

Funeral of Gary Brown

Pastor Matthew Ude

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Revelation 7:9-17

The Inugguit lived as hunter-gatherers in Greenland's remote Thule region for centuries. Some say that until they were encountered by Sir John Ross in 1818, they believed that they were the only inhabitants of the world.

From <<https://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/living-with-the-inugguit>>

Imagine attempting to explain the Caribbean Island to those people. You could tell them it's like summer all year round, but that wouldn't really do it justice.

We too are a people cut off. We live isolated from our God and from our brothers and sisters who have left and gone before us. We are cut off from the fellowship of God. We are cut off from the wonders of that heavenly land which is our true home. In Revelation 7 God attempts to explain to us the wonders of that life, which is to come, but just like the Inugguit we also are not capable of fully comprehending the joys that will be ours.

Revelation 7:9-12 9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm

branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."

Salvation belongs to our God. He alone is able to give us this greatest of all gifts. No one else is able to provide this grace. We cannot earn it. We cannot attain it. It is a gift that is given to us by God through Jesus Christ because of His grace. It is this gift which God has given to Gary.

Gary really wanted to sit on the pier and fish one more time. Gary wanted to spend more time with his grandkids. God gave him something far greater. God gave him salvation and freedom from death and sin.

Twice the Angels repeat, "Amen," at the beginning and at the end. Amen does not mean this is the end. It means surely, certainly, these things are so. Surely certainly, God has given salvation to Gary. Surely certainly Christ has died for our sins and risen again. Surely certainly Gary is not gone but at home in the joys of heaven.

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

We see the door of death only from the earthly side. We see the door open and those we love enter. The door closes forever behind them. We see only the closed door. Now we see the same door closed behind Gary.

John saw that same door from the other side. He saw the saints coming in through that door. He saw the saints coming into heaven. He saw Gary enter heaven. Gary has gone through the door he has left the tribulation of this earth and has gone home to heaven

When the elder speaks of the great tribulation he is speaking of life on this earth. We here in America in the 21st century have so much and have been so blessed that it is easy to forget at times that this life is "the great tribulation" and the "valley of the shadow of death." When we have so much and have it so easy, it's easy to desire to stay here. This earth is not our home. Heaven is our home.

We do not pray that Gary would return to us but that we would go to join Gary. He has gone out of this great tribulation. We

remain in it. We weep but he rejoices. We look forward to the day when we will join him.

15 "Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. 16 "They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 "for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

There are many reasons for tears in this life. We shed tears because we are forced to say goodbye. We shed tears because of pain in the body or sorrow in the heart. We shed tears because of loneliness and suffering. We shed tears because of regret. We know those things we have done wrong. We know those things we have failed.

One author once described life as the slow accumulation of aches and pains, not only of the body but of the soul. Regrets, guilt, sin and sorrows pile up in this life. All these are wiped away in Jesus Christ. All these sorrows are gone for Gary.

On this earth all joy turns to sorrow. In that life all sorrow turns to joy. Here all good things eventually perish. There all bad things perish. This is what God has done for Gary Brown. He has

done this not because Gary earned or deserved it, but because Jesus died for his sins.

He is God's child through faith in Jesus Christ, and he has now received salvation as a gift of God. The same gift which God has promised to all who trust in him. He shall not return to us, but we shall go to him. This is the promise that God has given to us and his promise is sure and certain.

Amen, Amen surely it is so, for so has God promised. Amen.