

# **Memorial Service at Pecan Grove for Clarence Roachell**

**June 29, 2021**

## **Richard Raschke**

Thank you everyone for coming. The way we will conduct the service this morning will be like this. I have a hymn that we will sing together that seems fitting to me for Clarence's life, then there will be a prayer, and then there will be a short season of time for you to share your impressions of your associations with Clarence. Then it will be my turn and then we will sing a hymn again. Let us start with hymn 226. This is not particularly because I think that Clarence needed to learn this lesson but rather because he had it learned very, very well. It is a bit inspiring to think about it that way: "Oh, teach me how to love". Then we will pray.

Hymn 226

### **Prayer**

Father, we feel thankful for the experiences that we have had in our life. This morning especially, we are thinking about the people that you have brought across our pathway. We don't know how to understand the way of life that you have planned. All the mysteries of how it is that one person is related to another in the hearts and the connections that form because of that. To think that some way in life things seem totally accidentally yet we somehow feel that You have a hand in so much of that.

As we consider this morning a dear friend who has left this fading scene, we thank you for the work You were able to do with Clarence and with his heart. Because we feel that we profited from that, and we thank you for the sense of support and fellowship that we experienced. We know that comes because of the work of the Holy Spirit. So, while we thank you for him, we thank you more for the power and grace and the way that You were able to do that and even to bring about the fruit of the Spirit in people's lives: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Pure things. And we honor You for that because no person can do that.

We give thanks for all the great positive thoughts we have and memories we have. In the time that we are saying goodbye to the finish of a life, we pray we that You would help us to not be so caught up in our life next that we forget. We pray that every good influence that has come to us from your Spirit through the lives of others, we pray that that would stick. And we pray that there would be times that we stop and think about that in the future and that it might affect how we would do things, the words that we would choose, the attitude we have toward other people and the choices we would make. We thank you that all these things are possible. This morning we are thankful for everyone that is here out of respect and out of love for the Clarence and Yourself. We ask for Your help today. We pray in Jesus's name. Amen

### **Dawn Overby**

This morning when I thought of Clarence I thought of a prayer, a psalm, and a hymn. He meant so much to us and I do not want to forget it.

### **Mireille Mille**

Dominique and I had the privilege of having Sunday morning meeting in Clarence's home and we loved that little meeting. Clarence was always a kind and cheerful man. He was a wonderful elder and we are very thankful for Mike Krengle who was careful to see that Clarence was ready for each meeting. When Clarence shared a verse in his testimony, he always said that it has been written especially for him. We are so grateful that he got his wish to go home to his heavenly Father. Dominique is not with us today, but he is with Clarence and all of us today in spirit. And he is listening to us.

### **Elton Cleveland**

I liked to hear Clarence speak because I knew that he is speaking from his heart. He often spoke from Isaiah and Proverbs and often with his eyes closed. But it was always from his heart.

### **Marilyn Frye**

Clarence liked to tease but when he became serious, he was very serious. I loved to hear him pray and speak and it was so definite and so him. I think of the children and others who liked Clarence and we are so thankful for grandparents like that. I hope we can appreciate it.

### **Della Bolt**

I have known Clarence for many years. When we came to Texas, I cannot remember the year, (it was about 1973) but we went to meeting in his home. It was always so special to be there. He was very cheerful, and we could always talk to him in a way that was very common. I am just thankful today that he is in heaven and I'm sure the Lord has taken him.

### **Alice Oetken**

I just feel so thankful too for having known Clarence. I enjoyed gathering together with Clarence in the South Houston field. He kept his home open for meetings. We were often in that meeting, and he often was an encouragement and inspiration to us. We had gospel meetings not far from there and he was often there with us. We feel thankful for the visits we had here before he was taken home.

### **Ken Newman**

I don't think I have ever known a person who spoke about love as much as Clarence did. In his testimonies and even in everyday conversation he talked about how much he loved everyone. And it seemed that everyone loved him. Often in this place, he would talk about wanting to go home, wanting to go upstairs he would say. He would point up and say, I hope to soon be there. In the hospital, I told him that you might soon get your wish. With a big smile he said, "I will be up there and look down on you all. I said, Clarence, I don't think it will be like that. He agreed. He said we will have much better things to look at in heaven. Our focus will be on Jesus. The day

before he died, the last thing I said to him was, “we love you Clarence” and he mumbled through an oxygen mask, “I love you.” I hope I never forget the example of how to love as Clarence did.

