



Words of Comfort

*A Selection of
Readings, Prayers, Psalms and Poems
for use in a funeral service*

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John Chapter 14 Verses 1-6

Jesus said to his disciples:
‘Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Believe in God, believe also in me.
In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.
If it were not so, would I have told you that I go
to prepare a place for you ?
And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and will take you to myself,
so that where I am, there you may be also.
And you know the way to the place where I am going.’

Thomas said to him:
‘Lord, we do not know where you are going.
How can we know the way?’

Jesus said to him:
‘I am the way, and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.’

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul:
he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever

Psalm 121

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord,
which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

The Lord is thy keeper:
the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:
he shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in
from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3 Verses 1-8 and 11

For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

He has made everything beautiful in its time.

I Said To The Man Who Stood At The Gate Of The Year

I said to the Man who stood at the gate of the year:
“Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.”
And he replied:
“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to thee better than a light
and safer than the known way.”

Minnie L. Haskins

A Prayer

Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening
into the house and gate of heaven,
to enter into that gate and dwell in that house,
where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling, but one equal light;
no noise nor silence, but one equal music;
no fears nor hopes, but one equal possession;
no ends nor beginnings, but one equal eternity;
in the habitations of thy glory and dominion,
World without end. Amen.

A Prayer From The Sarum Primer (1538)

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at my end, and at my departing.

Prayer Of St. Richard Of Chichester

Thanks be to Thee my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits which Thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults which Thou hast borne for me,
O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may I know Thee more clearly,
love Thee more dearly,
and follow Thee more nearly.

Prayer Of St Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is discord, vision.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Footprints

One night a man had a dream.
He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.
For each scene, he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
one belonging to him, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene in his life flashed before him,
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.
He noticed that many times along the path of his life
there was only one set of footprints.
He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest
and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he questioned the Lord about it.
“Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you,
you’d walk with me all the way.
But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times
in my life, there is only one set of footprints.
I don’t understand why when I needed you most
you would leave me.”

The Lord replied
“My precious, precious child.
I love you and I would never leave you.
During your times of trial and suffering,
when you see only one set of footprints,
it was then that I carried you”

Authorship Disputed

The Next Door Room

Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away into the next door room.
I am I and You are You.
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.
Call me by my old familiar name,
speak to me in the easy way which you always used.
Put no difference into your tone:
wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.
Laugh as we always laughed
at the little jokes we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.
Let it be spoken without effort,
without the ghost of a shadow on it.
Life means all that it ever meant,
it is the same as it ever was;
there is absolutely unbroken continuity.
What is this death, but a negligible accident ?
Why should I be out of mind, because I am out of sight ?

I am but waiting for you, for an interval.
Somewhere very near just around the corner
All is well.

Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918)
Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral.

We Seem To Give Them Back To Thee, O God

We seem to give them back to Thee, O God who gavest them to us.
Yet as Thou didst not lose them in giving,
so do we not lose them by their return.
Not as the world giveth, givest Thou O Lover of souls.
What Thou givest Thou takest not away,
for what is Thine is ours also if we are thine.
And life is eternal and love is immortal,
and death is only an horizon,
and an horizon is nothing save the limit of our sight.
Lift us up, strong Son of God that we may see further;
cleanse our eyes that we may see more clearly;
draw us closer to Thyself that we may know ourselves
to be nearer to our loved ones who are with Thee.
And while Thou dost prepare a place for us,
prepare us also for that happy place,
that where Thou art we may be also for evermore.

William Penn

The Dash

I read of a man who stood to speak
at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on her tombstone
from the beginning...to the end.

He noted that first came the date of her birth
and spoke of the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all
was the dash between those years.

For that dash represents all the time
that she spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved her
know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not, how much we own,
the cars...the house...the cash
What matters is how we live and love
and how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left
that can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
to consider what's true and real
and always try to understand
the way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger
and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives
like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect
and more often wear a smile,
remembering that this special dash
might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read,
with your life's actions to rehash...
would you be proud of the things they say
about how you spent Your dash?

