouldn't you get some reward for good deeds you've done?

You may insist that you don't believe in God, but without a God who holds men to account, then there is no justice for the evil of this world ... and very little point for all the suffering we endure.

2. "I don't like the Christian God"

- a. First, let me remind you that it is the Christian God who offers eternal life
- b. Yet we must acknowledge, faith in God carries with it certain responsibilities
 - 1) You are called to repent of your own ways
 - 2) You are called to submit to God's ways

Most people have trouble at this point: they like the way they live and they don't want to live the way they think God wants them to live. They think they will be miserable if they follow God.

- c. Though faith in God means submission to God, faithlessness means enslavement to sin

Rm 6.20-22 ¶ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.²¹ Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.²² But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

- 1) Refusing God means you are slaves of sin (and free from righteousness)
- 2) Submitting to God means you are enslaved to God (and free from sin)

Refusing God doesn't mean freedom, it means enslavement to sin. Sin is a hard taskmaster.

God, on the other hand offers an entirely different kind of "enslavement" — and one that ends in eternal life.

Mt 11.29-30 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.³⁰ "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

III. The hope of eternal life rooted in faith

A. "Whoever believes" — the key to eternal life

1. The simplest explanation of this is to point to Jesus Christ
2. Jesus is a man who is at the same time the Son of God (a mystery we don't fully understand)
3. Jesus offered up his infinite life in substitution for the sins of all mankind
4. Salvation in him is available to everyone who believes

Jn 3.16 ¶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

B. God is the one who saves, you must be the one to believe

1. A response is required
2. Failure to respond is not an option

Jn 3.17-18 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.¹⁸ "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Conclusion:

Our purpose today is to gather together to remember and honour the life of Joanne Stroink.

Yet she gave us a more important purpose: to preach the gospel.

Don't ignore this message! If you aren't a Christian, this message is for you.

Don't get upset with it, but let it upset your old way of life.

Turn to the Lord Jesus and live!

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Closing Prayer (Don Johnson)

**There Is a Redeemer — 190** (Kaleigh Stroink)

Recessional: Family leaves the room first