

Who Was He? Who Am I?  
WestminsterReformedChurch.org  
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### Prayer

“Father, Hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We ask you, Father, to comfort the family with the comfort that only you can give, and we ask for your blessing on our reflections at this time, in Jesus name, Amen.”

### Hymns

We have sorrow and we ache inside—but not without hope; that is why the family wants us to sing two of David’s favorite hymns: “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” and “When Peace like a River.”

### Scripture Reading

**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Mat 11.28-30).**

### Introduction

It is good that we come here today “to show our respects.” Of course, the funeral service is not for the person who died though we do want to remember him. This service is for the living. Most importantly, this is a time for the living to come face to face with the dead. That is, literally face to face with death.

We ought to come to this place to think hard about history, his place in history, and our place in history. We ought to come here to ask some difficult questions about life and death, his and our own. In other words, we ought to come here to face death squarely, looking for some *wise* answers. This is an opportunity; we should not let it simply slip away.

To avail ourselves of this opportunity we should ask two questions, “Who was he?” and “Who am I?” My job as a minister of Jesus Christ the risen Lord is to direct you to the answer to these two fundamental questions.

## Who Was He?

First, we must ask, “Who was he?”

Let me begin with a sketch of his life.

He was Dave King.

Born November 6, 1948 (Son of Corlis and Beryl King; eldest in a family of three, survived by his mother and brothers, Howard and Dan)

Died April 11, 2006 (suddenly at the young age of 57)

Veteran of the Viet Nam War where he served as a mechanic working on Army vehicles, spending a year, I understand, near Saigon.

In 1975, he married Charlotte Baudette. He became the father of three children: Jonathan, Michelle, and Elysia.

As to his employment history, it sums it up to say, "He was a carpenter in a narrow sense, but, in a broad sense, he was a multi-tradesman, bringing knowledge of many trades to the job with him." Dave spent most of his career working in settings where the work did not confine him to a single skill. He was able to do not only rough carpentry and finish carpentry, but where he was also able to manage excavation, do site lay out, rough and finish plumbing, and rough and finish electrical, along with whatever kind of general labor was necessary. In fact, because of this multi-giftedness, Dave received an honorary doctorate from his co-workers, and thus they called him doc or Doctor Dave. That was the case because he was able to attend to and fix most anything; he seemed to know everything about everything, a jack-of-all-trades and *master of all*.

Sometimes, in a conversation, you had to be very patient because of the details about a slough of things that flowed from his thoughts; a conversation with Dave was like being on the receiving end of a shotgun blast of details, nuances, and the interconnections of things!

## Some Windows into His Heart

Now we need some windows into his person as we ask, "Who was he, really?"

### 1) He had a sense of humor

Despite the struggles of his life, torn apart inside regarding the health problems of his son for many years and the health problems of his wife in recent years, he maintained a sense of humor. Let me give a few examples as we look through this window.

a) His sense of humor was often subtle.

Sometimes he would play with words. Jonathan noted that when he was in a fitness program at school, Dad would say to him, "You do fitness at school and fatness at home."

b) Furthermore, he liked practical jokes including the kind that meant he was on the receiving side of a cream pie in the face that hit him from a distance. We won't say who threw it, but his name is Jonathan! However, the way the story continued was that at the right time, perhaps two years later, he caught Jonathan by the back of the head and squeezed a cream pie into his face. Interestingly, this is a fun memory that Jonathan has of his Dad. As Jonathan said, "Dad could make a joke out of anything."

c) I enjoyed hearing Michelle and Elysia tell the story of the bow tie pasta.

You all may know the story but I heard it for the first time the other day. The kids happily remember Dad's antics whenever they had bow tie pasta for dinner (or whenever a bow tie came into view for some reason). He would take

the bow tie pasta and play the parts of the mean man, the little girl, and the hero (with changing voices for each). With the bow as a mustache (he expressed the harsh demand “pay the rent”), in his hair (with a high pitch, “I can’t pay the rent”) and as a bow tie for the hero (who confidently affirms, “I’ll pay the rent”). This is a good picture to form in the mind of Dave because he had a tough exterior; this gives us a fuller view of the man.

The subject of bows relates to the kind of practical jokes that he would play on people. For example, on one occasion, he had Michelle put a pink bow in his hair, and then without saying a word, went out with Uncle Dan to get something to eat and listen to a band—*waiting* to get a reaction.

He did this with me a couple of years ago and I missed the whole thing. He and Dan came to help me cut some wood for my wood stove. We got into the truck and Dave wore a red Santa Claus hat, stark green earmuffs, and aviator glasses. He was having fun, being subtle, and waiting for a reaction.

d) There is sweetness to his humor.