Linda Ellis

You Can Shed Tears That He Is Gone

You can shed tears that he is gone,
or you can smile because he has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that he'll come back,
or you can open your eyes and see all that he's left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see him,
or you can be full of the love you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

You can remember him and only that he's gone,
or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind,
be empty and turn your back,
or you can do what he'd want -

Smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

David Harkins

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***Feel No Guilt In Laughter,
He'd Know How Much You Care***

Feel no guilt in laughter, he'd know how much you care.
Feel no sorrow in a smile that he is not here to share.
You cannot grieve forever; he would not want you to.
He'd hope that you could carry on the way you always do.
So, talk about the good times and the way you showed you cared,
the days you spent together, all the happiness you shared.
Let memories surround you, a word someone may say
will suddenly recapture a time, an hour, a day,
that brings him back as clearly as though he were still here,
and fills you with the feeling that he is always near.
For if you keep those moments, you will never be apart
and he will live forever locked safely within your heart.

Author Unknown

If I Should Go Before The Rest Of You

If I should go before the rest of you,
break not a flower nor inscribe a stone.
Nor when I'm gone speak in a Sunday voice,
but be the usual selves that I have known.

Weep if you must,
parting is hell.
But life goes on,
so sing as well.

Joyce Grenfell

A Parable Of Immortality

"I am standing upon the seashore.
A ship at my side spreads her white sails
to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean.
She is an object of beauty and strength,
and I stand and watch until at last she hangs like a speck
of white cloud just where the sea and sky
come down to mingle with each other.

Then someone at my side says,
"There she goes!"

Gone where? Gone from my sight that is all.
She is just as large in mast and hull and spar
as she was when she left my side
and just as able to bear her load of living freight
to the place of destination.
Her diminished size is in me, not in her.

And just at the moment when someone at my side says,
'There she goes!' there are other eyes watching her coming
and their voices ready to take up the glad shout
'Here she comes!'"

Henry Van Dyke

Farewell My Friends

It was beautiful
as long as it lasted
the journey of my life.

I have no regrets
whatsoever save
the pain I'll leave behind.

Those dear hearts
who love and care
and the heavy with sleep
ever moist eyes.
The smife, in spite of a
lump in the throat
and the strings pulling
at the heart and soul.

The strong arms
that held me up
when my own strength
let me down.
Each morsel that I was
fed with was full of love divine.

At every turning of my life
I came across
good friends.
Friends who stood by me
even when the time raced by.

Farewell, Farewell
my friends.
I smile and bid you goodbye.
No, shed no tears,
for I need them not
All I need is your smile.

If you feel sad
think of me
for that's what I'd like.

When you live in the hearts
of those you love,
remember then....
you never die.

Rabindranath Tagore

I Am Not There

Do not stand at my grave and weep;
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there. I did not die.

Mary Elizabeth Frye

Farewell To You

Farewell to you! But not farewell
to all my fondest thoughts of you;
within my heart they still shall dwell
and they shall cheer and comfort me.

Life seems more sweet because you lived
and men more true because you were one;
nothing is lost that you did give
nothing destroyed that you have done

Farewell to you! But not farewell
to all my fondest thoughts of you;
within my heart they still shall dwell
and they shall cheer and comfort me.

Anne Bronte

Miss Me, But Let Me Go

When I come to the end of the road,
and the sun has set for me,
I want no tears in a gloom-filled room.
Why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little, but not too much,
and not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that once we shared.
Miss me, but let me go.

This is a journey we all must take
and each must take alone;
It's all a part of God's perfect plan,
a step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick of heart,
go to the friends that we know.
Bury your sorrows in doing good.
Miss me, but let me go.

Christina Rossetti

Into The Freedom Of Wind And Sunshine

Into the freedom of wind and sunshine,
we let you go

Into the dance of the stars and the planets,
we let you go

Into the winds breath and the hands of the star maker,
we let you go

We love you, we miss you.
We want you to be happy.
Go softly, go dancing.
Go running home.

Ruth Burgess

If I Should Die And Leave You Here A While

If I should die and leave you here a while
be not like others, sore, undone, who keep
long vigils by the silent dust and weep.
For my sake; turn again to life and smile
leaving thy heart and tender hand to do
something to comfort other hearts than mine.
Complete those dear unfinished tasks of mine
and I, perchance, may therein comfort you.

Mary Lee Hall

Beyond The Rainbow's End

I have gone from sight, but I am waiting,
waiting just beyond the rainbow's end.

I'm happy in this place I have gone to
because, I'm here with my forever friends.

