

Chapter 5

BURIAL OF THE DEAD

5700. At the House, Church or Funeral Chapel.

Opening Sentences

(The minister shall open the service with an opening sentence, such as one of the following:)

“I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another” (Job 19:25-27a, NIV).

“God is our refuge and strength,
an ever present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging” (Ps. 46:1-3, NIV).

“I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live” (John 5:25, NIV).

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die’” (John 11:25-26a, NIV).

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God” (2 Cor. 1:3-4, NIV).

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:17-18, NKJV).

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:6-8, NIV).

Hymn

(Then a hymn shall be sung, or played. Then the minister shall read a scripture lesson, such as one of the following:)

Scripture Readings

“Show me, O Lord, my life’s end
 and the number of my days;
 let me know how fleeting is my life.
 You have made my days a mere handbreadth;
 the span of my years is as nothing before you.
 Each man’s life is but a breath.
 Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro:
 He bustles about, but only in vain;
 he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it.
 But now, Lord, what do I look for?
 My hope is in you” (Ps. 39:4-7, NIV).

“Lord, You have been our dwelling place
 in all generations.
 Before the mountains were brought
 forth,
 Or ever You had formed the earth
 and the world,
 Even from everlasting to everlasting,
 You are God.

For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it is past,
And like a watch in the night.
We finish our years like a sigh.
The days of our lives are seventy years;
And if by reason of strength they are
 eighty years,
Yet their boast is only labor
 and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
So teach us to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Ps. 90:1-2, 4, 9b-10, 12, NKJV).

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?’

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:20-26, 51-52, 54-58, NIV).

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

‘Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb.’

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, saying:

‘Amen!

Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.

Amen!’

Then one of the elders asked me, ‘These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?’ I answered, ‘Sir, you know.’ And he said, ‘These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore,

‘they are before the throne of God
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent
over them.

Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.

The sun will not beat upon them,
nor any scorching heat.

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be
their shepherd;
he will lead them to springs of living water.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’” (Rev. 7:9-17, NIV).

Prayer

(Then the minister shall pray an extemporaneous prayer or use the following prayer:)

O God of life, as we have learned to do in all our experiences, we come to You in the hour of death. We know that You love us, and that You can turn even the shadow of death into the light of morning. Help us now to wait before You with reverent and submissive hearts. Make this a time of opening our eyes and our understanding, and a time of admonition to our hearts and souls. Bless those who feel this sorrow most keenly, and cause the bonds of Christian love to bind us closer together, so that we may share with

them that spiritual strength and that faith in God which is ours through the love of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Message and Prayer

(Then the minister shall preach a funeral message. The service may be closed with an extemporaneous prayer, and the following benediction:)

Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit abide with us now and evermore. Amen.

5725. At the Graveside

Scripture Readings

(The minister shall read a brief scripture lesson, such as one of the following:)

“I lift up my eyes to the hills—
 where does my help come from?
 My help comes from the Lord,
 the Maker of heaven and earth.
 He will not let your foot slip—
 he who watches over you will not slumber;
 indeed, he who watches over Israel
 will neither slumber nor sleep.
 The Lord watches over you—
 the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
 the sun will not harm you by day,
 nor the moon by night.
 The Lord will keep you from all harm—
 he will watch over your life;
 the Lord will watch over your coming and going
 both now and forevermore” (Ps. 121, NIV).

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be

where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going,' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:1-6, NIV).

Committals

(Then the minister shall read one of the following committals:)

And now, we commit this body to its resting place; and we commit the spirit, O our Father, together with every sacred interest of our hearts, into Your keeping; praying that You will deal graciously and mercifully with each of us, until we too shall come to You in glory, through the riches of grace in Jesus our Lord.

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.' He said to me: 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son'" (Rev. 21:1-7, NIV).

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22:1-5, NIV).

Prayer and Benediction

(Then the minister may offer a brief extemporaneous prayer, and conclude with the following benediction:)

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.