

Memorial Service for Grace Lee McGuire
Selected Scriptures
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INTRODUCTION

1. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Paul gives comforting words to those who believe in Jesus.
2. I read those words earlier.
3. They are comforting words for the those saddened over the departing of a loved one.
4. All of us are certainly saddened that Jesus took Grace to be with Him but at the same time we are full of joy that she is not suffering the evils of this life.
5. Richard said it very clearly Monday night as he held her in his arms and said, “I’m jealous—jealous that you made it to heaven before me.”
6. I concur with those words.
7. Grace is with Jesus.
8. This is a clear from the Word of God.
9. David said in 2 Samuel 12:23 after his baby died, “I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”
10. He didn’t say that about Absalom after his death in 2 Samuel 18:33.

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11. He didn't know if he would see Absalom because Absalom had willful, premeditated sin. His baby didn't.
12. Babies have no willful rebellion or unbelief.
13. They have no suppression of truth.
14. They have no understanding of sin's impact or consequences.
15. So, all innocent children who die then are elect and therefore go immediately to heaven.
16. What do I mean by "innocent?"
17. I do not mean "without sin" because all children are conceived in sin.
18. David said in **Psalm 51:5 (NASB)** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And *in sin my mother conceived me.*
19. What I am referring to is a condition of moral culpability.
20. Moral culpability means they have not reached sufficient mature understanding to comprehend convincingly the issues of law and grace, sin and salvation.
21. A miscarried or aborted baby has no understanding of law and grace, sin and salvation.
22. Neither does a baby who dies at birth or shortly thereafter.

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23. Neither does an infant.
24. Neither does a toddler or young child—or even an older child, in some cases.
25. At some point in a child’s maturity, he or she comes to have an understanding of law and grace.
26. In other words, the child begins to comprehend that God has rules and commandments; sin involves the violation or breaking of God’s laws; forgiveness of sin has been made possible through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross; the grace of God allows for all who believe in and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and submit to Him as Lord to be cleansed of their sin and live in the newness of life and joyful obedience to Him.
27. Fallen, sinful, guilty and depraved children who die with no spiritual merit—no personal, moral, or religious merit—are welcomed by God into glory. On what basis? Solely by God’s *grace*! They are saved the same way people are saved today—by God’s *grace*.
28. No believer had any more to do with regard to the accomplishment of his own salvation than the youngest and most helpless infant. All believers have been saved by *grace*.
29. Jesus said, “Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3).

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30. None of us are capable of saving our own souls.
31. We each must come as a little child—totally dependent upon God’s grace—if we are to receive the free gift of mercy and forgiveness made possible by the death of Jesus Christ.
32. The apostle Paul said very clearly, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2:8–9) (Ibid., MacArthur, 74-76).
33. What about you and me?
34. Again we are saved the same way but we don’t have the same promise that a baby has because we have reached a condition of moral culpability.
35. But for those who have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ, heaven is awaiting them.
36. Notice what is in heaven awaiting those who have surrendered to Jesus. First...
 - a) Their heavenly Father is in heaven

Mat.6:9 says, “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed by Your name.”
 - b) Their Savior is in heaven

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Heb.9:24 says, “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

- c) Their fellow Christians are in heaven

Heb.12:23 says, “To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect.”

- d) Their names are recorded in heaven

Jesus tells the seventy disciples that returned with joy after seeing that even the demons were subject to them, “do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

- e) Their inheritance is in heaven

1 Pet.1:3-4 - “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”

- f) Their citizenship is in heaven

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Paul says in Philippians 3:20 that “Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

- g) Their eternal reward is in heaven

To those who suffer because of their faith in Jesus, He says to you: “Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

- h) Their Master is in heaven

Paul said in Ephesians 6:9 to those Christian masters to give up “threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”

- i) Their treasure is in heaven

To His children, Jesus says in Mat.6:19-21, ““Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

38. “Everything a believer loves, everything he values, everything eternal is in heaven.”

