

It's an honor to be here with you to remember the life of Gary McGeehon. Gary was a loyal friend and confidant, a close colleague, a great husband and father, and an example to me of what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Gary, as I knew him these last 23 years, was a relaxed and easy-going person, very bright and insightful, very thoughtful and deferent to others. He also had a very clever and dry sense of humor. He enjoyed people and especially being with his family and supporting his grandchildren. He also seemed to enjoy needling me when I, par for the course, would make the stupid mistakes about facts of the matter or mistakes of accounting that have seem to implacably attach themselves to me in these latter days, all the more.

In my friendship with Gary, we shared a lot of meals, told each other a lot of jokes and anecdotes, prayed together, had a lot of business conversations over lunch, sat through a lot of boring Board meetings that I led, watched movies together, took our families together up into the mountains for getaways. And until recently, we talked a great deal of what the future would be like for both of us and our beloved wives and children. Unknown to both of us in those conversations, the time would be shortened for Gary, shorter than what all of us wanted for him and shorter especially for his wife and children.

There is a lot to celebrate about Gary's life, the sacrifices he made in his service to the Lord by recognizing his calling to be a missionary in Africa for more than 20 years where he met and married his wife Cathi and where he began to raise his family. The protection and provision he provided for his family throughout. His return home in 1999 and the courageous steps he took to find new employment and a new career, return to graduate school and earn a Master's degree and watch his family grow and begin to take flight. Yes, all of that without abandoning his first love of Jesus.

It is true he is better off now than he was before last Sunday because he has gone to be with the Lord. We have the promise from Scripture that Gary, as one who has received Christ by faith and by faith received the redemption Christ made on the cross for the forgiveness of his sins, that to be absent from his body is to be present with the Lord. That's Gary's present state, awaiting the resurrection of his body when Christ returns to consummate this age.

From the mouth of Jesus' closest disciple, he was quoted as saying at the tomb of Lazarus: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live..."

But for the rest of us who are here now, it is a bittersweet loss of his presence among us, at least for now. Bitter in our grief and sorrow—we will miss him dearly; sweet to know his pain and suffering has ended and he has entered into eternal joy and peace.

However, our loss is also one of the main reasons we gather here today...to support one another and specially to support his wife, Cathi and his children—Josh, Becka and Aaron. Gary would have liked it to be this way. He was and remains concerned for his wife Cathi and her welfare and is smiling to see us gather to help her through this loss and this season of grief in every way that we were able.

And it is fitting that we should gather around her in these moments, to help sooth her possible fears, empathize with her mixed feelings and her sadness, and to remind her of the good things God has already given her and still has in store for her. In a small way by our presence, we are here to remind her that the Lord has not abandoned her and that Cathi is front and center in the mind of the Divine One—He hasn't missed a thing-- and He watches over her day and night with His loving eye.

So, my dear friend Gary, we will miss you indeed and we look forward to one day being reunited with you when we, too, are ushered into the presence of God at our own death. Rest in peace—a peace which surpasses our full understanding--and rest in His enduring love. It has been an honor to know you and to fellowship with you, and an honor to stand and say to his loved ones and his friends, this was one fine man. I will miss you dearly.