

Suggested New Testament Readings for Funerals

Reading 1

A reading from the first letter of St John 4.7-12

My dear friends, let us love one another, since love is from God and everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever fails to love does not know God, because God is love. This is the revelation of God's love for us, that God sent his only Son into the world that we might have life through him. Love consists in this: it is not we who loved God, but God loved us and sent his Son to atone our sins. My dear friends, if God loved us so much, we too should love one another. No one has ever seen God, but as long as we love one another God remains in us and his love comes to its perfection in us.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 2

A reading from the first letter of St John

3.1-2

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 3

A reading from the 1st letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians.

5.1-6, 9-11

I don't need to write you about the time or date when all this will happen.²You surely know that the Lord's return will be as a thief coming at night. People will think they are safe and secure. But destruction will suddenly strike them like the pains of a woman about to give birth. And they won't escape.

My dear friends, you don't live in darkness, and so that day won't surprise you like a thief. You belong to the light and live in the day. We don't live in the night or belong to the dark. Others may sleep, but we should stay awake and be alert. God doesn't intend to punish us, but wants us to be saved by our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ died for us, so that we could live with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes. That's why you must encourage and help each other, just as you are already doing.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 4

A reading from the First letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

15.51-57

Now I am going to tell you a mystery: we are not all going to fall asleep, but we are all going to be changed, instantly, in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds. The trumpet is going to sound, and then the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed, because this perishable nature of ours must put on imperishability, this mortal nature must put on immortality.

⁵⁴And after this perishable nature has put on imperishability and this mortal nature has put on immortality, then will the words of scripture come true: Death is swallowed up in victory. Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin comes from the Law. Thank God, then, for giving us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 5

A reading from the First letter of St Paul to the Corinthian

15:20-28.

Christ has been raised from the dead, as the first-fruits of all who have fallen asleep. As it was by one man that death came, so through one man has come the resurrection of the dead.²² Just as all die in Adam, so in Christ all will be brought to life;²³ but all of them in their proper order: Christ the first-fruits, and next, at his coming, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he will hand over the kingdom to God the Father, having abolished every principality, every ruling force and power. For he is to be king until he has made his enemies his footstool, and the last of the enemies to be done away with is death, for he has put all things under his feet. But when it is said everything is subjected, this obviously cannot include the One who subjected everything to him. When everything has been subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subjected to the One who has subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 6

A reading from the First letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians

4.13-18

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have fallen asleep, to make sure that you do not grieve for them, as others do who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that in the same way God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. We can tell you this from the Lord's own teaching, that we who are still alive for the Lord's coming will not have any advantage over those who have fallen asleep. At the signal given by the voice of the Archangel and the trumpet of God, the Lord himself will come down from heaven; those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and only after that shall we who remain alive be taken up in the clouds, together with them, to meet the Lord in the air. This is the way we shall be with the Lord forever. With such thoughts as these, then, you should encourage one another.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 7

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

15.20-28

He who raised up the Lord Jesus will raise us up with Jesus in our turn, and bring us to himself—and you as well. You see, everything is for your benefit, so that as grace spreads, so, to the glory of God, thanksgiving may also overflow among more and more people. That is why we do not waver; indeed, though this outer human nature of ours may be falling into decay, at the same time our inner human nature is renewed day by day. The temporary, light burden of our hardships is earning us for ever an utterly incomparable, eternal weight of glory, since what we aim for is not visible but invisible. Visible things are transitory, but invisible things eternal.

For we are well aware that when the tent that houses us on earth is folded up, there is a house for us from God, not made by human hands but everlasting, in the heavens.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 8

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

5.1.6-10

We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. We live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 9

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy

4:6-8

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of justice, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 10

A reading from the second letter of St Paul to Timothy

2.8-13

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him,
we will also live with him;
if we endure,
we will also reign with him.
If we disown him,
he will also disown us;
if we are faithless,
he will remain faithful,
for he cannot disown himself.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 11

A reading from the 2nd letter of St Paul to Timothy

4:6-8

As for me, my life is already being poured away as a libation, and the time has come for me to depart. I have fought the good fight to the end; I have run the race to the finish; I have kept the faith; all there is to come for me now is the crown of uprightness which the Lord, the upright judge, will give to me on that Day; and not only to me but to all those who have longed for his appearing.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 12

A reading from the book of Revelation

21:1-7

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. I also saw the holy city, a new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away."