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39. Now let me ask you a question, “Is heaven precious to you?”
40. If so, “Why?”
41. “What claim do you and I have of heaven?”
42. “Can we be sure that when we die that we will immediately be in heaven?”
43. I believe the Bible answers that very question.
44. In the fourth book in the New Testament, known as the Gospel of John, we hear about a religious leader who came to Jesus at night seeking to know more about Him and His message.
45. But before he could even ask what was truly on his heart, Jesus answered Him by saying, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).
46. In this one statement, Jesus gave Nicodemus the necessary condition for going to heaven.
47. He said, “unless one is born again.” You cannot go to heaven when you die “unless” this occurs first.
48. He stated it again in verse 5, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

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49. To be born again, Jesus says, you have to be born “of water,” that is, you have to be spiritually cleansed of your sin, and you have to be born of the Holy Spirit.
50. Jesus is saying there must be a spiritual renewal and cleansing in order to go to heaven.
51. And for that to take place, Nicodemus needed to stop trusting in himself and his accomplishments to get him to heaven but in Christ who alone was to die in his place for His sin.
52. Jesus tells Nicodemus in verses 14-15, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.”
53. But, according to verse 19, man has two problems.
54. First, he will not believe on his own.
55. And second, verse 19 says, he loves “the darkness rather than the Light.” In other words, he loves his sin.
56. So what can he do?
57. First, he needs to see he is a sinner who loves his sin.
58. Romans 3:10-18 says, “as it is written, "There is none righteous , not even one; 11 There is none who understands , There is none who seeks for God; 12 All have turned aside ,

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together they have become useless ; There is none who does good , There is not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave , With their tongues they keep deceiving , " "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"; 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood, 16 Destruction and misery are in their paths, 17 And the path of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

59. Jesus said, “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed” (John 3:18-19).
60. The history of sin takes us back to the first book of the Bible—Genesis.
61. We are told in Genesis 2:16-17 that After God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, He “commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”
62. In chapter 3 of Genesis we read in verses 6-7:

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of

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them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”

63. This is what the Bible calls sin or disobedience to God’s specific command.
64. Romans 5:12 sums it up by saying, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”
65. The consequences of what Adam and Eve did that day was passed to every person who would ever be born.
66. But death itself was not the only thing passed to every person, also the sin nature.
67. Every person would now have the knowledge of evil which would manifest in “evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, [and] blasphemies” (Mat.15:19).
68. And even the good that man could express would be considered as “filthy rags” in God’s sight.
69. In Exodus chapter 20, God gave His Law, the Ten Commandments, to man to follow.
70. But because of man’s sin nature, he could not live up to what God commanded.

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71. For example, the Law says: (Ex.20:3-17):
- a) “You shall have no other gods before Me,” but man fashions a god after his own likeness.
 - b) The Law says, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image,” but man bows down before everything his heart desires.
 - c) The Law says, “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,” but man uses God’s name as a filthy four letter curse word.
 - d) The Law said, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” but man refuses to rest one day a week and worship God.
 - e) The Law said, “Honor your father and mother,” and “He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.” But man says, “Whoever says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God’– then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus [he has] made the commandment of God of no effect by [his] tradition” (Mat.15:4-6).
 - f) The Law said, “You shall not murder,” but Jesus said that “whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Mat.5:22).
 - g) The Law said, “You shall not commit adultery” but

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Jesus said “that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mat.5:28).

- h) The Law said, “You shall not steal,” but man takes what is not his and uses it for his own purposes.
 - i) The Law said, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” but man lies and slanders because his tongue is set on fire by hell itself.
 - j) The Law said, “You shall not covet” but man lusts after what his neighbor possesses.
72. Because of man’s sin nature, he has broken every one of these commandments and is guilty of being an idolatrous, blasphemous, lying, thieving, adulterer at heart.
73. And God says he will not be innocent on the day of judgment.
74. Because Adam’s sin was passed to every person, they will be given the wages of their sin—death (Rom.6:23).
75. And if the picture of the human dilemma was not bad enough, Paul said in Ephesians 2:1 that because of Adam’s sin everyone is therefore “dead in trespasses and sin.”
76. Spiritual death not only speaks of our nature but also of our inability to do what is pleasing to God.