As Elysia said, “he seemed tough, but he was a big softy. My mom would be after me to eat the broccoli on my plate; and dad would eat it for me,” and here is the fun part, “by having me pass it to him under the table so mom wouldn’t know.”

e) He had fun helping others

He helped me dig a trench in my yard 16 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 10 feet deep to cut into the sewer line to install a new clean out. If you can picture this process, because of my mistake we first dug in the wrong place. I said, well, we will have to go farther to the right.” He chuckled mildly and said, “Okay, let’s *find it* to the right.” Down there in the pit, I think he did something that he would do when he would make some play on words sitting around the table. He would put his head down, shake his head chuckling, and raise his eyes to see who was reacting; he was playful like a little kid. Well, we dug, and then we talked. We talked then dug, and we talked as we dug. I was stabbing in the dark on the entire project, but we finally made our way to the sewer line; he got out some special tools; cut out a section, told me how to make the connections to finish the job. Then off he went to another job.

Years ago when I was in a construction famine time (the kind of thing Dave understood all too well), Dave heard that my truck was out of commission. He stopped by, identified the problem as the starter, went to the parts store, came back, crawled under my truck, and replaced the starter. He would take nothing for his trouble. It was as if he was paying back a debt, and he was, it was a love debt, and it was fun for him.

He was the point man in cutting down a large elm tree that rested against the front of my house. He came looking for some fun work. He made the notch to direct the fall of the tree (we feared it would fall on the house; we felt like three stooges planning the cut). Dan stood on the sidewalk pulling on a rope to encourage the fall in the right direction. We heard a loud crack as Dave was making the final cut and he would run for cover; then back again; another crack and he ran for cover. Finally, the final crack sounded and I wish I had a camera as Dave ran one way with chain saw in hand and Dan ran down the sidewalk with the rope in his hand. There went the tree perfectly placed straight out from the house into the street. Then Dave cut the 36” stump with surgical accuracy flat and perfect just inches above the ground. We then cut sections for my wood

stove; that was a manly outing with the team of brothers, Dave and Dan. That was a workday, but whenever we would talk about it, Dave would laugh and Dan would laugh; we would just have a good laugh.

## 2) He had a serious side and that is how I knew Dave

We all saw him from different angles and we knew him in different relationships. I first met Dave in 1976. Our first conversation, of many, set the tone of them all. I saw his serious side; I knew him in the relationship of a Christian to a pastor.

a) For example, I heard him pray many times. I can tell you about his last prayer among the church family, and this will let us see a little more into his true person. As usual, he focused on a central point of the Scripture reading of the day, the Scripture he just read. He acknowledged his and our sins, and thanked God for the saving work of Christ. Then, as always, he prayed for the preacher, for clear and bold preaching of the word—the core directives that Scripture gives for prayer regarding gospel ministry.

b) I really think that if you want an answer to the question, “who was he?” (And this is a good time to ask such a question) you have to understand that acknowledgement of his sin and that focus on the saving work of Christ. You have to think about his self-awareness. You have to see him as a sinner-saint. Some of you may question that he was a sinner (you have too low a view of sin) and some of you may question that he was a saint (you have too low a view of grace). It is this self-awareness, this awareness of his dire need of Christ, which shaped his understanding of the gospel of grace. These words of Paul meant a great deal to Dave:

**But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24)**

## 3) Now we have a key window into this person’s heart

It is his sense of sin that shaped Dave’s faith in the doctrines of grace. He saw the heights of grace against the backdrop of the depths of sin. Recently, Dave talked to me about funeral services and he said that he would appreciate it very much if explanation of the doctrines of grace were part of his funeral when the time came. That is therefore what I propose to do.

a) Consider how he viewed the doxology at the end of sermon.

He made it clear to me one day that he truly valued the doxology, he said, “This is a good thing and a great way to honor Christ as sovereign Lord.” From Romans 8.28 and Ephesians 1.11, the sovereignty of God was a fundamental of his faith: God works all things after the counsel of His will and He works all things together for good to them to love Him and are called according to His purpose. Therefore, the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him. Profoundly, then, Dave’s death in its timing and over all

circumstances, is from the hand of the Father in heaven. Now we have to make adjustments in submission to His sovereign will.

b) An illustration that Dave liked was the one about throwing a lifeline to sinners out in the ocean of the world. The question on the table is this, "Are sinners drowning or drowned? Can they grab on to the gospel lifeline? No, they have drowned; they are unable to submit themselves to God (Rom. 8:7, "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God law; *indeed, it cannot*"). They cannot grab on to the gospel lifeline! Therefore, you may ask, "Why throw out the lifeline to people that are dead, what good will it do?" You throw it out because the preaching of the gospel is the means by which Christ gives life to the dead. It is the way that He sovereignly frees the wills of those He has chosen to save (God calls by the gospel, 2 Thess. 2:13-14). This is good news. Salvation depends totally on the grace of God in Christ. Salvation does not depend on us in any way; if it did that would be bad news because *we are not* dependable.

Whenever Dave heard that the doctrines of grace were under attack, he felt a call to alert status like a soldier on the battlefield. It was the case that "Dems' fightin words," if someone spoke out against the biblical teaching on the sovereign grace of God.

Dave withered like the grass and the flower that flourishes then falls: he is gone and his place knows him no more (Ps. 103:16). He has gone through the door of death ...to meet his Maker. We commit him into his Father's hands.

Now in death, and here in this place, he is a man who has a final word for us all, a word about life and death. He who has ears to hear let him hear, which means if you have ears to hear it, then listen to God's word and heed what He says.

