

## FUNERAL SERVICE FOR REUBEN JELICK

25/2/2006

### Foreword:

The following funeral service was written for a member of my congregation, Reuben Jellick, who died in a motorcycle accident, aged 23 years. It is typical of New Zealand services in that it is short and simple and can be easily adapted to other situations. The funeral was attended by over 300 people, many of whom were non Christians and unfamiliar with the Gospel message. **My aim was to use Reuben's death as an opportunity to present the Gospel truth, simply and clearly, allowing Reuben's life to testify to that truth.**

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### Reuben Jellick

### Order of Service

1. Welcome/ Introduction /Prayer/ Notices
2. Song: The Power of Your Love
3. Message: Prepared for a Prepared Place
4. Song: Eagles Wings
5. Tributes from Family and Friends
6. Video and Slides
7. Closing Prayer and Committal

### Welcome/ Introduction/ Prayer / Notices.

Good afternoon everyone and thank you for coming to pay your last respects to Reuben Jellick.

My name is Morgan Allen and I am the Pastor of the Village Church in Hikurangi. On behalf of the church and Reuben's family I would like to welcome you all here - and especially those who have had to travel many miles to get here. Reuben was a member of our congregation at Hikurangi and so as his pastor it is my privilege to officiate at his service today.

Reuben's death came as a big shock to us all, as he wasn't old, sick, careless, reckless, Godless but just the opposite. In fact if anyone deserved to live, it was him. While I was phoning people in our church to let them know what happened, I spoke to someone new to our church who wasn't sure which one Reuben was, so I described him as: tall, dark, handsome, quiet, strong, friendly, smart and judging by the crowd here, also very popular. He had it all going for him and in some ways that makes his death harder to accept.

And yet, through all this, the one thing that comforts us the most, and the thing that God also valued the most, is that Reuben had received the eternal life that God offers through Jesus Christ. Reuben knew the joy of having his sins forgiven and the peace in his heart that comes from being known, love and accepted by God. Reuben has now entered into the joy of that eternal life and that reward can never be taken from him. Amen!

So before we go any further, let us commit this service for Reuben to God in prayer.

### Prayer:

Almighty God, we are here today because of Reuben and what he meant to us. Lord we are greatly saddened because of our loss. At the same time our grief is mixed with joy because we know it is not a permanent loss. He is now with You and is rejoicing that he chose to put You first in his life. Because of that we want this ceremony to honour You, because of what You meant to Reuben and for the life You have given him. In Your Word it is written that unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and is buried, it cannot produce new life. So we pray that in some way Reuben's death would now produce new life in others. We also pray for Your continuing comfort for us all through this time and especially for Reuben's close family and friends. We ask it in Jesus Name. Amen.

### Notices:

1. This service will be completed here and then Reuben's body will be taken for private cremation.
2. There will be refreshments provided afterwards, and an opportunity to catch up with friends, family.
3. There is a Remembrance Book at the door for you to sign.
4. There will be an opportunity for anyone who wants to share personal memories of Reuben at the end.

**Song:** "The Power of Your Love". This is actually a love song that describes the intimacy and relationship that is possible with God. Reuben experienced what this song is about.

**Message: Prepared for a Prepared Place**

The Bible contains an account of King David and his great love for his friend, Jonathan. When Jonathan dies in battle, the Bible records the deep grief that David experienced for his friend. One of the things David wrote, that he discovered about death, was that God is also affected by our loss. This is recorded in Psalm 116:15 where David says; **“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of one of His loved ones.”**

This means that God does not take death, or our loss or grief lightly. God is not indifferent to our suffering. We see that same truth displayed by Jesus as He tries to prepare His disciples for the shock and trauma that He knows they will suffer as He is crucified. For a long time the disciples don't really understand what is happening, but finally He spells out plainly about His approaching death. Then He encourages His disciples by pointing to a time beyond His death when their sorrow would turn to great joy. **Read John 16:5,6,19-22**

It is just like that with Reuben. We are sad that He has gone, but Jesus said that the day would come for all those who share in His eternal life, to rejoice at being reunited again. And no-one can take that joy from us. In John 14 we see another example of Jesus comforting His disciples about His approaching death and resurrection.

