

## Funerals

Thank goodness this isn't my last blog of the year. I imagine anyone saying goodbye to at-least three people at Christmas might have a bad Christmas. Now I do realize that Christmas could be considered just another time of the year. Yet, we all know it isn't. Putting Jesus aside, Christmas is a special time of the year for most regardless of religion. Kids look forward to it. The stores look forward to it. So many people buy gifts and make dinners. Why? Its to celebrate the holidays. There is a sense of kinship between family. Funerals and Christmas don't mix

Add Jesus into the mix and Christmas is a magical holiday that celebrates the union between God and humans. It's Jesus birthday, not His funeral. Jesus came down and was born in baby form to live like us. Yet, He was still God on a mission to save souls. For me, I lost three souls. To be fair, one was a cat. Yet, her soul will be sourly missed around this house. Sixteen years is nothing to sneeze at. I would say the 500-dollar vet bills isn't either. Yet, we lost our buddy and friend. I would rather be thinking about Jesus birthday.

It's a good thing that people can replace animals pretty easy. It's a little complicated with losing people. Yes, we bought two new cats that are brothers. I miss our departed cat but these two have mildly filled the hole. Now the two people we lost last week it's not that easy. Loved ones are loved ones. Animals hold a special spot. Yet, human life seems to be different. Is it too personal because were human? It probably depends on who you are. The animal deaths two years in a row has hurt us. We did not replace the dog. Yet, the lose of human life has rocked us.

Was it expected? Now that is interesting. We have a friend who's 21-year-old son had cancer. No young person should get cancer. So much to live for. Yet, life here on earth was cut short. For some of us, it's way too long. Too much time to screw things up. Life for me has been

a mixed bag. However, I do like the life I've had. It's not been boring. My heart aches for the young man who had limited memories. Even those of us that are left have limited memories of him. It's worse than sad because you can't replace him. Even if we could buy another boy, it's just not the same with humans. A person gives feedback and love. Animals can give some but humans give it all. We can't have him back and that leaves a hole. For this boy it was a big hole too. He was the life of the party. How amazing it was to see a packed school auditorium. People were stunned at the loss. We knew it was coming but there was always hope. At that funeral, hope became a memory of praise. I'm still torn up inside. Christmas should not feel this way.

What does God have to say? Psalm 143: 7 *"Answer me quickly, Lord! My strength is fading. Do not reject me, or I will join those descending into the grave."* All other religions have you die. I suppose a Buddhist could come back a few times but it's finite. The grave is our final resting spot. Nobody can avoid it. except, the Christian. Why are Christians hatted so much? I think it's the grave. Clearly, we all die. Yet, the Christian seems to mock it. God saves people. From what? From death. Just believe in Jesus and you are to live on eternally with God. For whatever the reason many people hate that. Maybe it ruins a good funeral.

I also lost my step aunt (if that's a thing). Each year we would go to a Christmas dinner and there she was. I know most of us do not hang out with our aunt. Maybe we should. I think we lost my uncle this year too. I can't remember. Yet, I hold special spots for each of them. Each one gave me different memories. I know my aunt and uncle added to my life. No matter how small, a piece is missing now. Christmas dinner is getting thinner. I'm older and losing relatives one at a time. Seemingly at a faster rate these days.

It makes funerals different. Is my aunt going to heaven? I just don't know. Oh, I know but I don't want to go there. The young boy? There is great hope that he accepted Jesus. I saw a

few things that made me have great hope. So, his funeral was filled with hope and joy. A life lived and a life waiting to be with us later. Some funerals are sad. I know of people asking that God is not mentioned. Personally, I know others that believe they will perish in the ground. In fact, they want it that way. No way in hell do they want a heaven. I used to be in that place. I strangely get it. Who wants church for eternity. Do you really thing that time with God is only that? Yet, I know the Christian side too. There is hope in death. There is a trust in life. Live well, play hard and go peacefully to the Lord. Honestly, I can't understand why people veimently reject that?

This Christmas will be sad. I have new cats but I loved my old cat. We went away recently for two weeks. When I got home my cat gave us a kitty yelp. I will never forget that. Then she died a few weeks later. I keep the young boy's obituary near my desk. It's a reminder of a short time well lived. He was extremely missed. Will I be? I never met him but I knew his mother. I knew his friends. That funeral killed us inside. My aunt's funeral is coming shortly. That vacant seat at Christmas will suck.

My dad is moving on to a new stage in life. They are selling there home and moving into a condo. It's just not right. Yet, it fits their age more or less. Honestly, I don't like him selling off all he has gathered over the years. Funerals don't seem that far away for him. He certainly could outlive me! Yet, funerals are too close right now. I don't care if it's a cat, a boy I never met, or a distant aunt. Funerals at Christmas have a special type of sadness to them. The only good thing is Jesus says death isn't the end if you trust in Him.