

Absent from the Body... Present with the Lord!

Overview

Teach us Lord to continue to drink and to never be fully satisfied, always longing for more. Thank you Linda. If you've been attending here for some time you would have heard this story.

I was just a young kid. I don't know how old I was. That doesn't matter but I was young and my mother and dad went to the hospital.

This was in Hamilton stating that my grandmother was not doing well at all and I was allowed to stay up until they came home and I did so and when my mom came in and my dad, my dad went immediately to the bedroom. I had never seen him cry and he wasn't going to let me see him cry now and he went to the bedroom and my mom came and sat down beside me, took me in her arms and she knew how much I loved my grandma. I was very close to her and my mom said tonight grandma went to be with Jesus and of course I began to sob.

She said but let me tell you a little story. She said this is what happened tonight in the hospital. My uncles and aunts were there, mom and dad and surrounding her at bedside and apparently the nurse came in and said I'm asking the family just to step out in the hall.

There's a couple of things I need to do here. They stepped out in the hall and when the nurse emerged she said I need to tell you all something. She said when a person is in this condition and I don't know exactly what she meant by that exactly but she said when a person is in this condition they're not responsible for the things that they say.

So your mother is saying some things that might disturb you but please don't take it to account because she's not responsible for what she's saying. And my dad said what is my mother saying? Well she's uh she seems to be cursing cursing God and my dad said that's just not my mom. They went in and gathered around and my grandmother apparently her voice had dropped and no one could hear her but they saw her mouth moving and so my mom told me that my dad was the one who stepped over and put his head right down close to grandma's lips and here's what my dad heard.

Yes Jesus. Okay Jesus yes. I love you Jesus.

Yes I love you and then she took a deep breath and she was gone. What a precious little story for a kid like me to know that life does not end with the last thump of a heart. To know that Jesus was there in that room and was actually communicating with my grandma.

I love the verse that says absent from the body present with the Lord and to my mind I just absolutely accept this. Yes Jesus. Yes Jesus.

Okay Jesus. Suddenly she spoke her last breath but then grandma continued to talk to the one who was saying now Mamie you come with me. Oh glory to God.

Glory to God. I'm very enamored not obsessed but I'm enamored with a thought of death and I think that's normal for the number of candles I saw on a cake not very long ago and I'm researching this. I'm looking to find out what the old Hebrew sages thought of death way back you know back in the times of the kings and the chronicles and back in those days.

I'm reading what they had to say and then of course I'm studying what some of the early church fathers had to say because we're all in to one measure or another we think about it and I think that I probably think about it pretty well every day Nancy. I don't know what that's about and I'm not obsessed with it I'm just being realistic and every morning I wake up and I say well I'm still here. April's mother was a very serious individual in so many ways but she had a unique way of humor and so she would tell you things that were going on in her heart in her life and oftentimes she would tell it in a kind of a humorous way.

So I remember visiting her and it was only a couple of months before she passed and I said how are you doing mom and she said you know I'm having an argument with my heavenly father. I said oh what's that look like. She said well every night as I get into my bed she said I spend some time with him and then I close off with this.

Now lord I'm quite weary. I've had a good life. You've been so good to me but if you don't mind I'd like you to take me home tonight.

I'm done. She said every morning I wake up and I say so too busy for me are you. We're abnormal they say.

We're abnormal because we do not fear what they call death. Absent from the body present with the lord and I won't bore you with the story you've heard it too many times but I tell other people I told a man in a place of commerce not too long ago. I turned to him and I won't tell you how this all got started.

I you know I never stopped yakking and I turned to this fellow got chatting with him and I said well I'm not worried about that. I said if I die right now I said I know where I'm going and he stood there like I had slapped him across the face like that caught him and I said I said it's true sir. I said I don't fear death.

I said I was told by a doctor 10 years ago I've had patients in better condition than you David and I couldn't save them. You are in a very very difficult position right now. I just want you to know we might lose you and this man said and what did you say to reply? I said I said to the doctor at that time so what are we doing standing here let's get this on and a nurse spoke out to me and said Mrs. Forrest is here do you want to say goodbye? I said no I'm not going anywhere let's just get this on and I knew nothing for another 12 hours and when I awoke there was a nurse.

