

The Eulogy of Clay Warner Johansson

(August 2, 1955—June 24, 2023)

Grace Doctrine Church

1821 S River Rd

St. Charles, MO

Saturday, 22 July 2023

2:00 o'clock in the afternoon

Good morning, I'm Joe Griffin, pastor of Grace Doctrine Church here in St. Charles, Missouri. I was ordained in 1987 at Berachah Church in Houston, Texas, whose pastor was the Rev. Robert B. Thieme, Jr. He and I teach Scripture from its original languages of Hebrew and Koine Greek. The reason I mention this is that Clay and Nancy began their study of Scripture under Rev. Thieme's ministry and, following his death, they continued their studies under several other pastors who were trained in exegesis of the Bible from its original languages. Nancy asked me to present Clay's eulogy today and I am privileged and honored to do so.

Gathered with us today is Clay's dear wife, Nancy. She was his loyal wife who loved and supported him throughout their marriage as they both subscribed to and then applied the teaching of Scripture from doctrinally oriented pastors.

They have four children, daughters Megan, Kelsey, and Keely and a son, Aaron, now deceased. Clay is survived by his mother, Virginia Johansson, two sisters, nine grandchildren, and one great-grandson.

Clay's profession was with Hunter Engineering where he worked for 45 years and built a reputation by training new employees in the policies and procedures of the organization. Hunter's management found Clay to be an essential asset to their business which has several locations around the country and for which Clay worked in three of them, Florida, South Carolina, and Missouri.

Hunter's management describes Clay's impact on the company for his dedication to customer satisfaction, which he considered to be his paramount objective.



He was also devoted to physical exercise which included his participation in triathlons and long-distance biking. He and his daughter rode across the State of Missouri twice. Clay entered several 30 to 40-mile bike rides with his daughter, Keely, with whom he also participated in several triathlons which included a long-distance race consisting of three phases: swimming, bicycling, and running. Yet, the most dramatic was a 475-mile bike ride down the east coast of Florida from St. Augustine to Key West. It was not long after this that Clay was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

His personality was most often described as cordial, helpful, and gracious. His approach to others was based on his submission to the biblical standard of showing grace to others as a good soldier for Christ. In fact, there is a verse for this:

Galatians 5:14a The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

This crystallizes the foundational motivation of Clay Johansson's spiritual life. He was gracious to others, and many responded to him because of who he was—how he thought, how he functioned, and who he was as a man.

Therefore, to understand who and what Clay Johansson was, my comments will emphasize the basis of his motivation to be kind, thoughtful, and helpful to all those with whom he dealt. Here is my synopsis of the man we eulogize today.

Therefore, we have gathered here today to celebrate the transfer of Clay Johansson's soul and human spirit from time into eternity which occurred on Saturday, the twenty-fourth day of June 2023.

I use the word "celebrate" because this is the mental attitude that Nancy and her family would wish for us to have. Make no mistake; this is indeed a time of sorrow. But sorrow is a human emotion that is natural for those who are left behind by a loved one's departure to be with the Lord. It is the result of a sudden realization that there can never again be a time for earthly fellowship, companionship, or rapport.

Yet, although sorrow and grief are normal and legitimate emotions, they do not overwhelm those who have placed their confidence and trust in Christ. Stronger than human emotion is the clear testimony of biblical truth that applies to Clay's death and these principles provide for his family and friends a source of great peace and thanksgiving.



Clay was born in New Hampshire on August 2, 1955. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Johansson, were believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who grew in grace by listening to the recordings of Rev. Thieme.

In due time, Clay was taught the immutable principles found in Scripture that directed his thoughts, decisions, and actions for virtually his entire life. It was these biblical absolutes that enabled Clay to develop a quintessential inventory for his decision-making, problem-solving, and personal applications.

Because of this pivotal background of accumulating establishment and doctrinal truths, they prepared him for a life of success as a person, husband, father, grandfather, citizen, and employee.

