

- I. **Donna, Tonya, Laura, Lisa**, and all the family and friends gathered here today, grace, peace, and mercy are yours through our living Savior, Jesus Christ.
- II. **This is a very unexpected gathering today.**
 - a. It's one thing to prepare for someone's passing because they have struggled with a health condition for years... or they go through a prolonged illness... but Gordon had no signs of trouble.
 - b. He was going about his life just as he had for years... and then suddenly, he is diagnosed with terminal cancer and dies within a few short days.
 - c. One day all is well, the next day we are left with sadness and sorrow over the loss of a loved one.
 - d. It's safe to say that everyone was surprised and even shocked to hear about his death, and much of that came from him being a pretty active and seemingly healthy person.
 - e. Now we reflect on the fact that death can come at any time... but that our friend and loved one Gordon went too soon.
- III. **I met Gordon** a couple of years ago, as he attended church for the first time.
 - a. You could say he was checking out Ascension to see if it was the right fit.
 - b. He had a very kind presence about him... although I'm sure he had his moments, but he carried himself with a certain peace I guess you could say.
 - c. In my conversations with him in the past, along with the family most recently, a good way to describe him is a man of few words.
 - i. Perhaps Gordon wanted to *show* his love for others in actions and deeds rather than in many words.
 - ii. In a way, that is a comfort... because the person is always there for you... they may not have a lot to say, but you know they are with you.
 - d. Gordon also was a true family man – in loving his family by coaching and attending games whenever possible.
 - i. Again, he suited up and showed up because he loved and cared for you all that much.
 - e. In his obituary picture, Gordon is at a game... not sure if that's a Ducks' game or one of the family's, but it is a sign of his presence in your lives.
 - i. I'm sorry I didn't get to bond with Gordon over the Ducks a little bit this year because my team is the Denver Broncos and we drafted the Ducks' quarterback, Bo Nix... oh well, I will think of Gordon often when I watch games in the future.
 - f. Yes, Gordon, by all accounts, was a "good" person – and that's why so many of you have come to pay your last respects.
- IV. **And yet, there is more to the story** than just being a good person.
 - a. I want to make it very clear today...no matter how good Gordon was, no matter how many years he showed up for you and others... none of that is what got him to heaven.
 - i. The only thing that saved Gordon was his faith in Jesus Christ.

- ii. As our Gospel says today that Jesus alone is the “Way and the Truth, and the Life” – doing good is not the way, being a good person is not the way... only believing in Jesus as our Savior allows us to move into our home in heaven.
 - iii. And that’s all it took for Gordon – he was blessed by faith and God’s grace and the moving van has already come and gone to get Gordon all situated in his new home.
 - iv. Long ago, Gordon was baptized and called a child of God – he is God’s kid, and I hope that each of you has deep sense of peace because he believed.
- b. You see, our Gospel lesson tells us that Jesus has gone on ahead of us and created a home for us in heaven...a place to stay...our REAL and permanent home.
- i. I know we struggle to see Gordon as being “home” when we sit here today – but I’m reminded of a story I heard about U.S. soldiers coming home from wars around the world.
 - ii. These guys would finally get back home to America, and they would get on the ground and kiss the US soil.
 - iii. You see, they were over there in other countries doing their work, living there, but they had a passport or military ID that made them citizens of America.
 - iv. You know what? When Gordon got baptized, he became a citizen of heaven...his passport said, “citizen of heaven...” and now he is finally home.

V. **Many of us have placed our trust and hope on whatever is in the world.**

- a. The world and things God created for us can only do so much... there is something bigger than what we can see right now.
- b. When we die – through our faith in Christ, we will live forever...that is my hope for each of you...
 - i. Listen to these words from Psalm 16...“my body also will live in hope, because You [God] will not abandon me to the grave...”
 - ii. We can live in true hope because we know that the grave...where Gordon’s ashes will be... is not the end – through faith in Jesus... we live on.
 - iii. Life doesn’t end at death...through Jesus... death cannot hold us.
 - iv. This is exactly what Jesus is talking about in John 14:1 – Do not let your hearts be troubled, trust in God, trust also in Me...
 - 1. He’s saying do not worry about whatever this life throws at you – there is something wonderful beyond the grave.
 - 2. You see, because of what Christ has done for me, I am confident in my future – whether death takes me tomorrow, tragedy strikes me next week, or any other thing happens that I have no control over...I am confident that God has called me His own through baptism.

3. My home is heaven, and that is all on account of the work Jesus did for me... He died on the cross to pay for our brokenness and sins... and never forget, He did that work for me... for Gordon... and for you too.

VI. **As we sit here in sorrow today, it might be hard to picture heaven...**

- a. In fact, nothing I can say will ever do it justice.
- b. However, the pictures that God gives us in His Word help.
- c. In Revelation the same John who wrote the Gospel of John is brought to heaven in a vision to lay eyes on the future of all believers.
- d. No matter what kind of struggles Gordon went through in his earthly journey – trust me when I say, he is now, “trouble free.”
 - i. We are troubled and struggle with the death of our loved one today, but Jesus says, don’t let your hearts be troubled, trust in Me.
 - ii. In fact, He is saying this to disciples who are upset that He is going to go to heaven and will no longer be with them on earth.
 - iii. See, Jesus knows that there is something so wonderful beyond our earthly life – an eternal life with joy and happiness...
 1. No one is crying, no one hurts, no one has heart disease, or cancer, or any sadness or sickness.
 2. You see, heaven isn’t just some fairy tale to make people feel better – it is real, and it is our destiny as we believe in Jesus.
 3. And your husband, your brother, dad, grandpa... and your friend wants nothing more than to see you again in a great reunion...
 4. ...and through Jesus Christ and your faith in Him, all things are possible – even eternal life. Amen