

Tom Ruggirello - 2026 Memorial Service

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Final hours. We are so blessed by this design that we are able to see it today. That you've carried this word and you've carried those who passed it on all the way to our times to touch us.

And we are so grateful that even this past year has brought us closer through our experiences in individual and collective under your watchful care. Closer to you and your dear son. So, dear Father, we want to recognize your love and your wisdom in sending Jesus, and he was the perfect expression and reflection of this love and wisdom, and he walked with clarity, faithfulness till the very end to his death on the cross.

May we have the peace of mind. May we have the calmness in our hearts tonight as we resolve to grow even closer to you and emulate his loving character, his courage, his faithfulness, his love and his sacrifice. All of this expressing your great character. Dear Father, please help us thus to honor you that our joy may be complete.

We ask for your kind blessing on Brother Tom as he delivers his lesson and as he officiates the service and upon each of us as we partake of them emblems. Please be with all the brethren as they gather tonight, and we ask these things in his name as he instructed us. Amen.

Dear brethren, we are certainly privileged together this evening to honor our great King and Savior, and not only are we to honor his sacrificial life and death, but we also honor the principles he stood loyalty, heart, devotion to everything that is good. A love for truth, self sacrifice in the interests of others. A single minded devotion to do only the Father's will with an underlying humility that never sought honor for himself. Brethren, our Lord stood for every good principle that we can think of and more.

Everything he did was for the blessing of others. So, brethren, when we take the bread and the cup in recognition of his human sacrifice, we also honor the principles that were precious to Him. You may relate to this, brethren, but in the past I have often felt that remembering him through the memorial symbols just wasn't enough. It didn't seem like enough for what he did for us, and I think there is a truth in that sentiment.

The greater recognition of his sacrifice happens when we leave this room. The greater honor we can show him is demonstrated when we copy him, when we try to think as he thinks and reflect on the words that he would use when we speak. It happens when we mold our lives after the pattern of service that he left for us to study and what motivated him in his own service. As you well know, honoring him in that way is much more difficult than what we will do tonight but the memorial symbols and how we live our lives go together, don't they? And that makes this service more meaningful to our Lord and to the Heavenly Father.

It is the highest form of praise that we can offer when we take both of those things together. Of course, someday our Lord's sacrifice will also speak to the world, and it's thrilling to think of the time when the ransom will be taught in every classroom and deeply touch every seeking heart, and the world finally comes to see the importance of divine justice. They will see that there are no shortcuts to justice.

It is the foundation of God's throne, and man will learn that it must also be the foundation principle for this world if humanity is to endure.

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When the world learns why it was essential for Jesus not just to die, but to also suffer rejection, to experience bitter hatred, and why he had to be treated as the worst offender under the law and then put to death in such an inhumane way, then mankind will finally understand the extreme lengths that divine love was willing to go to save even the most sinful members of our race. Then they will see the divine balance between justice and love, and the world will then begin to appreciate the wisdom that saw the need for a merciful high priest and a priesthood that will finish the work that was begun by the ransom. If I had to summarize what the divine plan has shown us in one simple statement, I would say we now see the true heart of God and our Lord's heart, that they are filled with love and a desire to bless and lift up all of creation. His anger endures for a moment, and in his favor is life.

That's who he is.

Brethren, what do you see when you look out at the world? We often see a sinful, corrupt world because there's a lot there. But I suggest that we try to look at the world through the Lord's eyes. Jesus, of course, sees the sin, but he also sees the potential out there. He knows what this world will be like one day because he understands what it will need to get there.

And he knows how to give it to them. Guidance, instruction and righteousness and noble leadership. I can't wait for that to happen, to see how that will work for this human family. Brethren, I want to be part of that. I want to help this world to where God's plan will take them.

With that in mind, we can look at the world differently. We can look at it with hope filled eyes when its potential is unlocked in the kingdom and people come to understand why our heavenly Father and His Son are so worthy of praise.

So let's keep in mind that tonight's ceremony will also mean more to our Lord and to the Heavenly Father. When we appreciate God's plan for restoring the race and what that will mean to the family of man, we continue to honor his sacrifice that will raise the world to perfection and eternal life. These are important concepts to keep in mind. On a more personal note, our knowledge of the truth has helped us to realize that because of Jesus, you and I have tremendous advantages that we could never hope to have otherwise. First and foremost, we now understand Jesus.

We now understand that Jesus has put God within our reach, and I think the magnitude of that is difficult to comprehend because we really don't know what being the Almighty actually means. The Creator of the universe, who has billions of angels serving him day and night, is accessible to us. The Apostle John wrote about this. He says to as many as received him gave he power to become the sons of God.

