

**The Eulogy of
John White Brunner**
(March 22, 1924 – January 02, 2006)

**Twin Oaks Presbyterian Church
1230 Big Bend Road
Ballwin, Missouri**

January 8, 2006

We have gathered here together this afternoon in order to celebrate the transfer of Jack Brunner's soul and spirit from time into eternity.

I use the word "celebrate" because this is the attitude that Mr. Brunner would wish for us to take. 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 trust in Christ. Stronger than these emotions is the clear testimony of biblical truth that applies to Mr. Brunner's death and these principles provide for his family and friends a source of great joy and thanksgiving.

Jack Brunner was a believer in the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He came to understand that his sins were transferred from his account over to Christ's and that the Lord was judged in his place on Calvary's cross. He placed his faith in the historicity of the resurrection of Christ. These two events—the cross and the resurrection—constitute the Gospel of salvation and by placing his faith alone in Christ alone he received saving grace and was imputed eternal life and the guarantee of a resurrection body.

Over the past several years Mr. Brunner suffered from physical illnesses common to the human condition. We all are born, we live, we eat, we grow, we marry, we reproduce, we age, we decline, we die. This is a general summary of the human drama. It is during the time between birth and death that man must decide how he wishes to spend his eternal future. Because Jack chose Christ, he is now absent from the body and face to face with the Lord where, according to the Revelation of Jesus Christ, chapter 21, verse 4, we read,

"God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; death will no longer exist; neither anguish, nor crying, nor pain; because the first things have passed away."

Many in Jack's family and those among his friends and associates are also believers in Christ and thus are comforted today by this knowledge, not only for Jack but also for themselves. Those of his family who have attended my church over the past two decades are confident about these things and because of this confidence they now enjoy tranquility of soul as they gather here to remember the life of a husband, father, and grandfather and to give thanks to God for him.

None of us enter into this life with such confidence and Jack Brunner was no exception. I knew him for around 20 years. He was a man who had two burning interests: love of family and love of country. I have seen his efforts toward John and Jan's children in these regards. He was passionate about passing along the

traditional culture of America to Elizabeth, Ginny, and J. B. On occasion I was present when he assembled them together to view a video of some great historical significance and then test them afterward on what they had learned. Probably unobserved by him but not by me, were their eyes rolling back in their sockets in mock boredom, but over time the lessons sunk in.

They were treated to trips to historic sites: monuments, battlefields, cemeteries; had opportunities to hear famous people speak, and received countless books by popular authors that presented the traditional view of our nation's history.

Mr. Brunner was vigorously attempting to pass this traditional culture of our country on to the next generation. It was a worthy idea. Today our country's traditional worldview is under unrelenting assault from Progressives who wish to convert it into an Orwellian Oceania. Part of this effort is to deconstruct the divine institutions of marriage, family, and country and in so doing transform the United States into something quite unlike that of our forebears. Jack Brunner was on the front lines in opposition to this. He assumed the duty of passing along our nation's heritage to his family hoping that at least those of his own household would help stem the cultural downtrends so starkly evident throughout the commonwealth.

Jack Brunner had a good idea and more parents and grandparents need to follow his example. The deconstruction of marriage and family is afoot and must be stopped if we are to remain a free people, else we will repeat history since we would have failed to learn from it. Marcus Cicero was prophetic of our time when in 52 B.C. he wrote in *De Republica*:

“Before our own time, the customs of our ancestors produced excellent men, and eminent men preserved our ancient customs and the institutions of their forefathers. What is now left of the ancient customs on which the commonwealth of Rome was founded firm? They have been so completely buried in oblivion that they are not only no longer practiced, but are already unknown.”

Mr. Brunner's passion was to be actively involved in reversing this trend in America. He was rock solid in his loyalty to his family. To Mrs. Brunner he had enduring affection and before his passing he requested that I remind her through the lyrics of a few of their favorite songs about the halcyon days they enjoyed as a young couple:

LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART
(Beth Slater Whitson / Leo Friedman)

Let me call you "Sweetheart," I'm in love with you.
Let me hear you whisper that you love me too.
Keep the love-light glowing in your eyes so true.
Let me call you "Sweetheart," I'm in love with you.

