

January 22nd, 2023 Salomon Correa, Maggie Franco, Andrea Prime, Suzy Prime and Ava Luplow, five of our dear friends (three former JHBC students, one sibling and a friend) were killed in a car accident near Sinclair, Wyoming on their way back home from visiting us for a week.

They had spent this past week sitting in on classes and getting to know this year's student body, as well as catching up with staff who were previous classmates to three of them.

All five attended Faith Bible Fellowship in North Little Rock, Arkansas, a church of beloved brothers and sisters in Christ who we have come to love beyond words.

It is with inexpressible joy that we tell you that our friends had placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. As a result, we know they are currently with Him, a reality we are quite envious of.

We know from God's Word in Colossians 1:16 that *"by Him (Jesus) all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him."*

Because our friends knew they were created by and for Him they lived and breathed this to those who would hear. It was and is their desire to proclaim Christ's glory (splendor). It's fitting that sharing their hope in Jesus Christ is the best way we can honor them.

Our friends knew that we live in a broken world in need of being reconciled (made right) with the One who had made them (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Why is this world broken? It's because of sin, namely ours, which has separated us from Christ which leads to spiritual and physical death (Isaiah 59:2; Romans 5:12; 6:23). The requirement for us to be reconciled to God, is to be perfect and holy. The bad news, besides the fact that our sins have separated us from Him, is that we don't have the ability to do this. The best we have to offer is not acceptable to God (Isaiah 64:6). Because a man (Adam) initiated sin, which resulted in all of us becoming sinners, God required a Man (Jesus) to pay the penalty for our sins (1 Timothy 2:5-6a). Since no man is perfect and is able live to God's standard, God in His grace and mercy sent His Son (the second Person of the One triune God) to accomplish this for all who would believe in Him (Hebrews 2:17; 1 Peter 3:18). The Good News is that God has made a way for us to be reconciled through the righteousness of His Son, which is applied to all who believe in Him (Romans 4:5-8; Colossians 1:21 & 22).

What must we do to be reconciled to God? God's Word gives the answer.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

³ For I handed down to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Romans 10:8-13 ⁸ *But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; ¹³ for "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Because Jesus lives our friends' temporary departure from us creates a fraction of the pain compared to the infinite joy there will be in eternity with our Savior, "the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:2

There is no doubt that what they are currently seeing through their eyes is unspeakable joy, as they have finished the race set before them and are now enjoying fellowship with their Savior.

Writer/theologian (Tim Challies) who lost his son approximately two years ago said it so well:

"While our loved ones have left us, they have not ceased to be. They've simply gone on ahead. Because Jesus rose again, they will rise again. Because Jesus conquered death, they will conquer death. Because Jesus lives, they live. And so we grieve. We grieve in times of loss and our grief may last many days, weeks, or years. The pain is real, the sorrow is real, so the grief is real. But we grieve hopefully because we are convinced we grieve temporarily.."

Ephesians 2:4-9 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as indeed the rest of mankind do, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose from the dead, so also God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. 15 For we say this to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who remain, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

Those who would like to donate to the families can send it via CashApp at \$FBF9800 or by mailing checks made out to Faith Bible Fellowship at 9800 Northbrook Dr., Sherwood, AR, 72120.