That extraordinary relationship of being able to address God as our Father comes with many privileges and opportunities. It offers the guidance of boundless wisdom. It offers a providential care of unlimited power. It provides a glorious hope for the future, not only for our own personal blessings, but for sharing in the work of renewing this dying world. Jesus has opened all of that for us, for you, brethren.

How do we thank him for that?

Remember in the story of the woman with the issue of blood, remember how she came to Jesus believing that if she could touch just the hem of his garment, she would be healed? And after she touched him and she was healed, the Lord's tender response was, daughter, be of good courage.

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Thy faith hath made thee whole. I love that believing that Jesus could help her made her whole because her belief was in someone authorized by God to heal others to do these good works. For the suffering woman, of course, it was a physical healing.

But, brethren, for you and me, being made whole is much deeper than that. The healing of our issue is inward, isn't it?

He is our great physician, and through God's spirit, our sinful ways of thinking can change when we spiritually touch his garment. Jesus said to the woman, be of good comfort. The Greek word translated comfort also means to have courage. For her courage and comfort were standing right there.

She could just reach out and touch him. But for us, it takes something different, something more. We have to believe in our deepest heart that the Lord can heal what is broken in us. Our natural selfishness can be transformed into generosity. Our natural human pride can be turned to humility.

When we study the life of someone who gave up the glories of heaven to serve a sinful world, and he never bragged or looked for credit for the marvelous things that he did, what a pattern we have. When we do our best to copy him, we can courageously deal with whatever we encounter because he's promised to stand right by our side and to let us spiritually touch his garment. Brethren, I have to admit that I forget that all the time, and so, one reason God gave us the annual memorial was to remind us of the most important things we need to cherish and the resources available to us. Jesus is our source of comfort and strength and courage.

Brethren, we've also been given a guarantee, a guarantee that we have a legal standing with God. I love Hebrews 7, 1922, from Phillips. It says, the law is incapable of bringing anyone to real maturity. This means a far better hope for us because Jesus has become our priest by the oath of God, and he is, by virtue of this fact that is, by God's oath, the living guarantee of a better covenant.

Let me say that again. Jesus is the living guarantee, a better covenant. God took an oath that he would one day fulfill his promise to Abraham of blessing all the families of the earth, and that included the establishment of a priesthood to carry out that work. Now, earlier in chapter six of Hebrews, Paul says that there was no one greater that God could swear by.

So he swore by the own sanctity of his name. Brethren, there is no better guarantee anywhere that the Abrahamic covenant and the Melchizedek priesthood will become a reality. That's the best guarantee this universe will ever see. There is nothing more that Jesus could have done for us and for the world to come. Our confidence then is not in anything we can do, but in what has already been done through Christ.

But our gratitude for all that is expressed in our desire to serve him as best we can and in our efforts to be more like him. Jesus knew the narrow way would be challenging. He saw that the church would need other body members for continued support and encouragement. Remember how near the end of his life he prayed a whole chapter for the unity and blessing of his body members. He said to God, may they be one as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee.

That they also may be one in us, and the glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them that they may be one, even as we are one man. That's a pretty high standard, isn't it?

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That's what he's looking for in our fellowship in Our ecclesiastical He wanted us to have what he has with the Father, a unity of spirit that is so close that they could be considered one.

And I think. Is that a realistic expectation that we could be that close? Well, maybe it can be challenging, can it, when we disagree or when we come from different backgrounds, when we have different perspectives and different preferences in life. But brethren, it's certainly something to strive for in our fellowship because we honor Jesus when we take his words to heart and try to achieve that heart unity as prospective members of the body of Christ. Maybe it would help as we look to the future, look to the monumental work that we're being called to be part of.

If we're faithful, remember that wonderful passage in Revelation 21:4. Look forward to that. God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away. Man assisting mankind to reach that reality is the word God has in store for you and me as members of the royal priesthood with Christ as our head. It's a vision that should unite us.

And I look forward to sharing in that work someday with each of you. You know, we sometimes say that Christians shouldn't be involved in trying to reform this world because this social order just cannot be reformed. But someday, brethren, someday we will be able to say yes. Now it's time to solve the world's hunger and poverty problems. It's finally time to put an end to racism and hatred, not just for some, but for everyone.

And not just for a while, but for eternity. That's the social program we will share if we are faithful to our covenant of sacrifice. That common hope is one of the cords, I think, that can strengthen our bonds as brethren in Christ and future members of the Melchizedek priesthood, and it's all because our Lord's sacrifice guaranteed that the Abrahamic covenant would become a reality. There's no more powerful thing than that.