It is by this inventory that Clay was able to fully grasp and apply the biblical guidance to his life and circumstances. For example, in the English-speaking world, believers must rely upon the pastor's expertise in translating the Bible's original languages over to the English language making sure the biblical message is not lost in the process. This process is referred to as exegesis which means, "to interpret," defined by *Webster's* as "a critical explanation of a portion of Scripture."

This may sound quite academic and therefore boring, but once you get the swing of this system you come to realize what Timothy meant when he wrote this in:

1 Timothy 2:3 This prayer is good and acceptable in the judgment of God our Savior,

v. 4 who always desires all mankind to be saved [σῶζω (*sōzō*): "to receive salvation"] and to come to the knowledge of the truth [ἀλήθεια (*alētheia*): "purity from all error or falsehood," i.e., absolute truth].

v. 5 For there is one God, and one Mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

v. 6 Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

v. 7 For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling you the truth, I m not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.



From God’s perspective, there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who have believed in Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life and those who have not. Those who have believed in Christ have the potential to become good soldiers for Christ. Those who have not are part of the problem that presently faces our country. The true patriot is the one with biblical guidance present in his soul and the courage to use it in guiding his thoughts, decisions, and actions.

Because some believe and some do not is why A. P. Carter posed the question, “Will the circle be unbroken?” The sad answer is that no family circle is unbroken. The God we serve has no desire to be a tyrant, but rather a benevolent monarch. His intent, according to Peter, is “not for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Yet His plan is so structured that only those who respond to God’s unfailing love are qualified to enter into His heaven. And God’s unfailing love for the entire human race is expressed by His gracious provision of a solution to the human sin problem.

Condemned at birth by Adam’s original sin, and further indictment by personal sin, every member of the human race must come to the realization that he is spiritually dead, totally depraved, and in need of the Savior. Every person’s free will must choose for or against God’s unspeakable gift.

Among the four Gospels, John’s may be categorized as the most evangelistic of the group. His Gospel contains the repeated message that all who believe in Jesus Christ receive the imputation of eternal life and, by definition, this life can never be lost.

The key to understanding the biblical nomenclature essential to the gospel message is found in the noun **πίστις** (*pístis*) which is always translated *faith*, and the verb **πιστεύω** (*pisteúō*) which is always translated *to believe*.

In his Gospel, John uses the verb “to believe” 52 times while the other three Synoptic writers use it only 23 times among them. Thirty-eight of John’s references refer to “believing in Christ.”

The verb, *pisteúō*: “to believe,” is transitive. Transitive verbs demand a working object. In this case, it indicates that anyone who places his personal faith in Jesus is saved. His positive response to information about the Person and work of Christ results in his belief—the Greek verb, *pisteúō*—that Jesus is the working object that results in salvation.



There are about forty things revealed in Scripture that occur at the moment a person believes in Christ. There are two that the Lord emphasizes as paramount in the third chapter of John.

When the Lord spoke to Nicodemus, an unbeliever, in John 3, He presented him with a choice that, if made, would result in two things. There is an important word in John 3:16, a conjunction pronounced **ἵνα (hína)**. It is generally translated into English by the word “that,” which in this context, introduces both a purpose and result. Let’s consult the verse:

John 3:16 - “God loved the world so much, He **gave** [δίδωμι (*dídōmi*): this is grace, no gift can be a gift that requires anything on the part of the recipient] His uniquely-born Son, so **that** [ἵνα (*hína*): introduces both purpose and result] **whoever believes in Him** [πιστεύω (*pisteúō*): this is the necessary condition to achieve the purpose and the result. The verb *pisteúō* is transitive which means it demands an object which Jesus reveals is “Himself”] **shall not perish** [ἀπόλλυμι (*apóllumi*): purpose of believing: Nicodemus would avoid the lake of fire after he dies], but **have eternal life** [ζωή αἰώνιος (*zōḗ aiōnios*): result of believing: Nicodemus would be imputed eternal life and would go to heaven when he dies].”

