

Funeral of John Culver

October 1, 2020

Sam Houston Memorial Funeral Home, Willis, Texas

Hymn number 224 – O Jesus, I Have Promised

Westin Price read the obituary

John Culver, 94, of New Waverly, TX passed away peacefully on Set. 25th in the care of Vitas Hospice Facility in Conroe TX. He was born March 9, 1926 in Henderson County KY to Fagan and Idell Culver. He grew up farming the land and was later employed by L&N Railroad Co. In 1947 he received the calling to enter the Ministry and had many good years serving and living for others until he became unable in 2015. At that time, he became a resident of Pecan Grove Assisted Living facility and received wonderful care by all there in New Waverly TX. He was preceded in death by his Parents, brothers Amiel and Carl Culver, sisters Frances Bradley, Anna Weigand and Effie Garrett. He is survived by sisters Lois Culver of New Waverly TX and Alma Sue Culver of Owensboro and Sister-in-law Nell Culver of Kingsport TN and many special nieces and nephews.

Westin Price Prayed

Dale DeRaad

I've been thinking about a couple of verses in I Corinthians 4. I'm thinking about John's life. The first two verses: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

You know it did not take long being around John to understand that he was quite a fan of Kentucky basketball. And by the good fortune of being born in Kentucky you can quite easily become a lifelong fan of Kentucky basketball. But we heard that John at an early age made a vow to serve God the rest of his life. We are aware that making a vow is not enough to become a faithful servant of God or a faithful steward of the mysteries of God. To die faithful to that vow, a person has to make many, many decisions daily, weekly, yearly. To be able to maintain that vow and keep it as it needs to be. I appreciated thinking of John's life in that light. In that sense, he is a good example for all of us, an inspiration for all of us to maintain the vows that we have made and to come to this place a victor. Having overcome daily and having made those decisions and the choices daily that we could be counted faithful also.

It is a tall order to fulfill that second verse. It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. There is not really any option involved, that having made the vow to go forward and to discipline myself to make the choices necessary to fulfill that vow is quite an accomplishment. There are many phases to life and a lot of times in youth we might be led on through enthusiasm or through just the adventure of life. That does not last very long. Later maybe it becomes more of a concern for others around us and we see the desire to help them... to encourage others and so on. Sometimes it seems it may be the most difficult when life becomes more difficult, to maintain oneself, with the tests of a failing body and a person tired by the events of the day and so on. To maintain that vow to the end, as I said, is quite an accomplishment. We appreciate one who has sacrificed so many things for so long. There are so many options in life. It seems that, in order to get to the end faithfully, we have to maintain the sense of having made a good

vow, of having chosen well and a worthwhile goal. I'm grateful for the example of the inspiration that John offers.

Hymn 276 Precious Thought My Father Knoweth

Loren Quick

I'll read from two places. First of all, Hebrews 11:16

"But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Then in Philippians 3:12-14

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also, I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

I think that with every co-worker that we have had there are a few verses in the Bible that I read and I can hear their voice. Those are two parts I have that when I read them I get lost in them. I can't tell you what John said about them but I can hear his voice sharing those two scriptures. Especially that about seeking that which is heavenly. I love that in Hebrews 11, those people we read about, because we can go back and read in their story. We read good things and bad things, ups and downs, mistakes, and imperfections and whatever you want to call it. Hebrews 11 is like God's final testament. My thought, really, about being here today and thinking about what to say and thinking, what John would say? But what does God want to say to us today. Maybe He would want us to be conscious of that because we get upset or disturbed or ruffled a little bit about the things that go on in the world and all of that. But focus on the heavenly country. Let's have our mind set on that which is eternal.

It was shared with us from Lois about John's early years in the work and he said that he felt worthless. The congregation of workers can say "Amen". Everyone of us understands that feeling and everyone of us understands that sense of what am I doing here? The whole work would be better off if I went somewhere else. I don't think that is an uncommon feeling. It isn't voiced so much, thankfully, but it isn't an uncommon thing, especially in some of those early years. All along the way. The more years I put in the more respect I have for a man that has just kept at it in the midst of his nature and different things. And having to continually work at this matter of being faithful as we have been hearing about. Your nature still rises up and we still have to put it down. Sometimes we get more victory and sometimes less and all that but yet he kept on.

