

## A Tribute to Karen Beyers and Her King

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Good Afternoon. Family and friends, boys and girls, we gather today to celebrate the eternal life of Mrs. Karen Beyers, our dear Nana, wife, mother, sister, friend, and principal. Our hearts are torn. We grieve because we will miss Karen so much. Yet, we can dance with joy for her perfect healing and her graduation into God's very presence.

How do we know? We know because we believe with certainty that the whole Bible is inspired by the God—His very breath—and that all these things were written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name, because the sum of His word is truth (2 Tim 3:16,17; Jn 20:31, Ps 119:60). Today, I'd like to share with you the incredible story of Karen and her King Jesus, according to the very Words of God.

A long time ago, another very good friend died: our friend Lazarus from the Bible. Jesus said to his sister, Martha... and to Karen... and to you—Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” And then, to demonstrate that His Word is always true and that there is nothing in life ever more sure than the Word of God... Jesus said simply, “Remove the stone. Lazarus come forth.” And the man who had been dead and wrapped and buried for four days walked out of the tomb (Jn 11:25,26, 39, 43).

So, do you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life? Our dear friend, Karen, believed this with every fiber of her life. She poured out her life as a drink offering to teach this Word of truth to the next generations: to her daughters, Brooke and Bri, and to her grandchildren, Arianna, Brayden, and Mackenzie. And she wishes she could teach it to her grandchildren yet to come. And she taught this truth in her churches and to thousands of students in her Christian Schools—but now the time of Karen's departure has come. And though she was too humble to say it for herself, we who knew her well can shout it from the mountaintops:

“She has fought the good fight, she has finished the course, she has kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for her the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will award to her on that day; and not only to Karen, but also to all of you who have loved the appearing of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim 4:6-8).

You see, many years ago Karen knew that she, along with all of humanity, had “sinned and fallen short of God’s glory” (Rom 3:23). In fear and terror, she realized that “the wages of her sin was death” (Rom 6:23) and that she would one day have to pay that price forever. She recognized that she was dead already in her trespasses and sins.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved her, even when she was dead in her sins, made Karen alive together with Christ (by grace she was saved), and then God raised her up with Him, and seated her with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward Karen in Christ Jesus.

For by grace Karen was saved through faith; and that not of herself, it was... it is, the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph 2-8). For the gift of God is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23).

And so, when God chose Karen, and offered Himself to her to be her Papa, and wrestled with her heart, she one day accepted His free gift of eternal life. At that moment, Karen began a wonderful journey to fulfill His purpose for her life, and that purpose was “that what was mortal and temporary in Karen would be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared her for this very purpose is God, who gave to her the Holy Spirit as a pledge” (2 Cor 5:4-5).

And, oh, the fruit of the Holy Spirit that God produced from Karen’s life. Did you taste this fruit for yourselves from Karen’s tree? If you knew Karen for more than a minute, I know you experienced this divine fruit: Take a moment to picture Karen as I pronounce the fruit of the Spirit: “For the fruit of the Spirit in Karen was love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” How appropriate it was for her to initiate the ROC Awards Program at school to recognize these and other divine characteristics present in her precious elementary students. Because, you see, “those who belong to Jesus Christ have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires and since they live by the Spirit, they keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-25).

Because since Karen “is in Christ, she is a **new creature**; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled Karen to Himself through Christ, and gave her the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He committed to Karen the word of

reconciliation. (Didn't she do well?) Therefore, she was an ambassador for Christ, as though God were entreating you through her; she now begs **you** on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled to God!**" (2 Cor 5:17-20)

Karen's specific ministry of reconciliation was in teaching God's Words to the next generation. God commissioned her with her life verse of Isaiah 50:4, "The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, to know the Word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught." And as the Lord Himself taught Karen through His Word and His Spirit, she was so faithful to teach others.

Of course, there were many other fruits in Karen's life, including her favorite earthly fruit: apples. If you knew Karen for any length of time, you knew that she loved apples... apple quilts, apple pictures, apple paintings, carved apples, paper apples, apple-shaped anythings. And one of her favorite verses was also a reflection of her life: "A word aptly spoken is like **apples** of gold in settings of silver (Prov 25:11). Wasn't this just Karen? How many beautiful words she spoke to us that encouraged us, disciplined us, challenged us, and forgave us... like **apples** of gold in settings of silver. Or how about these verses: "Keep me, [Oh, God], as the **apple** of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings" (Ps 17:8) or "Keep my commands and you will live; guard my teachings as the **apple** of your eye," says the Lord (Prov 7:2).