It's 2 30 in the morning and when I awoke I saw a little lady she was not a tall person quite young in my estimation in her maybe mid-20s. She was my nurse she was a special kind of nurse to work with people in my situation and when I looked at her the lights were dim but there was enough to see the details of her face and there were tears running down her cheeks and I said why are you crying? She said because of you. I thought that was kind of nice she was kind of a pretty little thing.

I said whatever do you mean? I read your chart before I started last night. In the evening she would have been on night shift right 11 o'clock I don't know and she said you're not supposed to be here. Where am I supposed to be? You never should have made it.

She said this is what I do. This is where I work and she said I have never seen your chart with those statistics of a patient. She said you never should have made it.

She said the doctors are absolutely amazed and then she went on to say I said so what makes you cry? She said there's a joy in my heart. I said that makes you cry? Oh she said I'm not upset. She said I'm so thrilled.

She said I'm now taking care of somebody that he has plans for my patient. She said you are here for a reason. You have a mission.

Does this make sense? She made me cry. I said dear God yes. I said do you know who I am? She said all we know about you is your name is David.

Didn't know who I was. I don't fear death. I want to know more about it and I've heard this verse all my days and I've never heard anybody address it.

Surely you know this one. It was Job. Job in the 19th chapter and he's trying to defend himself because he's in such dire straits.

You know what he went through. It was absolutely terrible and his friends had shown up and they were telling him why he was in the condition that he was in. It's sin in your life.

God is upset with you and this you are a bad person and he's saying what do you mean? Well the Lord knows. We don't know what it is but all of these diabolical things that have happened all the losses. God is upset with you somehow and this was his retort.

He said for I know that my Redeemer liveth. Now I want to tell you about that word redeem. In the Hebrew word it's goel and in a sort of like a phraseology it literally means to rescue, to redeem.

You remember the story of Ruth and Boaz and how she looked she looked to Boaz as her kinsman redeemer that he would rescue her. Now she'd lost her husband and she had nowhere to go. She was in abject poverty but he because he was related to her of the tribe of the Moabites.

They're terrible people but here was a good one. She was related to him and so she was appealing to him that he would rescue her. That he would pay any outstanding debts and I won't go into all the details.

It's quite intriguing quite interesting and by the way this is what happens in many of the tribes in Kenya. I've known women who were hoping that their brother-in-law would be a redeemer to them because their husband had passed. So this is a thing that has gone into tribal situations as well and so that word redeemer means this.

Here are these men accusing Job of being a wicked sinner and he's saying I need somebody to act on my behalf. I need someone to redeem me from the accusations you're putting against me because I'm not guilty. But my very words of crying out I'm not guilty, I'm not guilty, you will decide that I'm just compounding my guilt because I'm just in denial.

So I need somebody to redeem me. My wife isn't going to redeem me. She said just curse God and die.

You're my very best friends and you are stomping on me. I need a relative to look after me. I need somebody to come and act as my lawyer, my defense, and to say no he's not a bad person.

And he said I haven't got anybody. However he said I know that my goal, my redeemer, my kinsman lives. He's not dead.

My kinsman redeemer lives and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. This is intriguing to me because Job is not, he's saying and if I don't get redemption and I don't escape the accusations you're throwing at me. You don't, without a doubt you're talking to all your friends down at the saloon and you're telling them poor old Job he's just not facing reality.

Like Job has a terrible reputation because of his friends who knew, oh I know Job well and he's really messed up with God. He's saying even if I die and I don't get salvaged here at another time when I'm still alive I'm going to be redeemed because there's one who knows me. He knows the, he knows the, my fingerprints.

He knows who I am. I have a redeemer. He's alive now.

He's alive now therefore he knows me now but at the end of the days when everything is is totally changed, whenever he says my redeemer will stand in the last day, he's literally speaking and does he understand it? I can't conceive that he does. If he understood the total import of what he was saying he would have been ahead of Isaiah chapter 5. He would have been ahead of him. The word of God says in the New Testament angels desired to know.

