

SONG #1 "Me and God"

PRAYER

Would you pray with me? God, we believe you are here with us in this moment...and only you can bring us through this time of pain. We surrender all other vices of comfort and turn directly to you and your eternal source of peace and love. We know that Rick and Sarah are with you, fully alive more than ever before. Would you remind us what life is about today as we celebrate the life of these loved ones.

WELCOME

Thank you for being here today. Attending this service shows your deep love for Rick and Sarah, their family and their friends. I will not dismiss the fact that this is an awful tragedy. The emotions of hurt, pain, loss, and above all the feeling "unfair" comes to mind. These feelings are right during this time as we grieve. It is ok to cry, it is right to have a heavy heart. While these emotions come quite naturally during a time like this I'd challenge you to take another look at today, from the perspective that Rick and Sarah would have desired. Today is a celebration of the love that we will display for them and honor the relationship they cherish deeply with Jesus, family and friends. So, today amidst tears I give you permission to smile and even laugh as we remember an extremely joyful couple that brought smiles and laughter to many.

Rick is survived by his brothers Ronnie, Joey and his sister Cindy. He is also survived by his daughter Jessie.

Sarah is survived by her mother Dottie, her daughter Chelsea, her daughter Jessie and best friend that she claimed as a sister, Kelly.

Rick and Sarah passed away on Tuesday in a very unexpected accident. There was a survivor in the accident and to the other driver and her family, on behalf of Rick and Sarah, this family would like to extend love, comfort and peace during this desperate time – this would have been the heart reaction and desire of the couple.

Rick was born in Austin on June 13, 1964. He would always remind you it his birthday was coming up. Rick was the youngest of 4 boys growing up in a house with one older sister. Rick never got in trouble; he was the favorite...the baby of the family. When his dad called home from the hospital on the last addition to the family and told the oldest, Cindy, that it was a boy, she cried stating that she wished he was a girl... from then on he always joked with Cindy, he would always say "I'm not a girl so get over it." Rick was a fighter, being the runt of the bunch but stuck up for himself...Cindy remembered him once calling her and saying... "its your sister." One of his favorite childhood memories he enjoyed was riding horses.

Rick worked for Leander Independent School District more than 10 years, then worked another part-time job after his day job. Taking impeccable care of his daughter and his wife he worked non-stop, he would do anything for anyone...

dropping what he was doing to serve someone else. Every Saturday he would visit the local carwash, extremely meticulous in taking care of things entrusted to him, even items like pens and keys he was extremely organized. Above all he took care of the people closest to him. Every event of Chelsea and Jessie's childhood... Rick would ensure to be there. If he were ever selfish it was much deserved after each Sunday he would come home from church and say "I'm not doing anything until after the Nascar race or Cowboy's game" ... he was a Mark Martin and Tony Romo fan. When Jessie was born, this was his pride and joy...his greatest accomplishment, his face lit up when he brought this baby girl home.

Sarah was born on January 5, 1968 in Omaha Nebraska. Quickly after being born she spend her childhood years growing up in Germany before heading back to the states. She grew up knowing German and would interpret for her parents. With very limited TV, she was 2 years old when she saw Elvis Presley, and has been crazy about him ever since. She enjoyed TV shows and "I love Lucy" was one of her favorites.

After moving back to the states, Sarah attended Martin Jr. High School were she met her best friend in life, practically a sister. Kelly and Sarah were inseparable, doing everything together. She and Kelly went on many adventures together. Traveling to the beach often, she loved to swim. She was the only one besides family that would call and text Kelly every day when she moved away. She was one to bring positive out of every situation ...even negative situations. Sarah loved crosswords and word puzzles.

Sarah was a waitress at Jim's, when Rick stopped in for a bite to eat one night. He got Sarah as a waitress and ate there every night after that. She referred to him as the most handsome man in the world. This continued to be a favorite restaurant not only for Rick but for the future family. The family says that there was only one person for Jim and only one person for Sarah, they were meant for each other. They were married February 14, 1997. They asked Sarah's daughter Chelsea if she approved of the marriage and she nodded with approval, being very much a part of the ceremony. This showed the couples love and inclusion for you Chelsea.

Rick and Sarah were more innocent and loving than most people. Trusting and honest. Rick and Sarah were never anywhere alone when they had free time, they spent all of their free time together. Simple people, they enjoyed kicking back and watching TV, even vacation for them was just getting some peace and quiet while enjoying the latest flix on TV. They would enjoy taking short trips and vacations to Smithville and San Antonio.

Rick and Sarah called Gateway Church their home and were very active there. Many Sundays they were the first ones there and were eager to get started with their serving roles. They faithfully served with Guest Services for over 4 years at Gateway; their daughter Jessie included. This team of about 15, is close knit and loves each

other well. If it weren't for this group of friends many would not be welcomed on a Sunday morning.