Like we read there in Philippians neither are we already perfect nor do we feel that we have got this all figured out. And John wouldn't have felt that way. But he knew that the heavenly vision he had and the understanding of what's awaiting and what God's plan is. There is only one thing to do and that is to forget the mistakes and forget the feelings of worthlessness and forget all that was said but press forward for the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. We are glad to think about that. That God's kingdom works on calling. Calling to be His child, calling to just say Yes to Him. What we want is that we would just continue to say Yes to God.

We are weak humans, but I say sometimes we are too strong. We struggle to get the yes settled and like Dale told you we make a vow. Then we get distracted and then we have to get it settled again. So, there would be no telling like how many times that John just had to go in prayer again to get settled again. We heard forget those things, forget the feelings of not being worthy to be in the work, forget the feelings of not being a capable worker, forget the feelings of regret for mistakes, forget the feelings of being a misfit for your nature. All of that everybody has but we probably don't understand how much the other person is feeling that way too. How many times have we needed to pray let me not focus on that but let me focus again on the heavenly country?

There is a God who has a plan. And that plan was before that man Adam was ever made. And that plan was that He would have this human creation that would respond to the love story that is the Gospel. Out of love responding to that love we can say Yes to the Lord, and then we would say Yes again, and then we would say Yes again. And when there have been mistakes. It says the just man falls 7 times and when we make mistakes, we get up again and say Yes again. That is the getting up step. Yes Lord, Yes Lord. My life is yours and it is yours again. We are sorry for the noes and we are glad we get to the point where we are sorry for the maybes. We are sorry for the, "a little bit later I will get to that", attitude that we have given the Lord sometimes. Then we get passed that and we say Yes again. We go forward. And God in His marvelous capacity to forgive, forgives us. Paul was saying for himself... forgetting those things that are behind. It is marvelous that we can know that God can do that... that God will forget the things that are behind. God will! Here you are... just say Yes to me now and I will say Yes. John said a lot of yeses. We don't know the number and we don't know how many times he wavered, and it doesn't matter. I feel comfortable mentioning that, just because it is the common experience of man.

We don't need to feel like there is some level that we are supposed to reach that means that you don't have a human nature anymore. You can reach that after this point. We haven't reached that point but now John has reached it. We look forward to that. So, we have clear vision again of it and clear vision again that the God of heaven called me. John said God called him, and he has tried. He called him to walk with Him, and he called him into this ministry. We are learning from experience that into this ministry He would call him again. He called him again. He called him again. How many times did John have to find himself again and be sure again that God hasn't changed His mind as He has called me, again. I don't know how many times for John, and I don't know how many times for myself. But God in His mercy just makes it clear to him that here is where I want you and just keep on doing this.

We want to be inspired by John's life, and be inspired by life and death itself, and the thought of the future. That we would seek that which is heavenly, and focus on that which is heavenly. We can go on and take forward steps and forgetting those things that are behind. We are not feeling that we have already attained, we are not feeling that we are already perfect in any sense at all. But we are feeling like the perfect One has called us. The perfect One who knows better our weakness in our situation... better than we do ourselves. This perfect One is very interested to help us. Press, and urgently press toward the mark of this prize of this high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So, whatever our place we take the next step by saying Yes. It is not a trump question. It is not over our head. In that sense it is from humility we say Yes Lord and Yes again Lord. Sorry I was slow, sorry I lingered, sorry I mis-stepped. Yes, again, Lord, forever Yes. We are glad for every Yes in John's life.

Those hymns that were sung, too... I was looking at them last night and this morning and yes they were the right ones. They were the ones that were from John's ministry and they must have been the ones that

encouraged him and because of that, he chose them. We are glad for his companionship and glad for his finish. We want to be inspired. Leave every misstep behind and go forward to more Yeses ourselves

Carl Hamilton

My thoughts have been in the 11th chapter of Judges. Remember the man Jephthah. He was the man that seemed very small in his own family, but he was finally chosen to be the leader for the armies of Israel when they came up against the children of Ammon. It tells us there in verses 30 and 31:

“And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.”

Then verses 34, 35, 36:

“And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon.”

