

A statement we wish to make to all our Family.

I have witnessed and participated in thousands of funeral services in my ministry and I have felt uncomfortable in many that I have felt did not harmonize with what we as Christians should believe; this is especially important at the death of one who has placed his or her faith in the Person of Jesus Christ whom God sent to die for our sins and earn for us Eternal Life. His promises to us are vitally important for this life, of course, but **essential** at the time of our death. He said that He was preparing a place for us so we can be with Him, and He asked the Father, God to let us see His Glory. Then He carried out His mission on earth and was crucified as described a thousand years before in the twenty second Psalm.

He was vindicated by His Bodily Resurrection by which He was able to convince His disciples of His Deity and the truth of His teachings. We, who believe their witness in the New Testament are heirs of the Eternal Life He promised, and at death will be with Him for Eternity. Jesus promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to make all this clear and when we read the Bible with an open mind and willing heart we receive the kind of assurance that Paul mentions in Romans 8: *"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children...heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ!"*

What a privilege, what joy when we can exchange these imperfect bodies for one like that of the Risen Christ, and we shall see Him as He is! Glorified! And we will join our loved ones in Christ forever.

Now we who profess to believe all this, how have we adopted so many of the unbelieving worlds' customs and superstitions accrued to modern funerals? I understand the need of some to enter a process of mourning and healing at the loss of a loved one. But why, at such a time do we feel it necessary to spend great amounts of money for all the appendages that have accumulated around saying goodbye to the dead?

We feel that the expressions and actions of love that we receive in this life are God's reward for our faithfulness to you and to Him. We need no more proof or expenditure of funds to validate that love. Why are expensive containers and processions and eulogies necessary when the dead in Christ are now joyfully joining the chorus of praise for our Saviour, Jesus Christ? Our greatest "Memorial" will be for you to continue faithful to the One Who was faithful unto death for you at Calvary. And we will expectantly wait for that joyful reunion because of His Faithfulness!

Jesus' promises and the witness of the Holy Spirit, utilizing the infallible Word of God has so impressed us with the joy of being present with the Lord that we covet only one thing when we die: *That is that those who have loved us will join us in a Prayer of Thanksgiving that **Now we see Him face to face!** wherever you are!*

Our desire is that our remains, this pitiful, corrupted body, will be cremated, placed in a cardboard box and disposed of in the simplest way by a member of our family, preferably on our property in North Carolina. We think it might be good for our wonderful "Old Timey Mountain Winesaps" and our younger apple trees! 😊

Remember, Christ is not the Author of fear, but of "power and love and a sound mind."