### **Patty Maki**

I speak on behalf of our son, Jason and Ivonne. As newlyweds they lived in Pasadena and went to Clarence’s home for meeting. They loved it. He loved them with arms outstretched and with love in his heart. As parents living far away in a different country, that love was heard through keeping in touch with Jason and Ivonne. It thrilled our hearts that they were with him in that meeting. I was thinking of that hymn that we just sang about all that love. That was Clarence. All that love and all that pouring out. We learned to love Clarence too. I feel thankful that now like that hymn he has gone on for what he has lived for. We all want to try to do the best.

### **Gary Saathoff**

Speaking of Clarence, I had met him before, but I really became acquainted with him later when Rachel came to our field and asked us to drive up there to be with him one Sunday a month. We were glad to do that. As time went on, we looked forward to going up there. We appreciated that meeting and we appreciated Clarence. He had a very cheerful attitude. I never heard a complaint from Clarence. He had a love for God’s word and God’s people, and it was always encouraging. As time went on, we could see his health was failing and his body wasn’t as sharp as it once was but one thing, we never saw was an indication of his faith failing. If anything, it seemed to grow stronger and it was an inspiration. We are thankful for that time we had up there, and we are thankful for the memories we have of him.

### **Abigail Hoffman**

I wasn’t planning on standing up because I didn’t think you would all understand me because I was crying too much. I knew Clarence as long as I can remember. You won’t meet someone so thankful nor as joyful as he was. I loved going to his meeting and when Jennifer Bartels tried to move us for Union meeting so that I could get somewhere where there would be kids my age, I thought that was a silly idea. I just loved his meeting so much, loved the way that he loved us, loved the truth, loved the gospel and loved the fellowship. He just was never afraid to show me that. He always gave the biggest hugs and the biggest smiles. I’m just thankful that I had a part in his life and got to be near him towards the end. I’m thankful for him and will never forget him.

### **Terry Hoffman**

My main memory of Clarence is 19 years ago this month when we went to the funeral of his wife. After the service when I shook his hand, he said to me with a smile that she had gone to be with a better man than he. I thought of that many times over the years since... of what a testament of his faith that was. Not just the words, but the confidence in that and that he was happy on that day. It caused me to wonder if over the years... how I could have that kind of faith?

This morning the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 30 came to my mind about where it says I set before you this day two choices: life or death. I counsel you to choose life. We know that because we do not have control over the day of our birth nor usually the day of our death... that he was talking about a different life and death. He also was telling them how they could choose life and

how to live. He said: Love the Lord thy God, walk in his statutes and keep his commandments. That confidence that Clarence had in his wife that she was with One that still lived even after her death... he lived that same way. This is why I have confidence today also that Clarence has gone to be with the best man that lived on this earth.

### **Kent Opel**

I did a quick calculation a little while ago and come to find out I knew Clarence for 63 years. In high school when I moved from Louisiana and to Houston, I went to Clarence's meeting. I had been there for a little while and I made a decision, after knowing Clarence just for a little while, that I wanted to be like Clarence. Like others, I wanted to be like him because of characteristics that he had that were like Jesus. Things that we love in people around us. A few years later, I was 40 years old, and many times in between I had the same feeling that I want to be like Clarence. I think that is something that praises the One that he was serving, that he wanted to be like Jesus.

### **Mike Krengle**

Hi, I am Mike Krengle, Clarence's son-in-law, Clarence lived with us for many years. In many ways Clarence reminded me of a child. He didn't have all the filters. You know he said what was on his mind and it was truthful. You might agree with him or not, but you could believe what he had to say. We received several notes, emails, etc. in the last few days. We got one from Dominique. He said how much Clarence influenced him on his spiritual journey and I think that it the greatest compliment you can give somebody. I appreciate my time with him, and I appreciate you all very much. Clarence had some wonderful friends and the family draws a lot of comfort in his last years, and years before of course. You all treated him so well. He said they treat me like a king and I said well that's what you want, isn't it? And he said yes. But thank you again from the bottom of our hearts. We appreciate it and the family thanks you.

### **Rich Raschke**

The first thing I remember about Clarence was his grip. I came to find out there was more to that than I realized. The first time Brian and I were here together was the first Wednesday in January. We were here for the meeting in the afternoon. That's when I met Clarence. But you know the grip of Clarence's hand really reflected the grip that Clarence's heart had on the things that were important. There is a verse in Hebrews that talks about this. It is in the second chapter of Hebrews. The writer to those people simply wrote like this... "Therefore, we ought to give the most earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at anytime we should let them slip." Even in life there is this possibility that things will slip away from us. We learn that because there may be people that we knew 30 years ago that we haven't seen since, situations or families that we knew 30 years ago that we haven't been around since. If we have the chance to be around them the human tendency is think that this is going to be wonderful, but we find out that it somehow is not the same. That is because in life we grow, and we change. And very unfortunately it happens to people that some of the things, some of the very valuable things, that they once held in the tiny little hand of their heart when they were small... some of those things can slip away in the course of life.