All thoughts of me, let them be joyful
of things we've done and happy times we've shared.
Don't feel sad my loved ones, because I've left you.
Please laugh and talk of me, as if I'm there.

Look up in the sky, I am the sunshine.
I'm the mist that rises on a summer's morn.
I'm the gentle breeze that cools the autumn evening.
When the birds sing in the trees, I'm their song.

This journey I have made, one day you'll make it.
You too will be with my forever friends.
It's then once more that, we will be together.
I'll meet you just beyond the rainbow's end.

Author Unknown

Until Then

From where I sit I shed a tear,
wishing somehow, that you were near.

So I close my eyes and think of you
and in just one movement
you step into view.
Now you're not here for me to touch,
my memories are precious
and mean so much.

I have no doubt that you are safe,
for you have moved to a brighter place.
You'll be welcomed with open arms
and all around will be a loving calm.
There is even a seat reserved for you,
reward, for the love you gave
and the life you knew.

I know someday I'll see you again,
I'll think of you often, rest until then.....

Author Unknown

Not, How Did He Die, But How Did He Live?

Not, how did he die, but how did he live?
Not, what did he gain, but what did he give?
These are the units to measure the worth
of a man as a man, regardless of his birth.
Not what was his church, nor what was his creed?
But had he befriended those really in need?
Was he ever ready, with words of good cheer,
to bring back a smile, to banish a tear?
Not what did the sketch in the newspaper say,
but how many were sorry when he passed away?

Author Unknown

To Those I love And Those Who Loved Me

When I am gone, release me, let me go...
I have so many things to see and do.
You must not tie yourself to me with tears;
be happy that we had so many years.

So grieve a while for me, for grieve you must,
then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a while that we must part,
so bless the memories within your heart.

I won't be far away, for life goes on;
so if you need me, call and I will come.
Though you can't see me, or touch me, I'll be near,
and if you listen with your heart, you'll hear,
all of my love around you soft and clear.

And then, when you must come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile and say, "welcome home."

Author Unknown

The Rose Beyond The Wall

A rose once grew where all could see,
sheltered beside a garden wall.
And, as the days passed swiftly by,
it spreads its branches, straight and tall

One day, a beam of light shone through
a crevice that had opened wide -
the rose bent gently toward its warmth
then passed beyond to the other side

Now, you who deeply feel its loss,
be comforted - the rose blooms there.
Its beauty even greater now,
nurtured by God's own loving care.

A.L. Frink

Remember Me When I Am Gone Away

Remember me when I am gone away,
gone far away into the silent land;
when you can no longer hold me by the hand,
nor I half turn to go, yet turning stay.

Remember me when no more day by day
you tell me of our future that you planned:
only remember me; you understand
it will be late to counsel then or pray.

Yet if you should forget me for a while
and afterwards remember, do not grieve:
for if the darkness and corruption leave
a vestige of thoughts that once I had,
better by far you should forget and smile
than that you should remember and be sad.

Christina Rossetti

I'll Walk Beside You

I'll walk beside you through the world today,
while dreams and songs and flowers bless your way,
I'll look into your eyes and hold your hand,
I'll walk beside you through the golden land.

I'll walk beside you through the world tonight,
beneath the starry skies ablaze with light,
and in your heart love's tender words I'll hide,
I'll walk beside you through the eventide.

I'll walk beside you through the passing years,
through days of cloud and sunshine, joy and tears;
and when the great call comes, the sunset gleams,
I'll walk beside you to the land of dreams.

Edward Lockton

Perhaps If We Could See

Perhaps if we could see
the beauty of the land
to which our loved ones are called from you and me
we'd understand.

Perhaps if we could hear
the welcome they receive
from old familiar voices – all so dear,
we would not grieve.

Perhaps if we could know
the reason why they went
we'd smile – and wipe away the tears that flow
and wait content.

Author Unknown

When I Must Leave You For A While

A mother's farewell to her children

When I must leave you for a while
please do not grieve and shed wild tears
and hug your sorrows to you through the years.
But start out bravely with a gallant smile.

And for my sake and in my name
live on and do all things the same.
Feed not your loneliness on empty days
but fill each waking hour in useful ways.

Reach out your hand in comfort and in cheer
and I in turn will comfort you and hold you near.
And never be afraid to die
for I am waiting for you in the sky.