Jesus makes it clear to Nicodemus that salvation, which includes deliverance from the lake of fire, and the imputation of eternal life, occur simultaneously when anyone simply believes in Christ.

John 3:16 and others like it are the sources of the Reformers’ claim of *sola fide*: faith alone. This principle is stated by Paul in:

Galatians 2:16 ... yet we know that no one is justified by the works of the law but by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by the faithfulness of Christ and not by the works of the law; because by the works of the law no one will be justified. (NET)

It must be remembered that both *faith* and *believe* are transitive and therefore demand an object. Jesus is that divinely approved object. The phrase is therefore expanded to read “faith alone in Christ alone.”



There are things about Jesus that must be understood by an unbeliever so that, when he does place his faith in Him, it is not simply recognition of Jesus' historicity, but a positive response to His saving work on the cross.

Therefore, the one who evangelizes must understand the difference between the gospel presentation and the divine act of salvation. Here is a summary:

The gospel is designed to present Jesus of Nazareth as Savior. Any number of details may be presented to describe His person and His work: He is both perfect God and sinless Man, who was sacrificed on the cross for the sins of the entire human race, after which He died physically, was buried, and three days later, was resurrected from the dead. Regardless of how many details are given, the free will of the unbeliever must be left to consider whether to believe in Jesus as the working object of his faith, or not.

Salvation occurs when the unbeliever responds with nonmeritorious faith alone in Christ alone. This faith response has both purpose and result: the purpose is deliverance from punishment in the lake of fire. The result is the imputation of eternal life. Taken together, salvation means that those who believe go to heaven when they die.

Salvation occurs at a moment of time. One second later the believer begins his spiritual life. How he lives it depends upon whether he will devote himself to the task of learning, retaining, and applying biblical absolutes to his life through consistent spiritual growth at a local church which was ordained to be the classroom for Christians.

Yet, as simple as the gospel of salvation is, many cannot comprehend the grace of God which is most assuredly the policy that enables a person to acquire eternal life. There are pastors who assert that salvation does require faith in Christ, but to confirm its validity the individual must perform "good works."

But the biblical system of "good works" requires submission to a system revealed in Scripture. First of all, one must already be a believer. Secondly, he must be filled with the Holy Spirit. This occurs when the believer confesses his sins to the Father:



1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, [to God the Father], He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This confession to the Father results in the filling of the Holy Spirit:

Ephesians 5:18b ... but be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Yet even the simplicity of these examples seem to have no impact on those who insist that “good works” must follow in order to “acquire” or “confirm” one’s salvation. This is a false doctrine by some who insist that “good works” are required to result in one’s salvation. Certification is by the Word of God, not one’s personal opinion.

Even though the verses just quoted achieve exactly the desired result, human legalism has the tendency to insist on human works. Yet, grace demonstrates that the *works for salvation* were accomplished solely by Jesus Christ on the cross.

In order to, shall we say, “drive a nail” into the legalism of “salvation by works,” our final example of faith alone in Christ alone is provided by a convicted criminal who was being executed for a capital crime.

The passage that clarifies this illustration takes place at the crucifixion outside Jerusalem in Luke 23:33–43. Verse 33 describes the crucified Jesus, flanked on each side by a criminal:

Luke 23:33 When they came to that place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.

What follows in verses 34–36 are derogatory comments shouted at Jesus; called, “rulers” in verse 35, “soldiers” in verse 36, plus an inscription nailed to the cross in verse 38 reading, “This is the King of the Jews.” The following paragraph contains our context:

Luke 23:39 Now one of the criminals who was hanging there hurled blasphemous insults at Jesus saying, “Are You not the Messiah? Deliver yourself and us!”

v. 40 But [adversative conjunction δέ (dé) this criminal had placed his faith in Jesus for salvation] the other criminal answered, and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?”