I appreciated especially what Kent was saying. This idea, that I was inspired by Clarence, and I want to be like Clarence. That is a beautiful testimony and beautiful truth. One thing about that kind of expression is that it's not as commonly heard in young people today as it was 40 or 50 or 60 years ago. Part of the reason for that is that in the course of time since then life has become much more complicated. Young people have way, way, way more sources of input into their life now. Far more entertainment. What that means is that it is far more difficult for young people today to stop and think about what they appreciate and about what that might mean for their future.

So, one thing that is coming to me out of the course of our moments this morning, is for all of us that are a little bit younger... we would do really, really well to occasionally to stop and think about the people we appreciate in our life. Why we appreciate them? We would do really well to stop and think to ourselves... you know, I would like to be like that. Because if we don't stop and think about that what will happen to us is it will slide away from us and it will lose its grip on us and it will be gone. So, the things we value in others we want to hang onto that. Because it is only by hanging onto it and taking steps in the right direction that we can have them in our lives. That's why you feel so inspired when you think of Clarence.

I thought about this grip that he had on his faith. I don't know when that got started.. I appreciate what somebody mentioned, that he enjoyed Isaiah, and I can believe that. In the few short conversations that we had with him, usually on Wednesday if we were here for the meeting, Clarence would talk about Jesus who is our Savior and what that meant to him. He would talk about Him and talk about what Jesus was like in a very deep way. I mean in as deep a way as a man 93 or 94 could. Also, it wasn't in a way that was like... I'm so important that I appreciate what Jesus did for me. That wasn't the way that Clarence thought. He was so impressed with what Jesus was and the way the scriptures talked about Him before his life and after his life. That is a very good grip for a person to have on his faith. I appreciate that Clarence had that, and it never slipped away from him.

So many things in life can slip away. Usually when we think about grip and things slipping away, we think about the sand on a beach or trying to grab a handful of water out of the pond it just sort of goes away because of cracks. But there is a way that we can hang onto the things that are important. We want to do that. We want to be diligent about that. Because that is the only way it really happens. So, I have appreciated thinking about that in regard to Clarence.

There is another part of Clarence's life. We have been hearing about this. I like the word loyalty. We have heard of love and support and encouragement. We heard about that from a lot of different places. Especially what Patty was sharing with us about her son and daughter-in-law and their situation. I've seen a lot of people in life about whom other people would say. if you got on their list of friends, you would never get off it. I've heard a lot of people say that about a lot of people. Some of those people that I have heard that expression be made about. it wasn't very easy to get on their list of friends. If you got there, that was a very good thing. There are people like that and there are good reasons for people to be that way. But Clarence was not a difficult person to get on his list of friends. I really appreciate that. I don't know if it is because we are the workers, but I felt from the very first moment that we met Clarence, that he was behind us and supporting us and next to us and would do anything he could to help us. He said

anything that he could have said to help us. It didn't take very long to get there. That's a sign of a person who is very content with what he has so that he doesn't feel threatened by the things that are around him. He has a lot to give instead of being someone that has to take. That's a wonderful mark. That's the mark of Jesus himself.

That's how it was. We arrived and Clarence was like that, and I was trying to think of how I can explain this from our standpoint as the people who are trying to be the servants of God. How would I explain this? You know there are several people in the Bible that came to my mind. They all are associated with this idea that in the course of the Bible which is really the history of God's people. That's one way to think about the Bible. It is the history of God's people. Like every national history, at certain times in that story there were people that were very, very important. Not everybody was very, very important. But certain times in God's gospel there were certain people that were very important. Then there were a lot of people who were important to God but as far as the story goes, they were fairly common and regular, and you wouldn't feel there was any grand significance to them in the grand scheme of things. So, among these very, very important people, for example, there were people like David, Moses, Jeremiah, Paul. Most important, of course, was Jesus himself. But there were certain people behind the scenes who all those people knew, that person has my back. Those people are not the famous people, they are not the ones that everybody knows about but when you read those stories you realize those were critical people. In our fellowship and in the way that it works, it seems that people want to look to people like Brian and myself. That doesn't mean that we are more important than anyone else. But it does leave us with a little more responsibility. The thing is, we need people that have our back too. That's the way I thought about Clarence.