We can go on for a long time listing the advantages that we have. So, brethren, I want to encourage you to do that when you go home later to try to absorb all the benefits that the Lord brings into your life, both now in the prospects of the future. Where would you be today without him?

Let's take a look now at the emblems that we're here tonight to remember Our Lord. Matthew 26:26-28 says, as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and break it and gave it to the disciples and said, take, eat. This is my body and he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. So on a fundamental level, the bread and the wine represent the flesh and the blood of Jesus. He came to earth as a being so in love with a human family, so devoted to doing the will of God, that he was willing to endure the breaking of his flesh and the spilling of his blood.

And he did it without complaint or self defense. He was the antitypical Passover lamb, quietly submitting to his own sacrificial death. For Israel, sacrificing the lamb meant salvation for two groups. As you know, as the death angel passed overhead, the firstborn were delivered on the night before the Exodus. It's a picture of the antitypical firstborn of the gospel age being delivered from the Adamic curse ahead of the world.

And then the next day, as you know, the Israelites left Egypt. They journeyed to the promised land, and so it's a prophetic finger pointing to mankind's journey to the promised land of Christ's kingdom

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and through it eventually to eternal life. So when we look at Israel's deliverance, we really see it overshadowed by the greater deliverance that was brought, will be brought through Christ.

In John 6, Jesus gave us an insight into what the memorial bread represents. He said, I am the bread of life, and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. So brethren, we understand that the bread is a beautiful symbol of the ransom price. If we eat his flesh, if we believe in the ransom and consecrate our lives to God, the ransom then is applied on our behalf and we are then justified in the eyes of God.

That symbolism points to the reality of how we can live forever. There's sense to it, there's logic, there's justice to it. Someday the ransom will be applied for the world and Jesus words will be fulfilled when he said, all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth. Imagine that. Try to picture the resurrection process as the billions of humanity start coming back.

I initially think it's going to be maybe a little chaotic, but what a joy to have your parents come back to meet your grandparents, your great grandparents. What a joy this world is going to start experiencing. Man will finally believe that despite what they had been told all their lives, there was only one Savior who could provide a corresponding price for Father Adam. They will see the reality of what love looks like, and most will gladly accept the one who brought them out of the dark stillness of the tomb into the light of the new world. The resurrection of the dead will be conclusive evidence of of who the true God is and what his plan has been for the human family.

But of course, today the application of the ransom merit is rare, and therefore those who experience it are few. So, brethren, as prospective members of the bride of Christ, you are part of an extraordinary class in an extraordinary age.

In 1 Corinthians 10:17, the apostle Paul wrote this from the because there is one loaf, we the many are one body, for we all partake of that one loaf. We are one body because we have had the merit of Christ applied on our behalf. That's the unifying bond that we have with one another. Being called part. To be part of the body is a rare privilege that will never be offered again.

It is our justification that makes us brothers and sisters in Christ.

And that's why the only ones partaking of the memorial emblems tonight should be those who have consecrated their lives and because of that, have the merit of the ransom applied on their behalf. His flesh was broken and his blood was spilt. As he hung on the cross, he could look at people in a different light, knowing that his sacrifice would one day give them life. It's an amazing perspective that knowing God's plan gave Jesus, and it can also help us look at the world in a very different light.

Then, after finishing with the bread, Jesus took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to the disciples, saying, drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Besides being a symbol of Jesus spilled blood, the cup also represents the experiences and sufferings that Jesus endured for three and a half years. We remember the willing Spirit that sacrificed itself not only for the blessing of an unappreciative nation, but for the entire world that had no idea what was being done for them.

When Jesus said that his blood was shed for the remission of sins. The word for remission is interesting. It literally means freedom. We can have the Adamic curse covered by the ransom, but

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we're still sinners even after that. The next work of salvation is to provide freedom from sin, its gradual remission.

That's the ongoing work our Lord is engaged in. Through his guidance and help, we are gradually freed from the sinful tendencies we have all inherited. Although we will never be perfect while still in the flesh. The work of freeing us from sin describes a spiritual development of our new creatures. That's the sanctifying work pictured when we drink the cup of the antitypical blood.

His sacrifice sacrificial life taught him how to help us. Do you think how wise for the heavenly Father provide the second of atonement, the process that will eventually free us from sin.

When Jesus said to the disciples, drink ye all of it. He was also inviting us and them to share in the sin offering as members of his body. Remember when James and John asked Jesus to let them sit on his right hand, on his left hand in glory. Jesus shared the requirement of anyone who wanted to be part of the heavenly class. He he said to them, are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of and to be baptized, Baptism that I am baptized with?

And they said we are able, and so they were, and that's the commitment most of us in this room have also made that changes how we should view this life. There's a lesson to be learned and even the most common event of life. But gremlin, you have to be looking for them.

