

The Gospel for the Funeral Service- John 5:24-30

²⁴ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The Gospel reading in the Funeral Service reassures believers departed this life. Family members and friends of the beloved are comforted by the Gospel reading. Everlasting life is the outcome for believers attentive to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Funeral Service serves to benefit the departed loved one and all in attendance. All attending the funeral service are collectively impacted by the service content. Death can come suddenly, when least expected and is no respecter of age.

²⁵ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

The Gospel reading unites with the departed and says those hearing shall live. God exceeds full human comprehension and the Gospel is to be received in faith. Jesus Christ conquered death and has the power to affect the dead of all ages. The Gospel has accounts of Jesus raising the dead including Christ's Resurrection. Jesus Christ's Resurrection is primary in understanding daily life in every century. While most people live long lives, some are taken from this life much younger.

²⁶ For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

Life emanates from the Lord God and is dependent on the Lord God to continue. It is valuable to remember Jesus said He was the way, the truth and the life. (Jn 14:6) Life and the Lord God are inseparable on earth and beyond the grave in eternity. The Church helps believers to understand God and God's relationship with life. The Church remembers and cares for believers from conception to life in eternity. Believers learn about the life in Christ by faithfully being a part of the Church. The Gospel read at funerals gives believers vital lessons for life from Jesus Christ.

²⁷ And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

Believers learn about the Great and Final Judgment regularly in God's Church. The Gospel teaches about the Second Coming when each person faces judgment. Funerals call to mind the final judgment each person will eventually face. Each day is an opportunity to prepare well for the final day of judgement. Jesus has the power to judge and to exercise that judgment at the appropriate time. Being attentive to the Gospel reading holds immeasurable value for life.

²⁸ Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

Funerals are important in the lives of believers and encourage personal reflection. The contents of the Funeral Service are rich and instructive for living attendees. Believers at the funeral benefit when considering their own departure from life. Funerals are an opportunity to assess personal life and redirect life when necessary. Christ welcomes believers turning to Him in faith seeking sincere repentance. Jesus Christ desires each person to repent and gives ample opportunities to repent.

²⁹ And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

St. John's Gospel is read on Pascha when Jesus' Resurrection is greatly celebrated. Believers greatly enrich their lives when using the Resurrection as their guide. Jesus created enduring hope when He destroyed death and rose from the grave. Belief in the general resurrection is professed at Baptism and each Divine Liturgy. Fundamental belief in the general resurrection distinctly influences daily living. Jesus welcomes believers seeking to prepare for the Great and Final Judgment.

³⁰ I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

At the Great and Final Judgment each person will appear before Jesus Christ. Jesus assures each person that His judgment will be just for those before Him. Standing before Jesus Christ for judgment affects where a person spends eternity. Funeral services while a believer is living serve as a strong reminder to prepare. John the Baptist and Jesus both preached and advocated for individuals to repent. Jesus' Resurrection is life's treasure to embrace and be the guide of daily life.

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