In 1944 he married his Sweetheart, Mary Virginia Gammon, following his graduation from university where he was commissioned an ensign in the United States Navy. His personal desire was to settle down and enjoy married life. But integrity demands that duty must precede self. So Jack Brunner assumed the attitude of Cavalier poet Richard Lovelace who wrote:

“I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more.”

And so off to war he went to honorably defend the country he loved in order to protect the woman he loved. He immediately was deployed to the Pacific Theatre where his most dangerous mission was flying supplies from air bases in East India to Kunming, China, a relatively short 500-mile flight but imperiled by the necessity

to navigate over the Himalayas. The journey, fraught with turbulence, storms, and icing, required pilots to struggle for safe altitudes in order to deliver their heavy cargoes over the 15,000-foot mountains. It became known as “flying the Hump.”

From his wartime experiences young Jack gained an appreciation for those who must leave the comforts of home, a young wife, and loved ones in order to enter into Harm’s Way. Mrs. Brunner, one of his requested lyrics for you is from the World War I song “Till We Meet Again (Raymond B. Egan and Richard A. Whiting).” It was poignant in World War II and remains so today:

There's a song in the land of the lily
Each sweetheart has heard with a sigh
Over high garden walls
This sweet echo falls
As a soldier boy whispers goodbye.

Though goodbye means the birth of a tear drop
Hello means the birth of a smile
And the smile will erase
The tear blighting trace
When we meet in the after awhile.

Smile the while you kiss me sad adieu
When the clouds roll by I'll come to you
Then the skies will seem more blue
Down in lovers' lane my dearie.
Wedding bells ring so merrily
Every tear will be a memory
So wait and pray each night for me
Till we meet again.

Jack and Virginia did meet again. After his return home, he took over the leadership of Vi-Jon Laboratories in St. Louis following the death of his father and remained active in the business until just a couple of years ago. Together they raised a family of three, John, Robin, and Carley who have provided them with seven grandchildren: John and Jan’s Elizabeth, Genny, and John III; Robin’s Elizabeth (Sally); and Carley and Eduardo’s Nicholas, Gabriella, and Lucas. All loved dearly by him.

There were several things about which Jack Brunner was confident: He was confident about how to run a business. He was confident that the most important things in life were family and country and was confident that being supportive of them was a noble cause.

I came to know Mr. Brunner shortly after my arrival in St. Louis to assume the pulpit of Grace Doctrine Church. I soon learned that Mr. Brunner had another passion that so far I have not mentioned. He had an intense interest in theology. He would come up to me after services and ask questions. We exchanged letters in which we discussed certain doctrines. I was soon on his mailing list and received numerous books, articles, and papers that addressed one subject or another. I have sat over meals with him discussing various passages of the Bible.

It was evident that Mr. Brunner had a wealth of theological information but I soon came to realize that there was one subject about which he had no confidence. He

was not certain that when he died he would go to heaven. It then became my duty to guide him to the point where such confidence could be attained.

The basic requirement has already been mentioned. The salvation of the soul, the gift of eternal life, and the guarantee of heavenly citizenship is appropriated through the volitional decision to believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mr. Brunner understood this academically but for some reason he thought salvation required more than simple faith. He was under the impression that his eternal future rested on some system of good works that he could perform and this hopefully would impress God sufficiently enough to allow entry into His heaven.

Interestingly, even this approach was not enough to give him confidence regarding his eternal destiny. How many good works are enough? How often must they be performed? Do one's mistakes, sins, and wrongdoings trump the good deeds a person has done? As a result of these misunderstandings Mr. Brunner was confused about his eternal future.

Over time, through many conversations, Mr. Brunner came to grasp the simplicity of God's grace. Grace is the absence of works. Grace consists of all that God is free to do for mankind on the basis of the cross.

He came to realize that one does not perform good works in order to *be* saved but he performs good works because he *is* saved. And once good works were removed from the discussion then the impact of the Scripture's clear testimony became evident.

The Greek word for confidence is ἐλπίς. The English word used to translate it is "hope" however this word suggests the presence of lingering doubt. But the Greek definition of *elpis* expresses "expectation" and "certainty in a divinely given future." It speaks of "sure confidence" in association with "patient endurance." [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 2:530-31]

True confidence must have knowledge of truth as its foundation, otherwise it becomes a masquerade for emotion, opinion, and even ideology. Mr. Brunner acquired his confidence through the development of biblical rationales.