Prophets, men who were spokesmen for God long to know the things that you now, you Christians, New Testament salvation blessed. You know more than they knew back in the Old Testament. Here was Job in this dire prediction, in this dire situation and he says I know my redeemer liveth and that he will stand at the latter day.

You know what the latter day means. Well we're the latter day saints right? On the day of Pentecost Peter got up and said Joel said in the latter days, in the latter day and you know the people in that country are aware of two rains. There's the early rains and then there's a latter rains.

The latter rains are the rains that finish up the crops and get them ready for harvest. So the word latter means a great deal to the people of that side of the world. The latter rain means coming to the conclusion, coming to the glorious day of the reaping of the harvest and when they reap the harvest I used to fly out to Alberta years ago and help a farmer that I love, Christian farmer.

I'd go and work with his adult sons and I helped them harvest hundreds and hundreds of wheat. I went out there and actually in a place called Killam, Alberta. I went out there and I helped them with the harvest and I tell you it was such a joyful time.

It was the, it was the completion. It was the latter day of that year of planting and harvesting. It was the end.

Job says in that final day, in the latter day he said he will stand upon the earth and though after my skin worms destroy my body, I'm enamored you see with what, what am I like? If you gather here on some Sunday and there's an announcement, David woke up cold. No, he didn't wake up this morning. He's cold.

I want you to know, I want you to know that I believe with all my heart that my grandmother will be somewhere near dying. No, I'm not enamored with her and I'm not obsessed with her. I'm just saying I know where she is and I know where my mom is.

I know where my dad is. I don't fear it. I anticipate it.

Hello. Though my body has totally decayed. Watch this.

How can you handle this? Israel was unsure of the resurrection. Do you know there was a whole tribe? Was it the Sadducees? You don't have to answer that. I think it was the Sadducees.

During the time of the four gospels, the Sadducees were among the sects of the, of the Israelites who never believed in the resurrection. So it was not a common thought. But this man says, though my body is destroyed in the grave, yet in my flesh I will see God.

This drives me crazy. God is not some glow in the dark in heaven. He's saying I will see God and I will recognize him.

This is glorious heaven coming folks. He says I will see him. Who wants to see a judge who's going to condemn you to hell? Job was being accused by his friends.

You're suffering now but oh you're gonna be in a desperate place in hell because if God's upset with you now, think about your future. He says I know my redeemer lives and I will see him and when I see him I won't be afraid. Hello? I won't be afraid to face God.

One of the greatest sermons apparently that was ever preached was by a name, by, oh no I'm not going to speak his name. He preached a sermon, it's a famous sermon called Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. Maybe you've heard of that and forgive me I can't remember the preacher's name.

I've quoted that so many times and just to hear that makes me shake. Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. Here's Job's accusers saying you won't be able to face God.

You'll be terrified by his presence. He says no, no, no, no. My redeemer is going to set the record straight and I will see God and I will see God in my flesh.

He goes on. Whom I shall see for myself. I love this.

He's already said in my flesh I shall see God and in case you didn't get it he goes on and he says I'm telling you I will see him for myself. I could tell you all about my grandmother. I could describe her as best as I could.

You'd never get a picture in your head of her but I saw her but it wouldn't be sufficient for me to say if you just saw her you would have loved her as much as I. That's foolishness I know. Job is saying no one's going to come and say to me hey Job I met with God and he told me to tell you everything's going to be all right. No, no, no.

He says I'll see him for myself and my eyes, my eyes shall behold and not another. My eyes. These accusers claim they'll see him and they just might stop by and tell us they're working on some kind of a sweetheart deal to get me freed from this accusation and trouble.

He says no, no, no, no. I'll see him for myself. Though my eyes, no he says though my reins, my reins.

Speaking of my bowels, speaking of my innards, speaking of the very core of my being though my vowels have been totally consumed within me. I'm going to see him for myself. Matthew 17 3. I love this.

I'm wondering what's going on in heaven. I'm wondering, I'm wondering if my dad in heaven would recognize my mom. David you're thinking too hard.

Now watch this. After six days, Matthew 17 3, Jesus took Peter, he took James, he took John and they brought, he brought them up into a high mountain. Does this resonate? And was transfigured before them.