**Read John 14:1-3,6.**

Jesus encouraged His disciples by saying, “Do not worry about Me leaving you because I'm going to prepare a place for you in heaven to be with Me.”

An old preacher, Barry Smith, summed it up when he said, “Heaven is a place prepared for prepared people.” Reuben was prepared. Reuben was not expecting to die but he was prepared to meet God. Amen.

In the verses I just read, Jesus said, **“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No-one comes to the Father except through Me.”** Jesus was able to make such a bold claim because He is the only person who has paid for our sin. He was the only person who stood in our place and took the punishment that we rightly deserved, so that by believing in Him and receiving Him, we not only go free from Judgment, but we also receive eternal life. **Reuben did that! He believed in Jesus, received the forgiveness that He offered, and let Jesus be Lord of his life. It was the smartest thing Reuben ever did. It is the reason that he was prepared.**

I had the privilege of baptising Reuben in the sea, a year and a day before he died. Water Baptism is like two gentlemen who shake hands on a business deal; the handshake is an outward expression of an inner commitment. Reuben made that commitment to Jesus. It was the most important thing he ever did. All the other choices/ commitments/ achievements and possessions of Reuben's life do not count for much any more. But this one thing he did, in getting right with God, counts for more than all the rest put together. When we die, God does not inherit our house, car, possessions etc, but God gets us. When we die God inherits the person we have become during our time on earth. With Reuben, God was not inheriting a stranger but was getting someone who knew Him, loved Him and had allowed Him to work out His purposes in his life.

Reuben knew that Christianity was not about rules and regulations but is a relationship with God, the Father, made possible by His Son Jesus, and by living in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what makes Christianity so unique. All other religions are about working your way to heaven. **Christianity is about a God who came down to us, to rescue us because He knew we could never save ourselves. His sacrifice for us on the Cross was the greatest love the world has ever known. It opened the way for us to be restored back to a right relationship with our Creator.**

In a moment we are going to sing a song about that sort of relationship and the intimacy that is possible between God and those that know Him. But before that, as I finish off, I want to mention something that a friend reminded me about. Robbie Williams reminded me of an old fashioned word that some Bible translations use – “Sojourner”. It is a word that describes someone who is travelling or passing by on a journey. He stops for a while, but doesn't really settle down, because he knows that he has not reached his final destination. I think that word, “Sojourner”, describes Reuben, in that he wasn't here to stay for long. He didn't put down his roots and build a home and family because he was passing through to the destination that God had prepared for him. The Bible uses “Sojourner” in Hebrews 11, to describe all who follow Christ, because this earth is not our real home. We are just passing through to what Jesus has prepared for us. That is why Jesus said, “do not get caught up with things of this world,” but instead focus on the things of true eternal value. Set your hearts on things that last forever.

Jesus summed it up by saying, “What does it benefit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul.” Reuben did not make that mistake. He loved life and he loved adventure – but he loved God first. This showed in his life and in his relationship with God.

This next song is about that sort of daily, intimate relationship with God. – Eagles Wings

**Closing Prayer and Committal**

Almighty God, we thank You for the life of Reuben and for what he meant to each one of us. We thank you for the opportunity to share together our memories of him and our love for him. Most of all we thank You for the relationship that he had with You and the future joy that relationship with You will bring to all of us.

Now as it has pleased You to take Reuben from this world and into Your Presence; we commit his body to cremation and ourselves to Your everlasting grace, that You would comfort us in our loss, encourage us to follow his example, and help us to let go of that which now belongs to You. As we depart from here, We ask Your Hand of blessing, protection and peace to be upon us all. We ask this in Jesus Name. Amen