Let us pray,

Lord, remind us that we are part of the company of all of your saints. As we remember those who have passed, guide us to see our part in your eternity.

Amen.

_____

When someone passes away, we have this intrinsic desire to talk well about the person.

We want to remember only the good parts.

We want to be grateful for their life.

Even if our friend or loved one who passed, was an imperfect person, we want to remember them as if they were perfect.

We want to speak well of the dead.

_____

But why?

Why do we want to change their story?

Does death remove a lifetime of sin?

You know, I was trained to speak about God and God's promises during funeral services.

That eulogies are for the family, and sermons are for the pastor.

And to be honest, I try to keep this tradition going.

Because the truth is, as Christians, death does remove a lifetime of sin.

But it isn't our death that does that, it is God's, through Jesus.

A funeral should be about God's promises for the deceased.

It is good and healing to talk about the deceased and their life.

But the goal, the purpose of a funeral, is to remind the living of the promises that their loved one has received in their fullness, and that one day, we too will receive this same fullness when we die.

Death feels like a finite reality.

I only know of one person who came back from the dead.

But funerals, remind us that the soul lives on.

Funerals are not designed to be a space of remembrance of the deceased life.

They are meant to be a space of remembrance of the resurrection and the promise of eternal life for the deceased.

Funerals are not just meant to be a source of closure, they are meant to remind us that this world is not the end.

That our loved ones are not gone, but somewhere else.

Funerals remind us, that as our loved ones enter into the cloud of witnesses, that we too will enter that cloud one day as well.

That death is not something to fear, but rather a step that all of us must take in this mortal life, in order to enter our eternal life.

Death is not the end, but the beginning.

Jesus is the proof of this.

His death was not the end, his death was the beginning of a movement that has shaped the world we live in.

Their are believers in this one man who rose from the dead on every continent on this planet.

A poor carpenter, turned rabbi, who was a part of a disliked group of people called the Jews.

Murdered by his own people and the powerful Roman government.

Crucified with two other criminals, as if he was just another body to dispose of.

His story could have ended there, just like so many other stories did.

_____

But his didn't.

His story survived.

His story grew and became the most well known and greatest testament to the power of the God of Israel that this world has ever heard and experienced.

His death changed the course of history.

_____

Death is not the end.

Death is the beginning to a movement of love, self sacrifice, and eternal peace that only our God can provide.

May we rejoice with our loved ones who have passed.

Because as we share a death with our savior, we will share a resurrection with him as well.

May the greatest story ever told, remind you to not fear death, but to embrace its reality.

To see it not as something evil, but as something that can change the course of history.

That can remind us of the promises and the love that God has for God's creation.

May we hold fast, not to our mortality, but to our immortality in Christ.

We are eternal beings, experiencing a finite world.

We are a part of this eternal cloud of witnesses.

Death is not the end, but the beginning of something new.

Our ancestors are not gone, they are here, with us today.

And may we open our minds to this reality.

And know that it is Jesus who made this all possible.

Amen.