The one who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." Then he said, "Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true." He said to me, "They are accomplished. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water. The victor will inherit these gifts, and I shall be his God, and he will be my son.

This is the Word of the Lord

Reading 13

A reading from the letter to the Ephesians. 1:3-6, 11-12.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.

In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 14

A reading from the First letter of St John

3.1-2

You must see what great love the Father has lavished on us by letting us be called God's children—which is what we are! The reason why the world does not acknowledge us is that it did not acknowledge him. My dear friends, we are already God's children, but what we shall be in the future has not yet been revealed. We are well aware that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is.

This is the word of the Lord

Reading 15

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

3.20-21

But we are citizens of heaven and are eagerly waiting for our Saviour to come from there. Our Lord Jesus Christ has power over everything, and he will make these poor bodies of ours like his own glorious body.

This is the word of the Lord.

Reading 16

A reading from the Book of Revelation

14.13

I, John, heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this down: Happy are those who die in the Lord, Happy indeed, the spirit says; now they can rest for ever after their work, since their good works go with them."

This is the Word of the Lord

Reading 17

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Romans.

5.5-11

Hope which will not let us down, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. When we were still helpless, at the appointed time, Christ died for sinful man. You could hardly find anyone ready to die even for someone upright; though it is just possible that, for a really good person, someone might undertake to die. So it is proof of God's own love for us, that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. How much more can we be sure, therefore, that, now that we have been justified by his death, we shall be saved through him from the retribution of God. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more can we be sure that, being now reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. What is more, we are filled with exultant trust in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation.

This is the word of the Lord.

Reading 18

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Romans.

5.17-21

For if, by the transgression of one person, death came to reign through that one, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of justification come to reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ. In conclusion, just as through one transgression condemnation came upon all, so through one righteous act acquittal and life came to all. For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous. The law entered in so that transgression might increase but, where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through justification for eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Reading 19

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Romans.

6.3-9

When we were baptized into Christ Jesus, we were baptized into his death. So by our baptism into his death we were buried with him, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glorious power, we too should begin living a new life.

If we have been joined to him by dying a death like his, so we shall be by a resurrection like his; realizing that our former selves were crucified with him, so that the sinful body which belonged to sin should be destroyed and we should be freed from the slavery of sin. Someone who has died, of course, no longer has to answer for sin.

But we believe that, if we died with Christ, then we shall live with him too. We know that Christ has been raised from the dead and will never die again. Death has no power over him any more.

This is the word of the Lord.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Romans.

8.31-39

After saying this, what can we add? If God is for us, who can be against us? Since he did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for the sake of all of us, then can we not expect that with him he will freely give us all his gifts? Who can bring any accusation against those that God has chosen? When God grants saving justice who can condemn? Are we not sure that it is Christ Jesus, who died—yes and more, who was raised from the dead and is at God’s right hand—and who is adding his plea for us? Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ—can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food and clothing, or threats or violence; No; we come through all these things triumphantly victorious, by the power of him who loved us. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence and nothing still to come, nor any power, nor the heights nor the depths, nor any created thing whatever, will be able to come between us and the love of God, known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the word of the Lord.

Reading 21

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans. 14.7

For none of us lives for himself and none of us dies for himself; while we are alive, we are living for the Lord, and when we die, we die for the Lord: and so, alive or dead, we belong to the Lord. It was for this purpose that Christ both died and came to life again: so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. All of us will have to stand in front of the judgement-seat of God: as scripture says: By my own life says the Lord, every knee shall bow before me, every tongue shall give glory to God. It is to God, then, that each of us will have to give an account of himself.

This is the word of the Lord.