

Comfort, Hope and Forever Young

In times like this it's normal to ask questions. Especially when a life is cut short so unexpectedly. It just doesn't make sense and seems so unfair.

In fact, you may be asking that very question: Why does life seem so unfair? Or simply just asking WHY?

You may be asking yourself why do bad things happen to good people? Some may be even blaming themselves.... If only I..., I wish...

What am I going to do without [name removed]? Or like me whenever a young person dies – simply angry.

Or worse, you may be blaming God and doubting that He even exists or at best that He doesn't care.

No matter the question, there are some things we just don't know and will never know.

There are some things we think we know and still don't really know. Like Facebook security.

Then there are things we just know. Like what our friends are doing in real time on SnapChat.

And there are things that others know, that we can also know, but we just need to get to know them.

I'll let that marinate with you [smile]

If the death of this beautiful young lady can teach us anything and I pray we all come to this understanding – OUR LIVES MATTER – both to God and to others – otherwise we wouldn't be in this room and there wouldn't be hurt and pain in our hearts due to this tragic loss.

We all have an impact even if it's not apparent to us at the time.

[so that was the pre-able – I won't be much longer]

There are two interesting dichotomies in both birth and death

1. At birth a woman goes through tremendous pain to bring forth life, but as soon as the baby is seen for the first time by the parents there is overwhelming joy and smiles flood the room.
2. In death, all the living gather to speak of the life of the person they've come to mourn. And although there is great sadness at the loss we CHOOSE to focus on the joy and the life of that person we had known.

I believe the reason for all the questions and such dichotomies as joy and pain is we need to be reminded, pointed to and become dependent upon Jesus...He is the ANSWER.

And so it is with this in mind that I would like to offer you comfort, hope and an encouraging word...you can and will get past the pain and sadness.

It will fade, but maybe not completely disappear.

The life and joyful memories of [name removed] will last for the duration of your lifetimes.

I want to encourage each of you, particularly the young people, that as you move forward in life, that you live with intent, making the most of the time because life is short, no matter how many years you check off the calendar.

Make every day count because someone needs you; that someone might even be right beside you. There is no time for blaming, getting even or being critical. LIFE IS TOO SHORT!

You need to know that you were created for a purpose, created for impact, created to show the world God's grace, God's mercy and His glory. Even in the midst of pain.

Again, it has nothing to do with how many years you live. Jesus was crucified at 33 and only taught for 3 years, but His life transformed the world.

Don't let the impact that [name removed] had on your life be in vain.

Be radical, get to know Jesus, read and live according to his promises

Here are 10 such promises found in the bible

1. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Jeremiah 29:11 (KJV)
2. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.
3. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;
4. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.
5. John 16:22 ...you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. (Jesus' words)
6. Revelation 21:5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."
7. 1 Peter 5:6-7 (KJV) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you (lift you up) in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you.
8. whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.
10. “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

Before I close in prayer, I have a question that you may not have considered and it is this:

Is there anyone living among you, who you would like to see again once you leave this earth?

- I have a wife, two teenagers and an 11 year-old who thinks she’s 30
 - We will all be together in eternity
- Is it easy...not always in fact it’s down-right hard sometimes
 - You don’t have to become a missionary or speak a funerals
 - The old church of condemnation is dead – Romans 8:1
 - You think you have to give up stuff, but I’ve learned you can't give up stuff even if it's bad for you.
 - You need a power that’s greater
 - You think you’ll just be a hypocrite
 - Don’t worry atheists are hypocrites too
 - The different is they don’t have a helper to learn the truth and become better

I encourage you to do your research, get your questions answered

I did my research and I know there is a God that cares.

I did my research and every problem in the world today can/will be solved by and according to scripture.

I did my research and I know that Jesus is the Son of God. Nothing else makes sense when you compile all of the historical evidence, archaeological digs and match it with modern day science.

I thank Jesus every day for the peace, joy, hope, comfort and purpose He has placed in my life. He can do it for you too.

If you are not sure who you can trust for the answers you seek, I can recommend a few good resources, people, fathers, mentors and friends. You can ask all the crazy questions you want until you too can understand the true and living God and be sure you’ll live forever together in eternity.

Talk with your loved ones, family and friends and decide together to follow Jesus. It’s easier when there is unity.

Let's pray Bob Dylan's lyrics "Forever Young"

May God bless and keep you always
May your wishes all come true
May you always do for others
And let others do for you
May you build a ladder to the stars
And climb on every rung
May you stay forever young
Forever young, forever young
May you stay forever young.

May you grow up to be righteous
May you grow up to be true
May you always know the truth
And see the lights surrounding you
May you always be courageous
Stand upright and be strong
May you stay forever young
Forever young, forever young
May you stay forever young.

May your hands always be busy
May your feet always be swift
May you have a strong foundation
When the winds of changes shift
May your heart always be joyful
And may your song always be sung
May you stay forever young
Forever young, forever young
May you stay forever young.