The Scripture tells us in Hebrews 9:27 that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." However, we are comforted to learn in Romans 8:1 that "there is no judgment for those who are in Christ Jesus."

It should be noted that the Hebrews passage is true of all mankind—"it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"—but the Romans verse is true for only those who have believed in Christ—"there is no judgment."

Jack Brunner made the transition from Hebrews 9:27 to Romans 8:1. But what if he had not? Then today I would be faced with a very difficult job for Monday would have marked his transfer into eternal darkness.

Before Monday, he did not know the time, the place, or the manner of his death. Neither do any of us. But each of us knows that someday we will die. Here's a revealing question to ponder: "When you do die, under what circumstances do you suppose God will allow you entrance into His heaven?"

Unfortunately, there are great misunderstandings today as to how one qualifies to enter God's heaven. As we've noted, some assert that by performing good works they will earn eternal life. Others claim that each one of us is seeking the same goal and a merciful God will ultimately permit all of His creatures to enter into heaven. The Lord refutes this idea in John 14:6 where He is quoted saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but through Me." No diversity there. There is even the notion that if one's good deeds simply outnumber his sins and failures then God will permit him inside. There is no such idea stated in the Bible.

What the Bible does say however is that, "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not even one."

And those who have fallen short and are unrighteous cannot have an association with a perfect and righteous God. This leaves us with an inescapable conclusion: there is no hope for *any* of us! There is no way that fallen and sinful mankind can earn or deserve this perfect righteousness. There is no way that we can lift off our own shoulders the burden that is placed there by our own corrupting sin. If it is to be removed, someone else has to do it for us.

So God, through His undiminished love and expressed by His matchless grace, provided a solution to the problem. God sent His Own Son, Jesus of Nazareth, Who was perfect and without sin, to be our substitutionary sacrifice:

2 Corinthians 5:21 - For He Who knew no sin became sin as a substitute for us so that we might have the righteousness of God in Him.

Who is the righteous substitute? Paul tells us in:

Romans 5:8 - God demonstrates His Own undiminished love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died as a substitute for us.

Who is this Christ? The title, Χριστός, is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word, מָשִׁיחַ *Mashiach*, or Messiah. This personality was understood by the Israelites to be a "Kinsman-Redeemer, One Who would emerge from the tribe of Judah and the dynasty of David. And so Jesus one day looked at His disciples and asked them in:

Matthew 16:13 - "Who do the people say that the Son of Man is?"

v. 14 - And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

v. 15 - He said to His disciples, "But who do you say that I am?"

v. 16 - And Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

"You are the Christ!" Peter correctly identified Jesus as the long-expected Messiah. It is Jesus Who is the Savior of man. On the cross it was Jesus Who received judgment for our sins. Any one who believes this shall not perish but have eternal life.

This was made clear to Jack by the Lord's quotes in Scripture:

John 3:16 - "For God demonstrated His undiminished love to the human race in the following manner: He gave [**this is grace, no gift can be a gift that requires something on the part of the recipient**] His Son—the uniquely born One—for the purpose and with the result that anyone who believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life.

What qualification does the Lord Himself stipulate for the acquisition of eternal life? Anyone who believes in Him! The word “believe” is the Greek verb πιστεύω. The noun form is πίστις, and is translated “faith.” The verb is transitive which places the merit of one’s belief on the object. The object is Jesus Christ. Simple belief in Christ results in salvation and the reception of eternal life.

“Too simple!” some say. Jack Brunner thought so twenty years ago. Let’s assume for a moment that he was right. Perhaps there *is* something more. Maybe if we searched the Scripture we’d find other things we are asked to do in order to be saved, to acquire eternal life, and thus qualify to enter into heaven.

So let’s take a look and see if there are other requirements beyond faith in Christ for entering into God’s heaven. The first few are again direct quotes from Jesus:

John 3:18 - “He who believes [πιστεύω] in Him [**Me**] is not judged but he who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the uniquely-born Son of God.

