

# The Fallacy of Most Funerals

By Frank Zimmerman

**A**T FUNERALS, especially ones where lives are cut off well before their old age, unspoken questions are brought before the human mind, and these should be brought out and dealt with.

In order to make sense out of the confusion, religious people sometimes take refuge in the following statement:

“It’s all God’s will, His will is perfect, we must not murmur.”

This, however, does not always work with people who long for a deeper explanation. I knew a man who, when he was a boy, his father, whom he loved very much, passed away unexpectedly. During the funeral, someone made the comment, trying to comfort him, that:

“God took him away to a better place.”

He had a strong reaction against this, and in his mind, he thought,

“How could a good God take away such a good man as my father, when good people are so much needed in this world?”

And with that, he turned against religion. This man worked for a while at one of the factories I was working in, and when he knew me to be a religious man, he told me this story.

Funerals, then, would be an excellent opportunity to talk about the problem of sin, and how it introduced death, and why God must let us go through this life of suffering and death, without delivering us from all of the consequences of it. There are stories and teachings in the Bible that could help very much to make people understand that God has a plan to

fully overcome sin, and our part in that plan is very important.

In God's plan, people need to be brought to see that sin is the destroyer, not the doorway to prosperity and success. At the same time, they need to see the love of God in providing a way out of sin, through Jesus Christ. God's plan involves wooing people back to a love relationship with their Heavenly Father, in order that they can be members of an everlasting kingdom, where pain and suffering are no more, because sin has been overcome.

Many people think that God, if He has unlimited power, should express His love by simply preventing the consequences of sin. But should He follow their ideas, the very lesson taught in daily life,—that sin brings suffering and death, that sin is the destroyer,—would be lost. Such a course that they short-sightedly propose, would make God prop up Satan's kingdom!

As well, we must always fight against the false idea that God is far away, in a paradise, while we are mowed down like sitting ducks, by the consequences of sin. The truth is that God suffers more than all of us, being so much more sensitive and aware of all the pain that sin causes to His universe, as He is vitally connected to each part of it through His Spirit.

### **Isaiah 63**

<sup>9</sup> In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them, and carried them all the days of old.

The life and death of Jesus Christ on earth was designed to show us what God experiences constantly; it was supposed to open our eyes to understand God better, so we would not be tripped up by the Devil's evil insinuations, as he attempts to get us to doubt God's love, and blame our Maker for all the problems that he has introduced into this world, by tempting

and overcoming our first parents.

Some other things I don't like about most funerals is that ideas are presented which openly contradict the Bible:

## 1. Straight to Heaven at Death

The idea that souls go straight to heaven at death. The Bible is very clear that our thoughts and feelings stop at death (*Psalm 146:4; Psalm 115:17; Ecclesiastes 9:5*), and do not start again until the resurrection of the body. Until that time, the Bible speaks of death as a sleep. Here is the plain Bible teaching about how to comfort people when their brothers and sisters in the faith die:

### 1 Thessalonians 4

<sup>13</sup> But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning **them which are asleep**, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

<sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so **them also which sleep** in Jesus will God bring with Him.

<sup>15</sup> 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**.

<sup>16</sup> 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**:

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> Wherefore comfort one another *with these words*.

But are *these* the words that people are comforted with at funerals? No! Not at all! Instead, we are told that our loved ones are already up in heaven, alive and awake, and better than ever.

No, sorry. I want to build on the Bible, not on man's imagination.

## 2. Bypassing the Judgment

The second thing in funerals that openly contradicts the Bible is associated with the first idea already mentioned. The Bible presents that there is a judgment before anyone enters on their eternal inheritance.

### **Hebrews 9**

<sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

This judgment takes place at a specific time, just before Christ's coming:

### **Daniel 7 [RV]**

<sup>9</sup> I beheld till thrones were placed, and One that was Ancient of Days did sit: His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire.

<sup>10</sup> A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

At the end of this judgment, Christ receives His “kingdom of glory,” and He then returns to gather the subjects of His kingdom.

### **Luke 19**

<sup>12</sup> A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

### **Daniel 7**

<sup>13</sup> I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before Him.

<sup>14</sup> And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The gospel message that God will proclaim to the world before Christ returns points to this time of judgment:

#### **Revelation 14**

<sup>6</sup> And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

<sup>7</sup> Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Another section in the book of *Revelation* points to this same time; it is after the announcement of the seventh trumpet. It is during the time of the seventh trumpet that Christ receives His kingdom, so we should expect mention of the judgment also, which takes place just before Christ's return. It is mentioned:

#### **Revelation 11**

<sup>15</sup> And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.

<sup>18</sup> And the nations were angry, and your wrath is come, and **the time of the dead, that they should be judged**, and that You should give reward unto your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear your name, small and great; and should destroy them which destroy the earth.

There is more scripture evidence from the Bible that explains this judgment period, but to sum it up, nobody goes straight to heaven without passing through the judgment first. And the judgment takes place just before Christ's return. So there is no way that a dead person can fly to heaven and be there in the presence of God right now. This, therefore, is the second false idea that is promulgated at funerals.

And, if possible, it is even worse than the first error. For whereas in the first case, we imagine people to be alive who are in the sleep of death, in the second case, we presume to tell God who we believe should pass His judgment, even though we do not have access to the books of record that are to determine that very judgment! Thus we place our erring human judgment above that of the God of heaven.

But so sure are we of our own righteousness, that without hesitation, we presume to instruct God that our friends, relatives, and children, any of the dear ones we love who may have passed away, are all fit candidates for heaven. So sure we are that God agrees with us, that we celebrate them as already there. Why do we need to wait for God's judgment? We have decided, and that should settle the question! We decide, and God should obey!

This is certainly one of the pinnacles of human presumption. No doubt there are more things about the way funerals are conducted that do not help to glorify God the way He needs to be glorified. But these are sufficient for now.