

Funeral Bible Readings and Psalms

(Any suitable Bible translation may be used)

1. New Testament Readings

John 6:35-40

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

John 11:17-27

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

John 14:1-6

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.'

Romans 8:31-end

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:1-26, 35-38, 42-44a, 53-end

I should remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you - unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still

alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them - though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ - whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.

For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?'

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15:20-end

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For 'God has put all things in subjection under his feet.' But when it says, 'All things are put in subjection,' it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

Otherwise, what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you - a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord. If with merely human hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.' Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.' Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

But someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' Fool!

What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living being'; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-end

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Revelation 21:1-7

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.'

2. Old Testament Readings

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11

*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,*

*a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.*

What does the worker gain from his toil?

I have seen the burden God has laid on men.

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Or

The Lord is my shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing.

He shall feed me in a green pasture: and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.

He shall convert my soul: and bring me forth 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 comfort me.

Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me: thou has anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.

But thy loving kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells.

God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day.

Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Come and see the works of the LORD, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire.

Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalm 121

*I lift up my eyes to the hills— where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip— he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.
The LORD watches over you— the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.
The LORD will keep you from all harm— he will watch over your life;
the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and for evermore.*

Or

*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills :
from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh even from the Lord :
who hath made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved :
and he that keepeth thee will not sleep.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel :
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord himself is thy keeper :
the Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand;
So that the sun shall not burn thee by day :
neither the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil :
yea, it is even he that shall keep thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out, and thy coming in : from this time forth for evermore.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and
ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

3. Further Readings

Old Testament and Apocrypha

- Genesis 42:29-end The sorrow you would cause me would kill me
- 2 Samuel 1:17,23-end David's lament for Saul and Jonathan
- 2 Samuel 12:16-23 David's son dies
- Job 19:23-27 I know that my Redeemer lives
- Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9
- Isaiah 53:1-10 The suffering servant
- Isaiah 61:1-3 To comfort all who mourn
- Lamentations 3:22-26,31-33 The love of the Lord never ceases
- Lamentations 3:17-26 It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the Lord
- Daniel 12:1-3[5-9] Everyone whose name shall be found written in the book
- Wisdom 2:22 - 3:5,9 The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God
- Wisdom 3:1-5,9 The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God
- Wisdom 4:8-11,13-15 Age is not length of time
- Ecclesiasticus 38:16-23 Do not forget, there is no coming back
- Psalms
- Psalm 6
- Psalm 25

- Psalm 27
- Psalm 32
- Psalm 38:9-end
- Psalm 42
- Psalm 90
- Psalm 116
- Psalm 118:4-end
- Psalm 130
- Psalm 139

New Testament

The passages included above are included in this list.

- Matthew 25:31-end The final judgement
- Mark 10:13-16 Let the little children come to me
- Mark 15:33-39; 16:1-6 He has risen, he is not here
- Luke 12:35-40 The coming of the Son of Man
- Luke 24:1-9[10-11] The Resurrection
- John 5:[19-20]21-29 Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life
- John 6:35-40[53-58] All that the Father gives me will come to me
- John 11:17-27 I am the resurrection and the life
- John 14:1-6 In my Father's house are many rooms
- John 19:38-end The burial of Christ
- John 20:1-11 The Resurrection of Christ
- Acts 10:34-36, 42-43 Everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name
- Romans 5:5-11 Hope does not disappoint
- Romans 6:3-8[9-11] All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death
- Romans 8:14-23 Brothers and sisters: those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God
- Romans 8:18-25[26-30] The future glory
- Romans 8:31-end Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ
- Romans 14:7-12 Christ the Lord of the living and the dead
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-26,35-38,42-44a,53-end The resurrection of the dead
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-end The resurrection of the dead
- 2 Corinthians 4:7-15 We carry in our mortal bodies the death of Jesus
- 2 Corinthians 4:16 - 5:10 The heavenly body
- 2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10 We know that if our earthly dwelling, a tent, should be destroyed, we have a building from God
- Ephesians 3:14-19[20-21] The power to understand Christ's love

- Philippians 3:10-end God's purposes for us
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 So we shall always be with the Lord
- 2 Timothy 2:8-13 If we have died with him, we shall also live with him
- 1 Peter 1:3-9 We have been born anew to a living hope
- 1 John 3:1-3 We shall be like him
- Revelation 7:9-end The crowd worshipping in heaven
- Revelation 21:1-7 Behold I make all things new
- Revelation 21:22-end; 22:3b-5 The Lord God will be their light

Other readings

These may be more suitable for a particular occasion, for instance, at the Funeral of a child:

- Psalm 84:1-4
- Song of Solomon 2:10-13
- Isaiah 49:15-16
- Jeremiah 1:4-8
- Jeremiah 31:15-17
- Matthew 18:1-5,10
- John 10:27,28
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-end