

Prayer for Grief and Gratitude for Reggie Jackson Sr.

April 29, 2020

We join together in prayer knowing that our Reggie's body is being cremated this morning. Since we cannot be together physically in this difficult time of social distancing, the Spirit of God joins our hearts helping us to pray with groans deeper than our words can express. Dear Lord, send your Spirit, full of comfort, this morning and hear our prayers.

OPENING WORDS

In the stillness of this April morning we turn to God who is our beginning and our end. From dust we have been made and to dust we return.

We gather to thank God for our friend Reggie Jackson Sr.

We gather recognize for just a moment the gift he has been to this world, to his family and to all of us.

And we gather to commit his earthly body to the elements in full confidence that neither life nor death can separate any of us from the love of God we know in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PRAYER

Gracious God, your steadfast love endures forever, your faithfulness to all generations. Trustworthy in all your words, and gracious in all your deeds, minister now to us in our grief. Speak to our hearts your word of comfort. Touch us into hope through the promises of holy Word. Enfold us within the fellowship of all who share our sorrow. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes from above. In quietness and peace we wait upon you. Amen.

PSALM 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;

though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
“Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

THE WORDS OF JESUS

Eternal God, in our sorrow we seek the comfort of your presence. Let your Word be a lamp to our weary feet, and a light to our path. Spirit of Comfort, enter our troubled hearts as we listen to these words of Jesus from John chapter 14.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no

longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” (John 14:1–4, 18–19, 25–27)

CELEBRATION OF MEMORIES

We hold Reggie who is now separated from us tightly in our hearts in gratitude and love. Though we cannot recall him to life, we can remember him and fix his memory within our own hearts. We can celebrate the fullness of his life, with all his strengths and weaknesses, goodness and shortcomings; and rejoice in the ties that bind us one to another. In this spirit let us take a moment to observe our memories. In silence I invite you to remember Reggie with love and gratitude.

(Take a few minutes to bring your memories to mind and hold them in love and gratitude)

Loving God, gather together all our memories, and treasure them in your eternal mind where nothing is ever forgotten. We thank you for all the goodness and loving-kindness you have bestowed upon Reggie in this earthly life, and pray that now beyond the bounds of death you will bless him with the gift of eternal fellowship with you and all your saints; through Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit now and always. Amen.

COMMITTAL

Having commended Reggie into the hands of God, we commit his body to the elements; confident that the one who has made us shall not leave us in the dust, but in Christ give us the victory of eternal life. We look to the final day when, as the scriptures promise, God “will wipe every tear from their eyes. There shall be an end to death, and to mourning and crying and pain, for the old order has passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

The Lord hath promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

CLOSING PRAYER

Eternal God, we thank you for Reggie. We ask that you be with us, and especially with Pat, Reggie Jr. and Gregory, in the days ahead as sorrow and loneliness weave their shadows around all us.

Restore our hope, dear Lord, through the power of the resurrection, and give us the strength to carry on. We pray that your grace and love will fill our hearts and our homes in this time of need. Grant us your peace. Keep us ever in your love, O God. Support us and strengthen us that we might be Support and strength for those who need us. Amen.

BLESSING

And now, my friends, take courage. Go today in the knowledge that the loving God is your eternal friend and companion. And may the peace of God which is beyond our understanding guard our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.