## Who Am I?

Now we must ask, "Who am I?"

You can answer this question by a summary of the entire Bible in a single sentence. What answer should *you* give? The best way to answer this question is to answer it in a summary of the entire Bible. You should say, "I am a person created in the image of God but fallen from that image, and in need of restoration in the image of God."

From this summary of the Bible, we can understand why people die.

It is because of sin. As Scripture says, "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

People talk about "bad things happening to good people," but the truth is that there are no good people, if we judge goodness by the holiness and

perfection of God. The Bible says, "All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; *no one does good, not even one*" (Rom. 3.12).

### That is why Jesus spoke of two roads.

There is the wide road that many travel and the narrow road that few travel. The wide road leads to destruction, and many people on that road are "good people." The narrow road leads to heaven and not one person on that road is a good person. No good people travel the road that leads to heaven. This is the hard truth. It is true because, in personal terms we can each say, "I was created in the image of God, *I have fallen* from that image into sin, and I need restoration in the image of God.

It is very straightforward. The wages of sin is physical death and physical death is not the end. Death is a doorway to either destruction or to eternal life. The road you and I are traveling leads to hell or to heaven.

Although in silence, right here at this moment in time, David King has a very important word for us all. He says, "Look here, look at me, and look death in the face." He says, "Do so in order to ask yourself these questions: 'who am I?' 'What road am I on? Where is this road taking me? How can I find restoration in the image of God?'" The theme of restoration brings us to the gospel or good news.

How can I have assurance of safety for the hour when I go through the dark door of death into the unknown beyond it? The answer is in the Scripture the read earlier (Mat 11.28-30).

### Jesus says, come to me for rest.

Rest is soul rest. Note the repetition; rest follows coming, taking, and learning. You see, something needs to be done about our sins. It had to be this way because God punishes sin. There are no "ifs, ands, or buts" about it.

Death testifies to the seriousness of sin, and so does the crucifixion of Christ. One hymn writer put it like this, "Ye who think of sin but lightly nor suppose the evil great, here may view its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate. Mark the sacrifice appointed. See who bears the awful load; tis the word the Lord's anointed, Son of man and Son of God." Another wrote these words, "What thou my Lord hast suffered was all for sinners gain; Mine, mine was the transgression but thine the deadly pain."

The penalty for sin must be paid. Therefore, without Christ there is no foundation for one's life, for my life or for your life.

Unbelieving philosophers speak the truth with penetrating power when they speak of life without Christ as nauseating. Living without God is like being free to sail out into the open sea only to become fatally seasick. Life outside of Christ is a room filled to the brim with meaninglessness from which there is no exit. Shakespeare put it well through one of his characters: Life is but a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage then is heard no more; it is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing." Without Christ,

life means nothing more than a chasing after the wind. It is vanity of vanity and vexation of spirit (the Book of Ecclesiastes).

The problem is that we are mask wearers. We deny this emptiness; we refuse to face it; we deceive ourselves. We wear a mask when we look into a mirror. In this light, consider the two buildings spoken of by Christ in a well know illustration.

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

The wise person is the one who hears the words of Christ and builds his life on them. The fool builds on sinking sand.

### Three things unpack true faith in Christ

Come to me, learn from me and take my yoke. *Come* means that you admit your sin-laden-ness and you cling to Jesus. *Learn* refers to being a disciple who seeks to know the teachings of Christ (They are treasures of great value and you seek them with determination, like a person trying to plunder a house of its goods! The word of God abides forever; therefore, value it!). *Take my yoke* refers to the yoke of His commandments, or coming under the yoke of the authority of Christ given in His teachings.

Now *here is a most important point*. True faith in Christ involves all three of these things. True faith involves clinging to Him, learning from Him, and living for Him. The narrow way to heaven, the way of wisdom in building your life, the way to restoration in the image of God is by these three things together. If you *say* you believe but you do not learn His word, then you do not believe. If you *say* you believe but you do not seek to obey His word then you do not believe.

The way to step onto the narrow road that leads to heaven is to commit yourself to the Lord Jesus as your prophet, priest and king. The true Christian is one who clings to Jesus and learns from Jesus, and lives under the authority of Jesus as His sovereign Lord. This is how the Christian life begins, and it is how it continues.

That is the good news of restoration in the image of God as we all face dying and death.

### Conclusion

To be sure, this is a sad time. It is discouraging, disheartening, and distressing. To confront death is to confront a sobering reality. Still, coming to the house of death brings you to a room filled to the brim with meaning, value, and hope if coming face to face with death causes you to come face to face with Jesus Christ the Lord of glory (cf. 2 Cor. 4.4-6).

In memory of Dave King, I commit all of you under the sound of my voice into the hands of God. May Dave King's dying and death cause you to consider your ways before Jesus Christ the Lord of glory. May you find comfort through the risen Lord Jesus and rest of soul in Him for both the present and the unending future.

As Dave would have it, let me close with a doxology: **Let us fall down before the majesty of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ; may we honor him as the risen Lord, Sabbath king, and universal sovereign; to Him be the glory both now and forevermore, Amen!**