

FUNERAL SERVICE FOR AN ELDERLY CHRISTIAN LADY

On behalf of the family of _____ I want to thank you all for being here today. I want to express my deep appreciation for each of you who have come together with this family to pay tribute to this good woman. Your coming today shows you care, and it shows your belief in the power of God to make human beings in his image, giving them a dignity and a place in creation enjoyed by nothing else. A funeral service such as this is a service offered out of love and respect for the one who has departed, but it is also offered out of love and respect for the ones left behind. So, once again, allow me to say thank you.

Much like God, death is no respecter of persons. Death comes to saint and sinner, young and old, high and low. Death is a condition that is universal among mankind. Job speaks of death as **“the place appointed for all the living” (Job 30:23)**. And the writer of Hebrews tells us that it is human destiny to die and then to face the judgment **(Hebrews 9:27)**. We see it every day. We’ve experienced it before and we will experience it again.

And we know these things, but. . .when death comes it still leaves us devastated, it still leaves us hurting, it still leaves us broken-hearted. No matter how often we see it or experience it we are never really prepared for it. So . . . what can we say at a time like this?

When David, the great king of Israel, knew his time to depart the earth was near, he called his son Solomon and offered words of comfort and advice to his son who would be the next king. When Jesus knew he would soon be leaving his disciples and returning to his Father in heaven, he comforted them by speaking of mansions he was going to prepare. And when the apostle Paul knew he would see the elders of the church at Ephesus no more, he offered them these words: **“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (Acts 20:32)**.

I am extremely honored to be asked to assist the family in this way, and I hope that I will say something today that will be comforting and strengthening, that will be uplifting to you in the days ahead, as you adjust to life now without your mother and grandmother and friend.

I've known _____ for more than eleven years. I first met her at the Portia Church of Christ, and I can still remember *the day* I met her. She was sitting on the back row of the church building between her daughter _____ and her granddaughter _____, and because I had designs on _____, I walked back to where she sat, introduced myself to her, and asked _____ to go to a concert with me that very night (and, believe it or not, she went).

Now, although I've known _____ for more than eleven years, I've never known her the way many of you have. By the time I became a part of this family, _____ had already been battling Alzheimer's Disease for a while. I don't know if she ever really knew me, or why I kept hanging around. To be honest, I don't know how many memories she had of anyone or anything. But I do know this – you have memories of her. And those memories are what we are here to celebrate today.

As amazing as this sounds, the memories we have of _____ have been preserved in the pages of Scripture. They were written down many thousands of years ago, and by a man who was not even a part of this family. His name was King Lemuel. And even though he didn't know _____, he described her perfectly when he described the perfect woman:

PR 31:10 A wife of noble character who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies.

**PR 31:11 Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.**

**PR 31:12 She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.**

_____ was introduced to _____ when her brother _____ married his sister _____. _____ was in the Navy, and one day when _____ was writing him a letter, she invited _____ to add a few words. _____ would later say, "I don't know what she said, but it must have been something pretty special." You see, not too very long after that the two of them were married. _____ and her sailor were married for fifty-one years. That's no small feat for a couple in today's world. And they were blessed with three beautiful children and five grandchildren whom they loved dearly.

PR 31:13 She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.

PR 31:14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.

PR 31:15 She gets up while it is still dark;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her servant girls.

_____ was an amazing cook. There were no frozen dinners or fast-foods to be found at her house. One of _____'s fondest memories is spending the night at _____'s house. In the mornings she and her cousins would awaken to find a hot breakfast of their favorite foods. Now, I've never tried this myself, but apparently mixing all those foods up together is quite a treat.

PR 31:16 She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

PR 31:17 She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.

PR 31:18 She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.

PR 31:19 In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

PR 31:20 She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.

PR 31:21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

_____ was a hard worker. You never saw her sitting around because there was always work to do. She was always straightening the house, or mending the clothes, or toiling in the garden. She had a magnificent garden. She planted and watered, and God gave the increase. And she was generous with the increase. Her friends and family members were always benefitting from her bountiful harvest. Especially from the pickles of that harvest.

She was also a gifted seamstress. She loved making things with her hands – little dolls and crafts and such. Her house was decorated with the things she made. But there was more to it than that. _____ says when she was a child _____ made all of her clothes. They didn't have the money for expensive store-bought clothes, but _____ always made sure her family was well-dressed and warm.

PR 31:22 She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.

PR 31:23 Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.

PR 31:24 She makes linen garments and sells them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.

PR 31:25 She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.

PR 31:26 She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

PR 31:27 She watches over the affairs of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.

_____ didn't work outside the home after she had children. But she supported her family. She made and sold cakes for all occasions – birthdays, weddings, you name it. So skilled was she, that she even taught classes on how to make and decorate cakes. She was always doing what she could with the gifts God had given her to make her house a home, and to bless the lives of all who knew her. So for these and a host of other reasons. . .

PR 31:28 Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:

PR 31:29 "Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."

PR 31:30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

PR 31:31 Give her the reward she has earned,
and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

Today, _____ has received her reward. She wasn't rich or powerful or even successful by the world's standards. But what does the world know? It's not the world's judgment that matters, it's God's.

_____ loved God, and she committed her life to him early on. And I have to believe that everything she did, she did to honor him, and to bring glory to his name. You know, even after her mind was ravaged by the effects of Alzheimer's Disease, _____ did not forget the Word of the Lord. Bonnie didn't know who I was or why I was there, but when I got up to preach, and I would begin quoting Scripture, _____ would quote it with me. She knew the Lord's Word, and she never forgot it. His Word was hidden in her heart; she never forgot his promises. So rest now you woman of noble character, you are blessed, and your deeds follow after you.

I want you to be comforted today as you remember _____. Remember her long, full life. Rejoice in this strong, loving family she built. Reminisce about the good times. You have such good memories.

Take comfort in them. The body will be buried. The material goods will be parceled out. But your memories will last forever. Take comfort in your memories, and be thankful. Be thankful that you have been a part of this long, full life. Be thankful that you have been blessed to be a part of this strong, loving family. Be thankful that you have made some precious memories along the way.

**“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace,
which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”
(Acts 20:32).**

Let us pray.