

Putting the “Fun” in “Funeral”

“That’s the problem with you Protestants. You think a funeral is a place to be all happy.” Family drama! My brother reported these uncomfortably stern words uttered by our eldest brother regarding our Father’s funeral.

A bit of background information: our senior sibling has been a practicing Jehovah Witness for forty years. Reared in the same household, attending the same church, and taught the same values; as a married adult, he rescinded his belief in the Christian faith and embraced another religion, that of The Watchtower Society. We, of course, respect his right to so do. Two clear doctrinal distinctions suffice: Christians say Jesus is God, Jehovah Witnesses insist He is not. One of us is correct. Christians believe we are saved solely by God’s grace, Jehovah Witnesses claim salvation based squarely upon their own works. One of us is incorrect. (Simple law of logic: two contradictory propositions cannot both be true at the same time.)

Give our beloved brother credit, he remembers Christian doctrine. Protestants indeed view the funeral of a sincere believer as a time of celebration. Homecoming! We believe a Christian goes to be with Jesus forever. Yes, we shed a tear, but sorrow is cased in ultimate joy.

No wonder a Jehovah Witness with a conscience cannot rejoice over the death of a born again Christian. Watchtower theology regarding the death of non-Jehovah Witnesses is officially “Annihilation”. They simply cease to exist. When they die, “poof”! Of course, that is nothing to celebrate. (Especially when it is your father.)

Contrast biblical Christianity. When a person dies, including non-believers, they do not simply go into immortal oblivion. Rather, they have an eternity. Awaiting, is either Hell or Heaven. The former is an eternal shame. The latter, infinite joy!

Now, your opinion, please? Many, in functional reality, dismiss or diminish Jesus choosing to live impervious to eternity. In the classic words, “eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you may die”. Adopting that stance, the best you are hoping for is an eternal void cased in endless vacuum. Once again, nothing to celebrate. ...Unless you prefer to celebrate... nothing!

If however, you accept Christian truth, then it seems wise to settle your eternal destiny now. You will find it gives ultimate assurance for the future and immediate significance to the present. And, indeed, that is something to celebrate!

Then, when we attend your funeral, it will be “a place to be all happy”.