Indian Prayer

When I am dead Cry for me a little.
Think of me sometimes
but not too much.
Think of me now and again
as I was in life.
At some moments it's pleasant to recall
but not for long.
Leave me in peace
and I shall leave you in peace.
And while you live
let your thoughts be with the living.

I'm Free

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,
I'm following the path God laid for me.
I took his hand when I heard his call,
I turned my back and left it all.

I could not stay another day,
to laugh, to love, to work, to play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way,
I've found that peace at the close of the day.

If my parting has left a void,
then fill it with remembered joy.
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss,
ah yes, these things I too will miss.

Be not burdened with times of sorrow,
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.
My Life's been full, I savoured much,
good friends, good times, a loved one's touch.

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief,
don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your heart and share with me,
God wanted me now, He set me free.

Author Unknown

Crossing The Bar

Sunset and evening star
and one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
when I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
too full for sound and foam.
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
and after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
when I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
the flood may bear me far.
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
when I have crossed the bar.

by Alfred Lord Tennyson

A Navaho Prayer

Grieve for me, for I would grieve for you.
Then brush away the sorrow and the tears.
Life is not over, but begins anew,
with courage you must greet the coming years.
To live forever in the past is wrong;
can only cause you misery and pain.
Dwell not on memories overlong,
with others you must share and care again.
Reach out and comfort those who comfort you;
recall the years, but only for a while.
Nurse not your loneliness; but live again.
Forget not. Remember with a smile.

Remember Me

To the living, I am gone.
To the sorrowful, I will never return.
To the angry, I was cheated,
but to the happy, I am at peace,
and to the faithful, I have never left.
I cannot be seen, but I can be heard.
So as you stand upon a shore,
gazing at a beautiful sea - remember me.
As you look in awe at a mighty forest
and its grand majesty - remember me.
As you look upon a flower
and admire its simplicity - remember me.
Remember me in your heart, your thoughts,
and your memories of the times we loved,
the times we cried, the times we fought, the times we laughed.
For if you always think of me, I will have never gone.

Author Unknown

God's Garden

God looked around his garden
and found an empty place,
He then looked down upon the earth
and saw your tired face.

He put his arms around you
and lifted you to rest.
God's garden must be beautiful
He always takes the best.

He knew that you were suffering
He knew you were in pain.
He knew that you would never
get well on earth again.

He saw the road was getting rough
and the hills were hard to climb.
So he closed your weary eyelids
and whispered, 'Peace be Thine'.

It broke our hearts to lose you
but you didn't go alone,
for part of us went with you
the day God called you home.

Author Unknown

A Hebrew Prayer

In the rising of the sun and in its going down,
we remember them.
In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter,
we remember them.
In the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring,
we remember them.
In the blueness of the sky and in the warmth of summer,
we remember them.
In the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn,
we remember them.
In the beginning of the year and when it ends,
we remember them.
When we are weary and in need of strength,
we remember them.
When we are lost and are sick of heart,
we remember them.
When we have joys we yearn to share,
we remember them.
So long as we live, they too shall live,
for they are now a part of us,
as we remember them.

This Life Mattered

This life mattered.

Ready or not, someday it all comes to an end.

There are no more sunrises, no more minutes, hours or days.

All the things collected, treasured or forgotten, pass to someone else.

Wealth, fame and temporal power shrivel to irrelevance.

It matters not what was owned or owed.

Grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies finally disappear.

Hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists expire.

Wins and losses that once seemed so important fade away.

It no longer matters where you came from,

or on what side of the tracks you lived.

No matter whether you were beautiful, or brilliant.

Gender and skin colour are irrelevant.

So what matters?

How is the value of our days measured?

What matters is not what we bought, but what we built;

not what we got, but what we gave.

What matters is not our success, but our significance.

What matters is not what we learnt but what we taught.

What matters is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate our example.

What matters is not our competence, but our character.

What matters is not how many people we knew, but how many people will feel a lasting loss when we are gone.

What matters is not our memories,

but the memories that live in those who loved us.

What matters is how long we will be remembered, by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.

It's not a matter of circumstance, but a matter of choice.

Yes my friends.

This life that we remember mattered.

Author Unknown

Useful Resources:

www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship.aspx

www.poeticexpressions.co.uk

www.naturalendings.co.uk/funeral-poetry

www.lastingpost.com

*'I will never forget you
I have written your name in the palms of my hands'*

Isiah 49.16