John 3:36 - “He who believes in the Son has eternal life but he who does not believe the Son shall not see life but rather the wrath of God continues to abide upon him.”

John 6: 47 - “Truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has eternal life.”

Romans 3:22 - Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe.

Romans 3:28 - For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law.

Ephesians 2:8 - For by grace are you saved through faith and that salvation is not from yourselves, it is a gift from God,

v. 9 - not of works, lest any man should boast.

The most profound yet simple statement regarding the issue of one’s salvation is found in:

Acts 16:31 - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

Jack Brunner came to understand these passages as clear testimony to the divine requirements for eternal salvation and entry into the environs of God’s heaven. As a result I am pleased to report that in God’s perfect plan, on Monday, January 2, 2006, the soul and spirit of Jack Brunner exited his human body and went home to be with the Lord. It was on this day, as dawn was breaking in the eastern sky, that Jack found eternal tranquility in the presence of God.

We should also note this was not a time of grief or sorrow for the Lord, for the Scripture tells us in:

Psalms 116:15 - Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.

And yet for the Brunner family this is a normal time for sorrow that is only right and natural. God’s grace will sustain you and give you strength to endure this.

Isaiah 41:10 - Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will sustain you, yes, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

During your time of grief, the Lord tells you that you may cast your troubles upon Him and He will answer your prayers by soothing your souls with His own perfect peace.

Philippians 4:6 - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgivings let your requests be made known to God,

v. 7 - and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will garrison your hearts and souls in Christ Jesus.

In time, God's grace will take this sorrow, which is now focused on Mr. Brunner's absence, and slowly transform it into the joyous expectation of the promised future reunion.

1 Thessalonians 4:13 - We do not want you to be uninformed, fellow believers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as do the rest who have no hope [**no confidence**].

v. 14 - For if we [as **Christians**] believe that Jesus died and rose again, and we do, even so God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in Him.

1 Thessalonians 4:15 - For this we say to you by the Word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep [died physical death].

v. 16 - For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven, He will do so with a command, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

v. 17 - Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

This is the biblical guarantee of the promised future reunion. And then, verse 18 is very important:

v. 18 - Always comfort one another with these words.

And finally, all of you should remember that the believer's death is God's victory. Paul informs us in:

1 Corinthians 15:54c - "Death is swallowed up in victory.

v. 55a - O death, where is your victory?"

v. 57 - Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are some of the reasons why I said at the beginning that we have gathered together here today to *celebrate* the transfer of Jack Brunner's soul and spirit into the presence of the Lord.

Consequently, his family may have tranquility of soul. The love of God provided a way of salvation for us all through His uniquely born Son, Jesus Christ. Because your loved one chose to place his faith in this grace provision means that you may now grieve his absence but you do so comforted by confidence, not as do others who have no hope.

Now I'd like to briefly address the family members individually.

(Impromptu comments to Mrs. Brunner, John, Robin, Carley, and grandchildren.)

Shall we pray:

Heavenly Father, we come to your throne of grace today, saddened by the death of a husband, father, grandfather, and friend. Yet we have learned from Your Word that such sorrow is only experienced by those who are left behind. And so we are encouraged by the knowledge that You rejoice in the death of Your saints and that Jack is happily in Your presence.

Thus, it is our prayer that Your grace will comfort those who now find themselves missing him. Shower upon them your gracious mercies which will bring tranquility to their souls.

Such poise springs from biblical principles which sustain, give strength, and provide the ability to endure. May the Holy Spirit empower each one to draw from this reservoir of confidence, enabling each to keep his eyes focused on the Source of all good and perfect gifts, our Lord Jesus Christ. Jack was a good gift, now made perfect in Him.

There is no substitute for victory. There can be no victory without Christ, a victory that was won through His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross and made available to all through faith alone in Him.

Jack Brunner, Your child, is victorious. On January 2, 2006, You called him to enter into the realm of Your eternal glory for which we are grateful and about which we are confident.

And we lift our prayer in the name of Your uniquely-born Son, namely, Jesus Christ, Who is *Yahweh Sebaoth*, the Lord of the armies. Amen.

Anchors aweigh!

Benediction:

Jude 24 - Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

v. 25 - to the only wise God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forevermore! Amen.