His face shone like the sun. His raiment was like a bright light and there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah with him. Now there's a conflict here with my understanding about the resurrection.

My dad's body is in the grave. My mom's body's in the grave and supposedly whatever is left of Job is finer than table salt. Like he's been reduced to dust.

But he says I will see him. And we would say well of course Job. In the resurrection the bodies will be raised.

I speak those, those verses over every grave. I never failed, I don't think I've ever failed to say this. I've said to the people there, saved and unsaved, godly and otherwise, I have said you need to know you're right now standing on miracle ground.

Because this person that we're about to lower into the soil was a saint of God. The trumpet's going to sound. He will descend with a shout and this body will be renewed and will rise again.

This is miracle ground you're standing on. So I know that this body will be renewed. This corruption will take on incorruption.

This death will take on life. But Moses and Elijah were recognized by Peter, James and John. Now of course I've got this dumb way that I think.

How did they know that it was Moses and Elijah? I have it. When you get to heaven you'll get a little name badge. How did, no I don't know how they knew but this was their testimony.

This was their story. We saw Elijah and we saw Moses. Why was that even allowed for these three men? Why did Jesus even take these guys up there? Because after that story of the mountain high and after Jesus had lifted up off of the mount of all of that and said heard the angels say this same Jesus shall so come in like manners you've seen him go.

They had another story to tell. They'd say and we saw up on the mountain with Jesus. We met Moses.

We met Elijah. And you know what they were doing? They were talking. They were discussing things and we got to listen in to the creator himself talking about his two icons Elijah and Moses.

Two powerful men of God. They're alive today. They're not really in the grave.

That's the dust. But they are there and we saw them and we weren't looking at ghosts. I can't put it all together for you.

I think I'm raising more questions than answers. I don't care about that. There are some things we'll never perceive until we get there.

By and by when the morning comes when the saints are gathered over home we'll tell the story how we overcome and we'll understand it by and by. Some of those old songs are pretty wonderful you know. When's the last time you heard a new gospel song out of California wherever they draft them up? When's the last time you heard a song about by and by when the morning comes? I love.

We walked in theology in those days. I learned my theology at the piano. In the church piano.

In the prayer room on Sunday nights. That's where I learned because as the prayer meeting began to kind of peter off. Some people were heading home.

They had to go to work in the morning. So many of us stayed. Somebody went to the piano.

How many remember anything like this? We gather around the piano in the prayer room around the piano and we would sing until 11 o'clock at night. We were singing songs like that. Songs that lifted the heart and said don't be disturbed.

Don't be troubled. I'm going to prepare a place for you so that where I am there you may be also. We sang songs that spoke of that.

Hallelujah to God. In Luke. This is a strange story.

It came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels. I love that. A beggar.

A beggar. Elon Musk are you listening? A beggar who lived on crumbs and handouts on the streets. When he died an angel was there and said take my hand.

Let me take you where you need to go. An angel carried. Carried what? His body is lifeless.

I told you this is not. I told you you're going to get confused. Just remain confused and enjoy it.

I love this. An angel carried part of him. His soul.

Into Abraham's bosom. As a kid I never understood what his bosom was. My mother had a large bosom.

She was not a small person. Sorry. Just telling it like it is.

I looked it up. He did not have feminine breasts. It means that Lazarus was carried up and was set on Abraham's lap like a child would be cradled on his father his mother's lap.

The rich man he died and they buried him and in hell Sheol. S-H-E-O-L. In Sheol the rich man who was no longer rich lifted up his eyes and being in torment.

Well Pastor Dave that's just spiritual torment. His mind was in torment. Hold on.

Being in torment he saw Abraham a long ways off and he saw Lazarus sitting on Abraham's lap. And he cried. He had a tongue to speak and he had a larynx.

He cried. Father Abraham. Abraham was wearing his badge so he knew which one was Abraham.

He said send Lazarus. Have mercy on me. Send Lazarus.

Send him back. Let him be resurrected. Send him back that he may dip the tip of his finger.

Oh Lazarus had fingers. Dip his finger in water and cool my tongue. I'm tormented in this flame.

