

## Stuart Eulogy

I met Stuart about 12 years ago here at CBC. I remember at the end of our morning service the first words he said to me (and it was question he would ask on each occasion he came here, and not just to me, but to everyone!) dinna? dinna? Of course I understood, after a while, he wanted to know what you were having for Sunday lunch!

**He loved his food - and we know he loved Chips.** He loved his Coffee and he loved a McDonalds McFlurry as well.

Something that was obvious to all that knew Stuart **was his caring and loving nature;** I am told he would always ask his carers if they were alright? Even if he himself wasn't feeling well.

I am told he always wanted to know if Jen his next door neighbour was ok, He loved to get her news paper from the shop for her. And enquired when Allen over the road was back from work.

Of course Stuart memory was phenomenal - He would never forget anything you told him, and if his care staff told him something he would ask them over and over about it and if he was ever asked to remind you of anything - he always did.

Stuart loved to listen to music, so much so, that the care staff turned his spare room into a music room; He loved Elvis and Johnny Cash. Stuart loved to get dressed up in his best clothes for singing and dancing at the discos.

The other great love of his life was Wolves football club and we remember here if a visiting preacher dared to mention another club - Stuart would call out with disapproval 'Wolves' 'Wolves' he took such pride in wearing the yellow and black colours of his favourite team.

Stuart would love to talk about his sister Lorraine and Charlie and his wider family.

He always thought of the Bluebird carers as part of his family and when they gave him his own bluebird fleece he wore that also with great pride.

**And to Stuart's carers & social workers and his sister Lorraine and the family, a big thank you from everyone for the love and care you showed him throughout the years and for the way you looked after him.**

Stuart had so many qualities, but something we noticed here at CBC was his precious childlike love of the Lord although he couldn't put it into words.

That childlikeness was evident when one of his carers remembered his face on a Christmas morning, "like a little child that kept waking every half an hour to ask if Father Christmas had been - and the way his eyes lit up when he saw all his presents"

And also the way he played pranks on the care staff, throwing water over them or hiding and jumping out shouting boo!

Stuart life had lessons to teach us all about simplicity and childlikeness, traits which sadly we have lost today, in our 'grown up' competitive and aggressive world, a world where so many are engrossed in themselves and their own importance, so that being like a child today is really counter-cultural.

But God's ways are often **the polar opposite** to the world ways - listen to these words from the Apostle Paul

*"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. <sup>28</sup> God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one may boast before him".*

And Jesus says:

*Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*

Children are, to a great extent, completely devoid of ambition, pride, and self importance they are usually humble and teachable. But above all they are dependent – dependent on others to meet their needs – just like Stuart.

To a child, a state of dependence is perfectly natural. They never think they can face life by themselves. A child is perfectly content to be utterly dependent on those who love them and care for them.

And It seems throughout the gospels Jesus seemed to favour the underdog, those who could admit their need, their dependence on God and ask for help.

Jesus says in Matt 5 *'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth".*

In chapter 9 of Matthew Jesus pointing to himself as the great physician says “**the healthy do not need a doctor only the sick**”

When Jesus says ‘the sick’ here, Jesus means those that are physically, emotionally, or spiritually in need, and that would include us all in some way - if we owned up to it.

**Death in much of a sense is a wakeup call for the living!** To wake us out of our apathy and disregard for spiritual things and make us think about the foundations of our lives, the things we depend on and those things we put our trust in.

To ask questions about our lives, our mortality, about our destiny after this life.

It’s a tragedy today that many don’t seem to ask these questions, people feel so self sufficient, so apparently ‘happy with their lot in this life’ that they say they don’t need God!

How mistaken we are if we say that. We **not only** need God in this life to give us purpose and meaning and hope. But also in the life to come, the truth is;

If you don’t know Jesus, you will be in for a big shock when you leave this life, and then it will be too late! - The Bible says ‘*it is for a man to die once and face judgement*’.

To be humble like a child and to enter the kingdom of God on Jesus terms we must regain our dependence on Gods Provision and Protection for our lives.

I am convinced Stuart is in the arms of Jesus because he had that childlike faith and that dependence on the mercy of God to keep him safe and to meet his needs in this world.

It may be more difficult for the rest of us to admit that need & dependence.

But if we are to enter the kingdom of God all of us must be converted: From pride to humility – from self sufficiency to dependence.

And Jesus tells us unless we are entirely, inwardly changed, we cannot enter the kingdom of God, Jesus said to Nicodemus ‘you must be born again’, thus must everyone be converted in this life, or they can never enter into life eternal.

We have a banner in the car park (you can’t miss it really its 16 ft long) with these words from Jesus ‘*Come to Me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest*’ I can’t think of a better invitation to anyone.

Come to Jesus - He is waiting for each of us to give up our striving and independence and the burdens we carry around - and find rest - rest from our endless round of self

seeking, the preoccupation with ourselves and pursuit of things that do not last or have any eternal value.

If we would only accept the fact that our dependence is on God, rather than turning away from Him, a new strength and a new peace would enter their lives.

As we lay Stuart to rest today. Someone who found dependence and trust in those around him - you can depend on God to carry you through every part of this life and into eternity – if you will only turn to him and admit your need.

Jesus says *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me”* (Revelation 3:20) Jesus says, the first step for us all is - making the choice to open that door and let Him in.

*Dear God, help us to admit our vulnerability and need so that, rather than striving for greatness according to the world’s standards, we might turn to you for the love and acceptance we all crave. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*