

**Funeral Sermon Notes**  
**Rich Hovde**  
**7-25-2008**  
**Pastor Bob Adkins**



*Christ Centered, Holy Spirit Empowered, Love Focused*

First let us remember that we are gathered here today not because Rich has died, rather, we are gathered here today because Rich has lived; We are not here to honor the death of a man we all loved so dearly, we are here to celebrate the life of this wonderful man who has touched so many lives, in so many ways.

I only had the privilege of meeting Rich once, however during my visitation with the family this past week I have come to know him well. Those of you that have had earthly fellowship with Rich can assuredly testify of his Love for God.

Rich has gone on to his eternal reward and is enjoying eternal life with his Lord.

As family and friends, we all share in our grief over the loss of father, son, brother-in-law, niece, nephew, friend and fellow Christian. Each of us will go through the stages of grief in our own way and in our own timing. It would be inappropriate for us to console one another in grief by indicating that this untimely death was somehow Gods' will or to tell another in their grief that God took his life so Rich could be with God now. You see, it is not god that wills early death to any of us, this is the work of the father of lies himself. But even so, we can rejoice in the fact that Rich is now in fellowship with his Saviour, Jesus Christ, and sharing in the almightily Love of God in ways we can only strive to obtain.

As we go through the stages of our grief, time of denial, anger – possibly even with God, bargaining, depression and ultimately acceptance please strive to think of how Rich would desire us to look upon his death.

Let us consider: What would he want us to do today and in the days to come? How would he desire us to act in our grief? Those of you that know him will agree with me when I say, that he would want us to follow God and the instructions God has given us in the Bible.

What does the Bible then tell us?

**Psalms 116: <sup>15</sup> Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.**

What is precious for God is not death, absolutely not. God does not rejoice in the effects of sin or the curse of sin. The original sin in the garden of Eden is what resulted in death – the curse of Sin. Gods’ original plan for man was for us to live in the Garden of Eden which contained the tree of Life. After death then entered into the equation, then a new plan for us to obtain eternal life became necessary. To this end, God, in the resurrection on the person of our Lord Jesus Christ has conquered death and holds full dominion over death, God hates death;

So what then is precious to God? It is the natural death of his saints. Why? Because we then enter into a new realm, free of sickness, heartache, pain & sorrow eternally being in the presence and joy of the Lord. Here in our presence we have the honor of one of the Lord’s precious saints – our brother, Rich. He was, and still is; a servant of the Most High God and Rich was and still is precious in Gods’ sight.

The word saint is not used to describe a person who is perfect; it is used to describe a fellow brother or sister in Christ. In fact, the early Christians would address each other as saints. To be a saint does not mean one is perfect, it simply means that our sins have been forgiven, it means that we who are saints enjoy a special relationship with the Lord God – and like our brother Rich, it also means we will live again in the resurrection, forever in the presence of God.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-57** Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.<sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.<sup>55</sup> O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?<sup>56</sup> The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.<sup>57</sup> But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the book of 1 Corinthians Paul tells us how each of us experience at least one kind of birth, and for those who are believers, as our brother Rich is, two births: The physical and then the spiritual. We see that there is a perishable body, a physical birth that each of us experience, and with those that give their life over to Jesus Christ there is the spiritual birth... what Paul calls the imperishable. He tells us that it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. We all here know Rich in his natural body, and in time we will know his in his spiritual body. Scripture doesn’t tell us exactly what having a spiritual body means, but we can be assured of this: There is no doubt that we will recognize Rich and he will also recognize us. We will visit, we will laugh, we will all be together again in the full presence of God.

Now Paul tells us that we are not to be ignorant, like those who have no hope. What he means is those people we know who, sadly and painfully, think that this right here is the end. They would say, sorry Rich, this is the end of it all. Ignorance is certainly not bliss, it is despair. Rich and I had conversations where we talked about eternal life and the certainty that our spiritual life is a reality. Rich was no fool. You know him, he wouldn’t be taken in by ignorance, or by a loss of hope. In fact, the family shared with me

Wednesday evening of how Rich was so proud that he now had a place of his own for the first time in his life. He was so thankful to Gods' blessings that made this a reality in his life. You may think, praise God – at least he enjoyed a great blessing from God on this earth before he went onto glory. But I wonder if we would have been this proud and thankful for the things Rich was enthusiastically thankful for. You see, the place that Rich was bragging about for most of us we would have been complaining about. It was a small, years old camper that he put a major investment into, \$200.00 purchase price and the cost of materials for him to fix it up by himself. This story made me know Rich more than anything else that I have heard about him to date. This spoke to me of his humility, grace, love of life, and most of all Love and thankfulness to his Heavenly Father. This truly encompasses of what it means to be a true “son of GOD”.

Let us examine his life more closely. How did Rich live up to the Biblical instructions of how one should conduct themselves as a true son of God.

- ***He loved the Lord and loved to talk about the Lord.***  
**Deuteronomy 6:5 (KJV)** And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.
- ***He knew the truth about Christ.***  
**John 11:25 (KJV)** Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
- ***He knew where he was going.***  
**John 14:1-3 (KJV)** <sup>Jn 14:1 (KJV)</sup> Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.
- ***He Believed***  
**John 3:17 (KJV)** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
- ***He has a new home.***  
**Philippians 3:20-21 (KJV)** <sup>Php 3:20 (KJV)</sup> For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>21</sup>Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

We can share in that same hope if we know Christ, and believe, and ask him to save us.

**1 Peter 1:3-5 (KJV)** <sup>1Pe 1:3 (KJV)</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

And God will comfort us until we see his again.

**Revelation 21:4 (KJV)** And 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.

What does it take to know Christ and the power of his resurrection? Could it be as simple of living a good life? Or is it very hard to obtain and therefore we must do many great works so we ensure we make it to heaven. Actually it is neither of these.

What does scripture tell us?

**Romans 10:9 & 13** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

**1 John 5:12** He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

**John 14:6** Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

**John 20:31** But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

So consider this, What can you do to best celebrate the Life of Rich? That has a simple answer. Become a Son of God!