Those on their serving team said what they will miss the most are the hugs that both Rick and Sarah would give them every Sunday morning. Rick and Sarah were waiting with anticipation to always wrap their arms around you as soon as you walked in the door. Smiles came with those hugs as well.

Rick was part of our parking team and would enjoy Rudy's Breakfast tacos together with the team after they got all the equipment set up in the parking lot for the day. Sarah was part of our Greeting team that handed out programs as people entered for our 9:30 service. She greeted people well with that smile of hers!

When they both came to Gateway Church, life had its share of struggles and difficulties but Rick and Sarah always persevered, despite what life threw at them they always still smiled and gave out their hugs. And as years went on they found great community with the people at Gateway. They formed deep friendships, Jessie included, with many of the people on our Guest Service teams.

They loved John Burke, the lead pastor of Gateway, and John shared that love with them. John and the church are so grateful for the many hours they have poured into serving others. They were a true testimony of servants.

Just a couple years ago, Rick, Sarah and Jessie made their faith public in front of their Gateway church family... claiming their relationship with God through the person of Jesus the three were baptized as a family. This gives us great hope of their current location, they knew Jesus and therefore are in Heaven with their creator God.

We were never meant to understand death. It's not how we were created. God created the heavens and the earth and claimed it as good...but when He created His masterpiece, man and woman, He said, "This is very good." We see in the beginning that God desired a face to face relationship with his creation, walking in the garden step in step, no death, no tears, no pain... just God and us, it was very good. Despite sin and suffering entering the picture and rebellion against God, even then He loved us and sought us out by sending His one and only son. Jesus experienced many trials that we face even here today such as death, despite the pain and suffering he encountered for us all He brings great victory for us all in conquering death so that we can have life with God.

Jesus once told his friends right before his own death,
John 14

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust in me also.

"There are many rooms in my Father's house. If this were not true, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. If I go and do that, I will come back.

And I will take you to be with me. Then you will also be where I am. "You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. So how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father also. From now on, you do know him. And you have seen him."

Rick and Sarah knew Jesus and His father God. This gives us great hope in a desperate time. This assures us that Rick and Sarah are in the best place anyone could ever be...in the presence of Jesus.

Their testimony of serving week in and week out was a reflection of this hope they had put in God, and greater the desire for friends, family and even strangers to take this step into community with God. This is the greatest truth and reason to celebrate life today, that we can be reconciled to God just as Rick and Sarah were through putting their trust in Jesus. As these two put their faith in Jesus, believing that He is our only way to connect with God, I'd ask if you have the same faith? God is ready to meet you just where you are at, Jesus says, "Come to me, all of you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest." Find your rest in God and his promise.

SONG #2 "Go rest high on that mountain"

Chelsea SPEAKS

Jessie, I don't believe by chance that just two weeks ago I had the privilege of bumping into you and your parents at Wal-Mart. Though a quick conversation, I remember thinking after seeing you with them, "Wow. They love their daughter, and their daughter loves them, what a tight knit trio... a beautiful family."

Jessie, there is no one that could ever replace who your parents are but you do have family here today. There is are no friends that could replace the friends you found in mom and dad, but you do have friends here today. The amount of grief and pain that will endure for you is not for you alone to carry.

Family, Jessie needs you now more than ever... shower her with your love and care. This daughter is entrusted into your care, she is your responsibility now, I expect you to step up as uncles, aunts, grandma and older sister. Where ever your relationship was with Jessie before, it's time to take it to the next level, you need to be present because her parents were present.

Church, Jessie and this family needs you now more than ever. They greatly appreciate your support now, but it needs to continue. When the storm becomes calm, who will be for them then? As the church I ask that you continually reach out to the family, love on them, pray for them, be the smile and give the hugs that we knew of Rick and Sarah.

COMMIT/RELEASE

In the last book of the Bible it says, "Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," Says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them." Rev. 14:13 Rick and Sarah are the ones that are blessed, and their deeds of love and sacrifice to serve others will follow them." We now release them into the care of God—who gave them life and blessed us in sharing their lives with us... We learn in the Bible that those who have a relationship with God are given duties in Heaven. I can only imagine that Rick and Sarah are greeting others at the pearly gates this very moment, big smiles and anticipated hugs. They are alive now more than ever before.

SONG #3 "I can only imagine."

PRAYER

Let's pray: "God, we trust you with Rick and Sarah into your hands and your care. We will miss them greatly but we thank you for the many years of life you gave them. Thank you for the way they touched each one of us. Bless them as they blessed us. Remind us oh God that you are the God of love and grace – that you give life and take life, but that in your son Jesus our life and relationship with you is unending. Help us now to live our lives to honor You and to honor the legacy we've been given by Rick and Sarah.

We will first be headed to Liberty Hill Cemetery for a short graveside ceremony. There will then be a lunch reception at Gateway Church. The family would like to invite you to enjoy a meal that has been provided by neighbors and our church family.

GRAVESIDE

I read Psalm 23 and said a prayer. Then dismissed those that were not family to give the family privacy in their last moments together.