Hot. Hot. Hot.

Hot. It's hot. It's hot.

It's hot. Do you remember that lady who had her own her own religion? They have temples everywhere. They're being sold now and used by everybody.

And this woman said that that we're all living in kind of like in a fog and that pain is not real. It's a figment of your imagination. Do you remember that woman? She's gone now.

Do you remember her? She had her own religion. Had her own temples everywhere. And she just said no this this body isn't even real.

We're a figment of her own imagination. So somebody said at one time she's in hell now saying I'm not here. I'm in torment by the flame.

But Abraham said son remember that you in your lifetime received lots of good things. And Lazarus he he got tempered with by bad things. But now he's comforted and sorry that you're being tormented.

And beside all this between us there's a great gulf fix so that they which would pass from here to you cannot. They can't pass. Then he said I pray thee therefore father that thou he was a Jew.

He recognized Abraham as his father. I pray that you would send him to my father's house for I have five brothers. He has memory of the old life that he may testify to them lest they also come into this place of torment.

And Abraham said unto him. This is like reading the newspaper. Here's Abraham's response.

If one went to them from the dead they still will be in denial. He said if they won't listen to Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded the one were to be raised from the dead. Just quickly now.

Hebrews 11. And actually I'm about to share with you where I began with this message. Because my mom and dad were looking for the second coming.

My pastor would preach on the second coming and as a child I believe the second coming was happening soon. My son bless his pointed head spoke to me on the phone just last week and he said dad I remember. I remember.

There was a reason why he wanted to say this to me. He said I remember he said when you preached and said that my big sister Sherry would never even attend high school. Jesus was.

I remember the place. I remember the time I was a guest speaker in Hamilton at a big church and I got ramped up and raving crazy. I'm saying he's coming.

He's coming. My little girl who's right over here in the front row she'll never go to high school. That girl went to high school.

She lives in Niagara Falls and she's a grandmother. So my mom and dad died having not received the promise that they read in the word of God. But they died in faith still believing.

My grandmother went to be with Jesus and so she missed out on the resurrection morning. She missed out on all of that and there's kind of a sadness to it that we would all hope that come Lord Jesus come quickly come quickly. Hebrews 11 has a long list and you know it by faith by faith by faith Abraham by faith Sarah.

It goes the list is incredible and how they had faith in God. But it says these all having obtained a good report that means a good standing before God a good testimony they did not receive the promise. God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect.

In other words all of those old folks like Abraham who had the promises all the promises you're going to bless many nations. He's blessed many nations and they still hate him. He probably has well him and Trump have the most hated names in the world today.

You'll be blessed and your people will own all the land. I looked it up on a map it's incredible from the Tigris to the Euphrates God told Abraham from that do you know how many countries that takes I think it's five countries. Part of Turkey part of Iraq part of Persia Iran and crowding Egypt and it's not theirs.

So Abraham was given this promise this is your land. But he never received the finality the finish the completedness of that promise. But he died believing and his sons after him they all died having not received the promise.

In another rendition another Bible called the living Bible I don't depend on it I have a copy I looked it up it says and these men of faith though they trusted God and won his approval none of them received all that God had promised. For God wanted them to wait and share the even better rewards that were prepared for us. The amplified version all of these though they won divine approval by means of their faith did not receive the fulfillment of that which was promised because God had us in mind.

God had us in mind. Abraham might have had reason to say but why why and the Lord could have said because your family is still growing Abraham we didn't want to leave any out. These all died having not received the promise.

Let me give you a quick little tidbit. A couple or three or four people in this room might know the family that I speak of. I know of two in this room for sure that know the Cowles.

Elf Cowle Hamilton his wife Irene Elf was very very very responsible for the planting of the church today known as Lake Mount. He was ultra ultra important in the establishment of that church. Great man of faith.

Had two daughters both of them served God with all of their heart. One living in California and the other one right up here in Ontario and that daughter married Rudy Krulik if this helps and they founded Heaven's Gates Hell's Flame. That's the family but Paul the son decided to live another way of life.

He moved to Hong Kong. I don't know the story. I don't know what kind of life that he lived but I know that it it traumatized Elf and Irene.