We have to be aware that every trial, every blessing has something to offer in the way of our spiritual growth. Drinking from the Lord's cup is an exceptional honor. I think that we can hardly comprehend. But brethren, if we are faithful unto death, we will sit with the Lord and we may even be able to work alongside of James and John. We can now see our experiences as an offering for the future sins of the world, making us merciful and sympathetic members of the Melchizedek priesthood.

The apostle Paul understood this calling when he wrote Hebrews 13. He said, Wherefore Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. Now Paul changes the symbolism of the Lord's goat following the bullock out into the camp. But the message is the same.

The Lord wants hearts willing to follow the Lord and to drink any cup that he has poured for us. Whether we are still in the vigor of youth or if we can hardly do any physical activity whatsoever. Wherever we are in life, God is looking for our deep hearted devotion to him and his cause. If we are willing to do that and do our best to suppress the will of the flesh, the cup of experience becomes a cup of joy. Paul called it a cup of blessing.

There are then two aspects of atonement. The ransom removes the Adamic Curse and when applied to justice on our behalf, provides our justification. When applied later for the world, it actually means the raising of the dead. The second aspect, involving the sin offering, again provides two great benefits for you and me. We have a merciful priest who understands the struggles of a narrow way and can help us because he's been there.

That same principle applies to the world when the mediator between God and man is established, and under that arrangement, under God's plan, mankind will be gradually freed from the debilitating bondage of sin, brought to human perfection. So our Lord's suffering and our consecrations will be an essential part of removing sin from the heart of man.

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When Jesus gave us the memorial symbols, he said, do this in remembrance of me. Well brethren, that's our primary focus tonight. We gladly join our hearts with the millions of angels described in Revelation 5 when they said with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessings. Imagine billions of angels saying that together. So tonight brethren, we are gathered to pay tribute to our great Savior.

Perfect flesh broken and the precious blood that was spilled. As Jesus asked the blessing on the bread before he served it to the disciples. We'll call on brother Derek now to ask a blessing on the bread in our consideration of what it represents, and after that then the elders will serve that first memorial symbol for the dark.

Our Father who are in heaven.

We are thankful that we could gather this night this to fulfill wish of our Lord to remember him for couple last weeks. We try to remember his teachings, his example that he gave us all and what he taught us about your kingdom, about your will. Tonight we gathered to remember one particular aspect, his death and cruel cross and everything what this death represent for us and for whole mankind. We see in this death and in this bread our justification and justified but still unperfect. We ask for special blessing and special help from you for us that we can learn how to eat this bread every day of our life.

That we can learn how to get closer to you, how to learn about your will in our life and how to serve you better every day. We ask for this special blessing for us all and for all your children around the world, and we do that in Jesus name. Amen.

Sa.

Has everyone been served? Brethren wanted to thank you and he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new covenant which is dead for many for the remission of sins. Brother Joe now will Seek a blessing on the cup in our consideration of what it represents. Brother Joe.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the privilege we have of partaking of this memorial cup in remembrance of thy beloved son and his sacrifice on behalf of the world of mankind and especially on behalf of ourselves in this acceptable time. We see in this cup an emblem of our Lord's blood which seals our reckoned justification and standing before Thee as adopted sons and daughters. Further, we see in the crushed fruit of the vine which fills this cup the suffering and agony our Lord endured for three and a half years. We also see in this cup our opportunity to likewise be crushed as he was to perform our small sacrifice and fill up our portion of that which is behind of the afflictions of the body of Christ. We also see in this cup the fruit crushed together, just as we are jointly with one another and with all the brethren throughout the age, crushed together in the communion, the common participation of the suffering and the blood of Christ.

And now, as we drink of this symbolic cup, may we be the more reminded of the actual significance of it and and be drawn closer to our Lord and to one another as we renew our determination and our vows of consecration and sacrifice and walk along the narrow way together. We ask all of this in Jesus name. Amen.

Has everyone been served?

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Brethren, we'd like to close the service with hymn number 359.

Jesus didn't instruct us on how some of the details regarding the service, and so we've adopted the custom of following his example on the night he instituted the memorial. The account says when they sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. I think Jesus didn't offer a prayer at this point, probably because his discussion with the disciples would continue as they walked to the garden of Gethsemane, and so we will follow the proceedings of that night, dispense with our closing prayer.

But after our closing prayer again, I encourage you to go to Gethsemane with the Lord and consider what transpired the rest of that night and into the next day. Because the next few hours witnessed the most significant event in human history. M359, and if you're able, brethren, to stand for all four hymns, that would be nice. But you don't have to.

You can. Thank you.

Glory.