I was going to tell you about some of these people who were in the Bible like that. We know that when David was very young and had just barely fought that battle with Goliath, had slain the giant. He was trying to be as good of a person and helpful to God's people as he could and to the nation of God. Then there was this problem because King Saul was very envious and very fearful of David, because it was obvious that God was with David. So, David had a very uncomfortable position. David's best friend in that situation was a man named Jonathan. Jonathan came to David many times at his own risk to let David know what was happening and to let David know, look, I'm behind you. Even to such an extent that it happened in one place that there were certain pieces of armor that Jonathan took off and gave to David. Jonathan was Saul's son and so by birth rite he would be the next King. But it was like Jonathan saying to David I know that you are really the one and that you should have all of this because you are going to be the King, and I'm behind you. It says that the soul of Jonathan and the soul of David were knit together. That was a very, very, close friendship and very, very close kind of support. David needed that.

Moses was the leader of God's people probably in the physical sense, the national sense the greatest leader there ever was among the people of God. Today we have leaders, but they are spiritual. But Moses was a natural leader. There was one day when there was a battle going on and Moses was trying to pray for the help of the battle. There was a man named Hur that simply stood by Moses and helped him to pray. It was a famous battle. And it WAS actually a miraculous battle. During the course of the battle, Hur (which is a strange name) simply helped Moses to pray. And Moses needed that help. I appreciate people who are very unknown in many ways

but have this ability to encourage other people to pray and have the ability to encourage me to pray. We need that and Moses needed that. It was a great thing that a man like Hur was standing next to him to support him and be close to him.

Jeremiah was the prophet of the people of God. He was the prophet of God to the people. He didn't necessarily have good things to tell them. Jeremiah had to tell them it is going to get bad and then it is going to get good. What God is telling us is that in the time that it is going to get bad just hang on to our faith and keep looking to Him and keep believing. Even though we are going to have to go a long, long ways away God isn't going to forget us. He is going to be with us and He is going to come with us and then it will be good. That is what Jeremiah had to tell them. People don't like to hear that. People don't like to hear that it is going to be bad and then it will be good. People like to hear that it is going to be good right away. So, the people threw Jeremiah in the dungeon which was like a pit. But a couple of those were Jeremiah's friends and they figured a way to pull Jeremiah out of the pit so that he would not die. That was a great risk and Jeremiah needed that. There were people behind the scenes that were standing behind Jeremiah.

In the days of Paul's ministry, he needed people like Aquilla and Priscilla whom he could discuss questions with. They had great vision themselves and therefore could be a big encouragement to the rest of the fellowship. Paul needed people like that. But he also needed people like a man needed Onesimus who came to prison and sought him out. Just so that he could have someone to encourage him.

You see how this was. All the way through the people of God, the ones that had the responsibility did well because there were people next to them and behind them that they knew were their support. This is what Clarence was to us even in the small way that a man who was living in an assisted living facility could be... which on the surface doesn't look like very much, but it is.

In one sense Jesus had that because when He sat down for the very last time with his disciples before He was put to death one of the things that He told them was: You are they who have continued with me in my temptations and so you have a place in my Kingdom. We often think of Jesus as being the greatest of all. He was the greatest of all and we could think of Him as self-sufficient. But I suppose that in one way He was self-sufficient, but He was the Son of God. Even if there had been no one that ever believed, Jesus could have had a way to function in the world. However, those are wonderful words: You are they that have continued with Me in my temptations. That's like Jesus telling them... you guys had my back and I appreciate it. It's like telling them there was a lot that you didn't understand about what was going on, but I knew that you were behind me. And I appreciate it. That's what He was telling them.

That's the feeling that I have had of Clarence in the way that he was to Brian and me in the time that we were with him. He was behind us and next to us and under us and would do anything that he could for us. I appreciate that. I think that probably whatever condition in life that any of us would have had, whether it would be parallel to Clarence in age and experience or whether it would be a situation where he had more responsibility than we had. I think that everyone of us would have this feeling of Clarence, I know that man is with me and cares and wants me to do nothing but prosper and wants everything to go well with me. I think all of us would have

known that from Clarence. And that is so nice. That is the way that everyone that met Jesus was, they knew that He wanted them to prosper.

Solomon when he was writing his proverbs... there are three places where he wrote about brothers. One place he wrote... there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. I think the greatest friend of course is Jesus. But there is the way that the people of God and the people of faith are not only friends to one another, but they are brothers. That is why I said in the beginning that the word that sticks in my mind is loyalty. That is the way I think of Clarence. Once you got on his list of friends you were going to be on his list of friends, and it wasn't very difficult to get on that list. We do appreciate that about him.

But we appreciate most of all what the work God did that in him. We would like that the same kind of working would be done in us. People always say good words at times like this. I think it would be a terrible tragedy if it were my day and people were talking about me because I loved this world and they only said good words because they knew they were supposed to say good words. That would be a terrible tragedy. We are not saying good words about Clarence because we know we are supposed to, but we are saying things about him because the Lord did good things for him. In the same way we want the Lord to do some things for us that nobody else can do.

Hymn 75, I've a Friend