

Funeral for a Child

PRAYER

Father, we thank you for your presence here, today. We ask that the peace that passes all understanding rule our hearts and our minds, this morning. This is a difficult day, but we know that we can lean on the everlasting arms of Jesus in order to make it through these kinds of moments.

Be with us as we celebrate the life of our sweet, [child's name]. In Jesus' name we pray – AMEN

Today, we celebrate the life and mourn the loss of one of the sweetest creatures God ever made - [child's name].

[child's name] was special - not because she had special needs, but because she was a unique individual, created by God to bring joy and happiness to those who knew her.

Death is a necessary and normal part of life. The Bible says in Ecclesiastes there is a time for everything. Even a time to die.

Death is also a very mysterious part of life. It creates many different responses in people. Some people run from death – it causes fear. Some people avoid talking about

death – it makes them uneasy. What is the appropriate response to death? What should we do now that we have lost our sweet little angel, [child's name]?

Let me suggest a couple things.

First, we have to...

Celebrate [child's name]'s life.

[child's name]'s life was a gift. Not just a momentary blessing—but a treasured, heaven-sent gift from God. The Bible tells us in James 1:17, “Every good and perfect gift is from above.”

[child's name] was only 12 years old. Such a short time on this Earth. Yet, [child's name] probably made more of an impact on more people than most will who live to be 70 or 80 years old.

[child's name] lived a life full of health challenges. She struggled with Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Deafness, Motor Control, and a host of other issues. She struggled with motor skills such as sitting independently, standing, holding a cup, among other things. Yet, she had a **remarkable strength**. She worked hard every day at accomplishing those tasks.

She couldn't walk, but man did she LOVE it when you pushed her in her wheelchair. I still remember the first time I

got the opportunity to push her through the halls of the MAC, into the Party Zone, and ultimately into the COOL Kids room. The moment we started rolling, that GIANT smile came across her face. If I slowed down, you could tell her countenance was changing – as if to say, “What are you slowing down for? Speed up, Pastor Brian!!!” So, I did – and there came that smile right back to her face. I fell in love with her instantly. So much so, I decided I had to keep that sweet smile on her face. So, rather than open the COOL Kids door, I turned her around and pushed her all around the Party Zone. She LOVED it! Eventually, she had to go to class. But, not before I had a new best friend. And, her name was [child’s name].

[child’s name] began fighting from day one! She fought for what she had her entire life and never complained about it. Not once!

There came a time when she had to have a G-tube placed because she wasn’t gaining enough weight. It took some getting used to – by everyone BUT [child’s name]. In true [child’s name] fashion she just thoroughly enjoyed feeding time even more.

There are many of you here, today, who loved [child’s name]. Many of you today were loved BY [child’s name].

But, I dare say that many of you took a back seat when it came to her love for her dogs: **Butter and Mo**. They are actually here, today.

[child's name]'s Aunt Lauren told me a story about Butter. A couple of years ago, her kids and their Uncle Mark decided to make a leaf pile to jump into. Mark brought [child's name] out and put her right in the pile of leaves with the kids. Well, little did they know - Butter the bulldog had been lying in wait for just the right time. All of a sudden, Butter came rumbling through the pile of leaves, throwing the leaves everywhere! [child's name] loved every second of it and laughed so hard she almost lost her breath. This was not just a giggle, mind you. This was one of those deep belly laughs. [child's name] truly found joy in everything that life had to offer.

[child's name]'s Mom, Ryan, shared with me one of her favorite memories of [child's name]. There was an orphan puppy named Tuli that had to be nursed back to health. There were times that Ryan didn't think she would make it. But, it was no surprise when Tuli bonded with [child's name]. The puppy would sit on [child's name]'s chest eating her treats while [child's name] just scooted all over the house.

Watch! **(play video)** [child's name] had a very special way with animals.

I want to take a moment and speak to all of [child's name]'s doctors, nurses, and therapists that might be here today. On behalf of the family, THANK YOU. Your loving care of [child's name] blessed her and blessed this family. Not one of you ever treated caring for [child's name] as “a job.” It was obvious you treated it as **a calling** to minister to and take care of [child's name]. You will never know how grateful Ryan and the entire family is for your sacrifice and love.

Today is certainly a day of different emotions. We've spent several minutes telling stories and celebrating [child's name]'s life, today. But, we also have another response to the death of [child's name]...

Embrace The Questions

When a child dies, we are flooded with questions. Why now? Why her? Why this way?

It's okay to ask those questions. God can handle our pain and our wondering. Jesus Himself asked, “My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He understands the cries of a broken heart.

The Psalms are filled with laments, with cries for understanding. **Psalm 62:8** says, *“Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge.”*

Grief isn't something to skip over. It's something to walk through. Jesus said in **Matthew 5:4**, *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”*

Ryan, you've known grief before—and now you face it again. But you do not face it alone. You have a Savior who walks with you. A family who loves you. A church who supports you. And a little girl who now knows no pain, no limits, no struggles—only peace.

We grieve the loss of [child's name], but also,

We hold onto what lasts.

In moments like this, we are reminded that so much of life is temporary. But love—that lasts. Faith—that endures. And the presence of God—that never changes.

[child's name]'s life reminds us that the most meaningful things in this world are often the simplest: a smile, a cuddle with a puppy, a laugh buried in a pile of leaves, a soul that radiates love even when words aren't spoken.

These are the treasures we hold onto.

Psalm 34:18 says, *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”*

That is what [child’s name]’s story does—it calls us back to what matters. To live with kindness, to laugh with joy, to love with abandon.

And to remember that everything beautiful in this life is only a shadow of the glory to come. That’s why we...

Live with eternity in mind.

We are not here today to say “Goodbye forever.” We are here to say, “See you soon.”

[child’s name] is not gone—she has just gone ahead. She is with her Savior, fully whole, fully healed, fully alive. Walking. Laughing. Hearing the sounds of Heaven. Talking with the angels. Dancing with her brother, Marshall.

The Bible says in **Revelation 21:4**, *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”*

Psalm 23 reminds us:

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me... Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

That's where [child's name] is now—dwelling in the house of the Lord. No more wheelchairs. No more tubes. No more silence.

She heard these words clearly on Saturday: “Well done, my good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy I've prepared for you.”.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the moments we got to share with [child's name]. She was a gift – a gift to the world. Thank you that we got to watch her grow, watch her smile, and watch her reflect your love to everyone she met.

I pray that each of us will follow her example and reflect your love everywhere we go. Comfort us as we mourn, but remind us of the day when we will be reunited with [child's name] once again.

In Jesus' name, Amen.