

4.7 Kenneth A. Dawson



Ken's Choice

Leatherwood Dahlias

Maggie Valley/Waynesville, North Carolina

Romans 5: 8

“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

John 11: 25

“Jesus said to her [Martha the sister of Mary and Lazarus] ‘I am the Resurrection, and the Life. He that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.’ ”

Kenneth A. Dawson

October 27, 1935 – June 13, 2023

I am Bob Rapalje, I'm Kenneth's brother-in-law—I'm better known as "Martha's Bob"! Kenneth is a very good friend of mine, since I came into the family about 50 years ago. We are here to celebrate Kenneth's life and share our memories of him. I want to thank Lynn for giving me the opportunity to lead the service today, to speak to you, and to share some of my own thoughts.

Let's begin with a scripture from **1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18**.

"We do not grieve as those who have no hope! We do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep [die], or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. . . . And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words."

We DO have hope, but more about that later. Let's talk about Kenneth! Don't say anything right away, but I want you to just think about this: What do you think was Kenneth's FAVORITE thing to do? Now after thinking for a minute, tell us what you think, and maybe tell us a memory or story that you have of him.

What do you think was Kenneth's FAVORITE thing to do?

(No particular order was established since it varied at different times of his life!)

1. Fishing
2. Growing fruit and vegetables
3. Hunting
4. Shopping at Costco
5. Spending time with his German shepherds
6. Fireworks
7. Giving away fruit from his grove
8. Watching his Gators beat the Georgia Bulldogs (Haha! Never mind Florida State!)
9. Being outdoors—hiking with Florida Trails
10. A little girl named Georgia—his great granddaughter

What are your other thoughts/memories of Kenneth?

These are a few of my thoughts: Kenneth was indecisive. Did he used to have a sign, "I think I'm indecisive, but I'm not sure."?

Kenneth's death was very sad to me because for the last years of his life, I hardly ever got to see him, due to the health issues of Martha and me. However, from the time of his stroke in 2017 until COVID, I was able to see him quite a lot!

As you know, he was very independent, even able to live in his house on his own and ALL ALONE after the stroke. Because we lived close to him, we were always glad to help him, especially in those last couple of years that he lived at home. When Kenneth couldn't get his TV to work, he called me to come help. If I couldn't figure it out, I called Philip and Christina who also lived nearby. They also invited him to family activities. Martha would sent food, or I would stop and pick up a sub for Kenneth's dinner a couple of times per week.

Knowing that Kenneth was alone, I tried to spend some time visiting with him. I always tried to focus on important things, like who was going to win the Florida/Florida State game. Of course, he was an avid Gator fan, and I am a Seminole. I remember one time we were in town together each of us wearing our respective team shirts. Someone saw me helping Kenneth down the steps, and he wanted to take a picture of us! He could not believe a SEMINOLE fan would be helping a GATOR fan down the stairs! He was amazed to see that we, Seminole and Gator fans, were friends, and that we actually LIKED one another!

Another important thing we talked about was Heaven, and what it would take to get there. We agreed that his parents and my parents were already in Heaven, and I explained how in the book of Hebrews, it talks about a "cloud of witnesses," a cheering section of people who are already in Heaven that are watching us and cheering us on to do the right things (that is, to love God and treat people with love and kindness!). Tears would form in his eyes as he remembered his Mother and Dad, remembering that he himself had not lived as a Christian. But then I reminded him that this is why the Lord used Lynn and the doctors and nurses to bring Kenneth back from the edge of death, so he would have time to get himself right with God and fix some errant relationships, especially with the people in his family. I explained to Kenneth that the Christian faith is the ONLY religion in the world that has a Saviour who actually died a painful death on a cross to save all

who trust Him. Our salvation is NOT what we have done for God, but what God has done for us! When we get to the Pearly Gates, and St. Peter asks, “Why should I let you in to Heaven?”, the correct answer is, “because of what Jesus did for me on Calvary.” The President of the United States might say, “I was the President!” St. Peter would say, “No! I’m sorry! That’s not enough!” Then, I would remind Kenneth, “Why do you think Lynn and the doctors brought you back and saved your life? You get something most people do NOT get! You got a SECOND chance!” Most people do NOT get a second chance! Second chances come by PRAYER. Kenneth’s second chance happened as a result of DECADES of prayer by his Mother and Dad, and FINALLY the answer came!! NEVER GIVE UP!! NEVER STOP PRAYING FOR LOVED ONES!!!

After talking with Elton and Gwen Love, we have concluded that there is NO doubt: Other friends have confirmed that they prayed with Kenneth to receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Kenneth belongs to Jesus, and he left us just in time to celebrate the 89th wedding anniversary of his parents Adolph and Vergie in Heaven on June 13. Our God is a MERCIFUL and LOVING God!! With God, TIMING is EVERYTHING!!

I believe when God-fearing people die, they are “gathered to their family” in Heaven. Do you know what that means? It means that while we are having a funeral here, being sad that we have lost a very dear friend or family member, that there is a WELCOME HOME party going on in Heaven for the person we have lost! But, don’t let anyone fool you! According to John 14:6, Jesus said: **“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life! No one comes to the Father but by ME!”** So HEAVEN, and therefore this welcome home party, is only possible because of what Jesus did at Calvary.

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, why don’t you do it now! No matter what you have done, ask Jesus to forgive you and give you a NEW start in life! He will do it! Then find yourself a Bible believing church, read the Bible starting with the books of John and Romans to find out who Jesus is and what He did for you and me on Calvary, and try to spend time with other people who love Jesus!

[Return to homepage](#)