The family has told us that when John was 12 his younger sister, Sue, was burned very badly. It was a question of whether she was going to live or not. So, John made a vow. He told the Lord that if He would preserve her life then he would serve Him all of his life. We are thankful that God has a way of helping us understand that there are things that are too great for us. Yet they are within the will of God and we need God’s help. But we need to give ourselves to God in a way that makes a covenant between us and God.

I have been enjoying the word “dedication” and realizing that dedication is powerful because it involves God. Dedication such as this involves us, and it involves God. It helps us to be united unto God’s purpose. It helps us to remember that we are not our own and we are only here as a very fragile being. But yet there is for us a place to serve. There is for us a duty, a privilege. We are thankful that vow which was in the last hymn John chose, there in the bed. It was the hymn that we sang first, number 224, “O Jesus I have promised, to serve thee to the end”. We are thankful that that was still his purpose.

We remember that when Jephthah came to that point of making that vow. I feel the Lord was in his mind and in his heart. The sacrifice that he had to make was a costly sacrifice. He made it. It was that that united him in the effort to defeat the Ammonites. They were able to accomplish that which was necessary for the armies of Israel to survive. He understood that in the vow that he made was what came into his heart as God was ready to receive him.

We look into John’s life and think of that vow that he made as a young man of 12 years old. Perhaps he was coming to the age of responsibility. And there he was before God, responsible. There he was after the few words that he had said, “I will serve You the rest of my life but just spare my sister’s life.” We are thankful that when we make such a vow and we open our heart to God, it allows us to be one with God’s purpose. It allows us to turn our hearts to those things that are the mind and the heart of God. John

might have thought in his early age that this is going to cost me. We think today, if John looked back on his life he realized he was a winner both ways. His sister survived and he had a life of service unto God, the highest calling. He got a constant presence in his life. Later he got a calling for the ministry and he realized that God called him to the best. He made a vow, God saw, and God heard and honored it. John honored it and he was a winner both ways. We are thankful that when we make a vow to God, we dedicate our life to God, we dedicate our purpose, we dedicate all that we are to God... that God is pleased to find in our heart the purpose to serve Him with our all. He is ready to receive us. Because of that pleasure of God, we have God on our side and we have God to help us accomplish our vow, and also helps us put our life into His hands. We are thankful God understands these things and He helps us turn to the wisdom of God and turn to those things that He has chosen for us.

Jephthah's daughter, it tells us (maybe some of the other versions that make it more clear than in the King James version) she dedicated her life to God because of her father's vow. She understood that her father's vow was binding on her life. She was glad. She was glad for the victory over the Ammonites. That the children of Israel could be free. She realized the price. The price might be great. She wouldn't be married, and she wouldn't have children. She would have her life dedicated to God all the rest of her days. It tells us a little later in the end of the chapter, "That the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year." They would remember her and the vow that was placed upon her. We are thankful that when God helps us, like her father when he vowed a vow, we understand that when God looks into our hearts He wants us to open our heart to Him and give Him our best. He makes it possible for us to just do what the Father has spoken. Just do what the Father has spoken, and we will be those who are a winner on both sides. We will be those who will give Him our best. There will be others that will remember the sacrifice and it will help them then.

We are thankful that John kept those things that were real to him, in his understanding, in his life, when he began to realize this is what God has called me to. This is greatest that I can be called to. Even though it wasn't probably his idea to go into the work, but God laid it on his heart. When God lays things on our heart, He makes it possible for us to keep all that is of His care and His will, of His concern. He gives us strength when we run out of strength. He opens the way for us to know how it is that God uses even a human being to honor himself and He gives us a place, gives us the strength of a spiritual place. It is far above all the ambitions and thoughts of mankind. Just remembering again what Jesus was able to say there at the end of His life in Luke 23:46.

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."

"I commend my spirit" "I recommend my spirit unto you. I give it into your trust." I'm thankful that in God's trust is the greatest victory of all. Thankful that there is grace for humans and their souls to overcome and finish the race. We know that when we finish living according to His will, we can commend our spirit into His hands. Things will be taken care of well beyond the limits of our ability. We are thankful that the Lord can look upon us here today. He sees and hears the message that reaches each heart. He understands each vow that we make. He understands the dedication that controls our life. He wants to be the One that helps us to have the victories we need.

Hymn 404 - There is No Gain