This criminal had committed a capital crime. He, the other criminal, and Jesus Christ were each sentenced to death.

Luke 23:41 “In fact, we are justly [**culminative aorist active indicative of πράσσω (*prássō*): repeated crimes**] suffering, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds, but Jesus has done nothing wrong.”

Having said this, the man turned to Jesus to Whom he repeatedly appealed in:

Luke 23:42 He kept on repeating [**iterative aorist passive imperative of the verb, λέγω**], “Lord Jesus, remember me [**imperative of entreaty of the verb, μνάομαι (*mnáomai*)**] when You come into Your kingdom.”

Also nailed to a cross among the two men, Jesus replied to him:

Luke 23:43 “Truly [**ἀμήν (*amēn*)**]: “I am telling you the truth!], today you will be with Me in Paradise!”

1. The man to whom Jesus spoke was guilty of a capital crime and thus sentenced to death as was Jesus and the third man in the passage.
2. All three were nailed to crosses. They could not move their arms or legs except slightly to relieve the pain of cramping muscles. None of the three men was capable of performing any works since they were nailed to crosses.
3. What the man appealed for Jesus to do was, “Remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”
4. This man had done no good works. He could not have performed any works if he had wished to do so.
5. Yet, what the man had already done was to ask Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom.
6. Jesus’ response was, “Today, you will be with Me in Paradise.”
7. PRINCIPLE: Salvation is not based on faith in Christ followed by the performance of good works. Salvation is acquired by placing one’s personal faith in Christ based on His work on the cross.



8. Having done so, the new believer's first obligation is to confess his sins, get a Bible, go to church, and begin to grow in grace from the teachings of its pastor, and systematically apply what he learns from Scripture to his life and circumstances.
9. Making this a consistent daily practice will allow him to accrue in his soul the power of God's immutable Word.
10. Salvation enrolls the new believer into God's Grace Academy under the tutelage of a church's pastor and under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, who will do this according to Jesus:
John 14:26 "The Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."
12. Consistent Bible study results in the believer building an inventory of biblical absolutes from which the person may consult and apply to the circumstances he faces in his daily life.
13. The more this occurs, the more powerful the believer's decision-making has in its application. This impact is described in this verse:
Hebrews 4:12 For the Word of God is alive and powerful and is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow, and is a critic and judge of the thoughts and intents of the soul.
14. This verse and others we have noted are cited today in order to describe the historical impact of the man we eulogize today.
15. Clay Johansson lived the life I have endeavored to briefly illustrate. His daily relationship with the Lord was centered on his devotion to Bible study which he placed as top priority in his spiritual life starting in his childhood.
16. By doing this, he was able to develop biblically based principles with which he applied to those with whom he came in contact:
 - a. In his teaching career at Hunter, he used his education to not only communicate the principles of each category under study while, at the same, time applying pertinent biblical standards in his personal relationship with each student.



- b. His recall and application of professional and biblical standards enabled him to develop a relationship with the students he taught. This resulted in a symbiotic rapport with his students that endeared him to them.
- c. He also applied his inventories of professional and biblical standards to the corporate world.
- d. And if these examples are not enough accolades, Clay was also a talented artist, an example is on display in the church today which I recommend you view.

Thus, is it any wonder that Clay's biblically enhanced personality was a joy and a blessing for his dear wife, Nancy, daughters Megan Johansson, Kelsey Becerril (Esteban), and Keely Hawkins (Matt), his mother, Virginia Johansson, two sisters, nine grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

They each miss him dearly; however, their grief is diminished by the knowledge that Clay is absent from the body and at home with the Lord:

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Clay has already made the transfer from time into eternity. Nancy's grief is already mollified by her confidence in the biblical references reviewed this morning. She may now look forward to the promised future reunion with Clay.

In closing, I think it appropriate to mention that Clay was preceded in death by his infant son, Aaron Johansson. I am pleased to report that father and son are now reunited in heaven in the presence of the Lord.

Shall we pray.