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77. It paints a helpless situation with no where to go, no where to hide, and no remedy.
78. And if the Bible stopped right there none would have any hope.
79. But praise God it doesn't stop there.
80. The Bible provides the answer to our dilemma in a Person.
81. His name is Jesus Christ.
82. Paul describes him in Ephesians 5:23 as the "Savior."
83. And according to 1 Timothy 1:15, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save [or rescue] sinners" from God's judgment.
84. How did He do that?
85. He took in His body on the cross the consequences of our sin.
86. By Him bearing our sin in His own body, He provided the justice that the Law demanded for our sin.
87. The Law said the penalty for breaking God's Law was death and Jesus took our penalty for us.
88. In other words, instead of God punishing us for our sin, He punished Jesus.

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89. Paul describes it in 2 Corinthians 5:21 in this way when He says, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
90. In other words, God treated Jesus as if He sinned.
91. Isaiah 53:4-6 says, “Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”
92. When Paul says that God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us,” he tells why He did this—“That we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
93. To “become the righteousness of God in Him,” refers to salvation from your sin.
94. It refers to deliverance from sin and judgment.
95. How does one acquire the righteousness of God?
96. Paul answers that question in Ephesians 2:8-9 when he says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

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97. It is “by grace...through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”
98. To receive this gift of grace the Bible says you must “deny [yourself], and take up [your] cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23).
99. “Deny” is from *aparneomai*, which means “to completely disown, to utterly separate oneself from someone.”
100. It is the word Jesus used to describe Peter’s denial of Him while He was being questioned by the high priest (Mat.26:34). Each time he was confronted about his relationship to Jesus, Peter more vehemently denied knowing Him (vv.70, 72, 74). He disowned his master before the world.
101. That is exactly the kind of denial a believer is to make in regard to himself. He is to utterly disown himself, to refuse to acknowledge the self of the old man. Jesus’ words here could be paraphrased, ‘Let him refuse any association or companionship with himself.’
102. The self of which Jesus is speaking is the natural, sinful, rebellious, unredeemed self that is at the center of every fallen person and that can even reclaim temporary control over a Christian.
103. Next He says, “Take up [your] cross daily.”

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104. Taking up one's cross is not some mystical level of selfless 'deeper spiritual life' that only the religious elite can hope to achieve.
105. Nor is it the common trials and hardships that all persons experience sometime in life.
106. Nor is it having an unsaved husband, nagging wife, or domineering mother-in-law or a physical handicap or suffering from an incurable disease.
107. It is simply to be willing to pay any price for Christ's sake.
108. It is the willingness to endure shame, embarrassment, reproach, rejection, persecution, and even martyrdom for His sake.
109. "To the people of Jesus' day the cross was a very concrete and vivid reality.
110. It was the instrument of execution reserved for Rome's worst enemies.
111. It was a symbol of the torture and death that awaited those who dared raise a hand against Roman authority" (John MacArthur, Matthew 16-23, p.49).
112. To take up your cross is to be willing to start on a death march.

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113. It is to be willing, in His service, to suffer the indignities, the pain, and even the death of a condemned criminal.
114. “Obviously the extent of suffering and persecution varies from believer to believer, from time to time, and from place to place.
115. Not all the apostles were martyred, but all of them were willing to be martyred.
116. Not every disciple is called on to be martyred, but every disciple is commanded to be willing to be martyred” (MacArthur, p.49).
117. So “to come to Jesus is to come to the end of self and sin and to become so desirous of Christ and His righteousness that one will make any sacrifice for Him” (MacArthur, p.49).
118. Last, Jesus says, “Follow Me.”
119. After a person denies himself and takes up his cross, Jesus said, he is prepared to “follow Me.”
120. True discipleship is submission to the lordship of Christ that becomes a pattern of life.
121. John said, “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (1 Jn.2:6).

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122. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
123. Jesus sums it all up in verse 24 when He says, “For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”
124. “The Lord is saying that whoever lives only to save his earthly, physical life, his ease and comfort and acceptance by the world, will lose his opportunity for eternal life.
125. But whoever is willing to give up his earthly, worldly life and to suffer and die, if necessary, for Christ's sake, will find eternal life.
126. Every person has a choice.
127. He can "go for it" now and lose it forever; or he can forsake it now and gain it forever” (John MacArthur, Matthew 16-23, p.51).
128. Have you forsaken your life to have Christ's?
129. I would like to ask you to bow you heads with me as we pray.
130. Pray that God will open your eyes and heart to what I have just shared with you.

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132. To come to Christ is not easy.
133. In fact it is the greatest commitment you will ever make.
134. Let's pray.