

Andrew K. Frey

Funeral of Don Haas

1 John 3:1-3

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²**Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.** ³**Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.** (NIV84)

Theme: Don has received his inheritance as a child of God.

Don was a loving man. There are many things that Don loved, but two stand out to me. His family is one of them. Nine kids with his lovely wife, Coralee. Numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I've been told that he there is over 80 in his immediate family. The majority of you are here today to say good-bye to your family's patriarch. And he loved you all.

He was proud of you all too. He talked about you. Although it was hard for him toward the end, he would do all he could to spend time with his family. In fact the last time Don stepped foot in this Church was this past Christmas Eve. It wasn't easy for him, but he wanted to hear some of his grandchildren tell him about the birth of the world's one and only Savior, Jesus Christ.

But as much as Don loved his family, he loved his Savior even more. As much as he was proud about his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, he was even more proud to be a child of God. He loves his Savior. And he loved his house. A few times Don told me a story about this house was built. Don said that he was the one to raise his hand a make a motion for this Church to be built—way back in the 50's. Don wasn't bragging simply because he had a hand in the construction of a building. No, he was proud that he had hand in the building of God's house. It is a place where he learned God's Word. Where he received Christ's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of sins. It is where he got to praise and thank Jesus for that he did for him. Jesus gave up the glories and riches of heaven to come down to this earth. There he lived a perfect life—not once disobeying God, as we do numerous times a day. Then on the cross Christ took the guilt of all

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our sins upon himself. He became guilty of the sins of the whole world. He suffered through their eternal punishment when he was forsaken by his Father. And then he died because of our sins. And he gave us his perfect life. His obedience is now credited to us. He made the ultimate switch. He took away what we couldn't have—our sins, and he gave us what we needed to have—his perfection.

That is why Don was proud to be called a child of God. But he wasn't born that way. None of us were. We were all born as children of the devil. By nature we are hostile to God and want nothing to do with him. When Don was born he knew nothing of God or his Son. We were conceived and born into sin. It is passed down to us from our parents and ultimately from Adam and Eve.

But Don didn't remain that way. God brought him to faith through the waters of baptism. He washed away his sins and clothed him in the robe of Christ's righteousness and perfection. He made Don his own dear child. And he kept Don in the one true faith. He didn't remain in infant in his faith. But he grew in his knowledge of God's Word. And as his knowledge grew the Holy Spirit increased the faith in his heart. God made Don his own dear child. And when Don strayed, as children often do, God called him back. He led him to repentance, forgave him and welcomed him back into the family of believers.

It is through faith that Don is a child of God. And as a child of God, he has received his inheritance. This inheritance is a free gift from God—not earned or deserved. It is eternal life in heaven. For Jesus didn't stay dead. Three days after he died he rose from the dead. And he promises that all who die in the one true faith, will join him in heaven forever. As a child of God, through faith in the Savior, Don has received his free inheritance.

And so Don is at home with his Father. None of us know exactly what that's like. But Don certainly does. We can't comprehend life in heaven. A place without sin and its effects. We can't understand a place free from pain, toil, sorrow, hunger, or pain. We don't know what it means exactly to have a perfect and glorious life. But Don does. What we will be in heaven is not known to us. But it is to Don.

We see a dead, life-less body. We see someone who was ravaged by sin. Sin took its toll. He became weak and frail. His body lost all his of its former glory.

But he won't stay that way forever. No on the Last Day Jesus will return and raise his body from the dead. And Don's body will join his soul in heaven forever. And it will be a glorious body. Perfect and holy. Without sin and not able to perish, spoil, or fade. Don has been made like Jesus. And so he shares in his glory. As John points out, **now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him.**

But Don doesn't have to wait until judgment day to enjoy the glories of heaven. He is already in Paradise with his Savior. He is already in heaven singing the praises of Jesus Christ. And right now he sees Jesus as he is—in his full divine glory. That is something that he couldn't do on this earth. For our sin makes us unholy and the eyes of the unholy cannot look upon the holy God and live. But Christ removed his sin, took away his guilt, and gave his holiness and perfection. Don is no longer a sinner, but God's perfect and holy child. A child who is able to lay his eyes on his God—in all his glory and majesty. And through faith, the same stands for you. As John tells us, **we will see him as he is.**

And you will see him as he is, through faith. Whose he? Well you will see Don. Not as he was, but as he is. Just as you will see all our fellow believers. But much more importantly, you will see your Savior—whom John is talking about. You will see him in his full glory. And together with Don you will sing his praises. And you will do so forever with your Savior. Amen.

To him, who is the Resurrection and the Life—to the one who saved us and brings us to heaven, Jesus Christ—to him be honor, glory, and praise, forever and ever. Amen.