So, since Karen became alive in Christ several decades ago, what was happening—what was her reality—all these years on earth before she went to Heaven? Again, the very words of God our Father and Creator are very clear. "For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the same One who has shone in her heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But she had this treasure—this very Light—in her earthen vessel—in her earth suit, her body, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from herself;

We know Karen was afflicted in every way, but not crushed; she was perplexed, but never despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; she always carried about in her body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus would be made manifest in her mortal body. She **knew** that He who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead would also raise her with Jesus and would present Karen with you! (2 Cor 4:6-14) Won't that be an exciting day? This will be the day when Jesus raises

Karen up from the dead and then you up from the dead and then presents you both to His Father! WhooHoo!

Therefore, do not lose heart, because though our outer man is *decaying* day by day, yet our inner man is being *renewed* day by day. For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are invisible; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are invisible are eternal (2 Cor 4: 16-18). So set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth (Col 3:2). Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Seek first His Kingdom (Matt 6:20:33).

For we **know** that if Karen's earthly tent, her body, which was her house was broken and torn down, she now has a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor 5:1). For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, **then** will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?" (I Cor 15: 53-55). Gone! Conquered by the blood and power of the Lord Jesus!

Therefore, family and friends of Karen, by the very power of God's Word, we "do not want you to be uninformed about Karen whose body died last week. We have grieved and we will grieve, again, but not as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him Karen Beyers who died in Jesus.

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, will not precede Karen. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and Karen and all the others dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Therefore, [when you grieve], comfort one another with these words" (I Thess 4:13-18).

As I complete these thoughts on Karen's life with some of our favorite and comforting words from God, I need to be direct with you. If Karen knew you, she loved you. That's just the way it always was with her. She was worried about you. She would try to solve your problems. No matter her pain, she would find a way to bless and encourage you. She would pray with you and for you.

Most importantly, she would want you to share the treasure of Light that she carried in her body since childhood... the very Light that guarantees her a place in Heaven with our heavenly Father. She wants **you** to claim Jesus as your only Lord and Savior. How fitting it would be, if in her very last graduation ceremony today, she could award you a diploma guaranteeing your entrance to heaven... so that you might one day arrive in the great throne room trembling for your unworthiness, just to be gathered up to find rest forever in your Daddy's arms through the blood of Jesus Christ.

You see, God called Karen and her husband, John, to minister to the broken and the broken-hearted. To be God's servants to offer people 2<sup>nd</sup> chances... and John and Karen were born for it and loved it. Karen forgave others almost as easily as she drank water. This, because the King of Light and Forgiveness actually lived in her tent.. God is the God of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and 7000<sup>th</sup> chances.

Dear friend, if you have been running from God. Please stop running today. If you have been wrestling with God, it means God wants you. He loves you. He is pursuing you. He has chosen you for eternity. Karen would beg you today: **be reconciled to God**. His love is incredible. His life lasts forever. So, please, here is another chance for you. Take the offer of a God who is full of loving-kindness. All He wants is to rescue you from eternal death and suffering. Will you be saved today? Have you wandered away? Read the Bible—the book of *John* is a great place to start. Talk to me or someone else whom you know who loves Jesus. Getting to heaven has nothing to do with being good or religious. It has only to do with Jesus.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one can come to the Father but by me!**" (Jn 14:6)

My friend, on behalf of Karen and her family, I say to you: God's "Word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart—that is the Word of faith which I am preaching today, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in

your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Bible says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; for 'whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved'" (Rom 10:8-13)

When you call on the name of the Lord to deny yourself and follow Him, all the joy, all the fruit, all the abundant life that we knew to be Karen.... All these will also be yours in Jesus Christ as He comes to live in your tent. God will give you everything pertaining to life and godliness. And, then, when your body falls asleep for the last time, you and your family can be just as confident in the promises of our faithful God: you will live forever with Him. And as we fix our hope completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, we can look forward to our Master's greeting:

'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' (Matt 25:21)

And we will join our dear sister, Karen, in singing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty who was and who is and who is to come." And then myriads and myriads and thousands and thousands of angels will join us around the throne with the living creatures and the elders, and together we will sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." And then every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them will say with us, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever" (Rev 4:8, 5:11-13).

"Then we will see a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there will no longer be any sea. Then we will see the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And we will hear a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away'" (Rev 21:1-4)

“In God’s presence there will be fullness of joy; in His right hand there will be pleasures forever” (Ps 16:11). “Surely, goodness and mercy will follow Karen all the days of her life, and Karen, and all God’s people, will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Amen!” (Ps 23:6).