Hours before Elf died the family called said David your friend and so I went to his apartment in Hamilton and just to piece it together the doctor would be summoned come and give Elf an injection. He was in dire pain. What he was suffering from was just horrendous and so the doctor would come and give him a needle and a call was made to a doctor come quickly can you he's in pain he's crying out in pain and the doctor who showed up was not his regular doctor it was a fellow from the Hindu religion a doctor.

He came in and Elf was surprised to see him of course and the doctor was very kind and very gentle and said okay I'm going to give you this needle and you'll be you'll have relief immediately and Elf said stop. Elf said to the doctor before you do that I have a question for you doctor. Do you know Jesus and the doctor was amazed to hear that question and before the doctor injected Elf he led the doctor to the Lord.

A few days later that same doctor showed up at the door and said can I see the old gent and they said we didn't call for you. He said I know that but I want to see him. When he came in to Elf's bedroom said I knew you'd be back and he called for the oldest daughter who was present because daddy was passing and he said I sent you a couple of days ago to pick up a Bible at the Bible bookstore.

He came I knew you would come get the Bible and they handed him a beautiful leather Bible and the man knelt down beside Elf's bed and the last thing that Elf did in this world is he laid hands on that doctor and prayed over him but he had spoken to me a few days before that and it said David my daughters are serving God. The one is involved with the drama heaven's gates house flames you know all about that and the power that has got it persuaded so many to accept Jesus but he said Paul's not saved. Paul's not saved.

He said I prayed and I prayed and I prayed. My heart is that I don't want to lose my son from heaven. He's got to get saved.

David if you ever have an opportunity take the opportunity and minister to my son Paul. With my death he will come back. He will be here.

I had the privilege of being a soloist at that funeral. I sang it is well with my soul because it was well with Elf's soul. He died not having received the promise but I think it was within 14 days.

I stand to be corrected. Paul fell on his knees and gave his life to Jesus. I don't know when he's coming but with the world turning inside out and our whole economy going into collapse and now our Captain Canada flew over to China and said forget about Trump.

I'm with you guys. Really? Send your police over. We're going to exchange ideas.

You can just come do whatever you want. Our country's being sold out and that's so troubling to me. Come Lord Jesus even so come.

But it may not happen yet. The word I finished now. I love to finish.

You know that Hebrews 11 was a message to the Hebrew people at that time who were about to give up their sense of hope because life was so treacherous. Because these Hebrew people, these Jewish people had surrendered their lives to Christ. They were rejected by their own tribe, by the other Jews.

They lost property. They were persecuted beyond measure. Some of them were falsely accused of things and ended up in jails.

They were beaten. People refused to do commerce with them. They couldn't run a little store because no money, nobody was going to deal with them.

They were treacherously dealt with and so they began to wonder why did I give my heart and my life to Jesus? The cost is incredible. We can't stand this much longer. Some of us have died because of the treachery because of our faith.

If we hadn't surrendered to Jesus everything would be just fine and dandy. And so some of them were thinking about going back, giving up on Christianity because the journey was too treacherous. If they'd gone back to it and gone back to the temple worship and relied on the work of the priest and said the rosary, doing whatever, they could have gained favor again.

And the apostle writes to them, to the Hebrew says, don't give up yet. Think about what these people went through. Some of them were cut in half.

Some of them were crucified upside down. They were boiled alive. They died for their faith.

They refused to recant. They refused to give in. Abraham, think about it.

You think about the losses of your property. Abraham forsook everything in Iraq and he made his journey something like 2,000 miles on foot until he came to the promised land. You haven't suffered anything yet.

Hold on. Don't give up. Don't you dare back off.

And to me this is the message today. We must not back off. We must not yield ground. Not one little bit. Live for Jesus and the reward is incredible. And if your son, your daughter, your sister, your brother, whoever is not serving God yet, don't give up.

Paul Cowell died a glorious Christian and worked for God in his last days. That story was turned around. Glory to God. Don't give up on your kids. Don't give up on your relatives. And don't you back off. Not one iota. These all died deprived of the finish of the hope. But hope is on the way and his name is Jesus.