Funeral Address Outline

St John's Parish Church Drumgath (Rathfriland)

2:00 Saturday 4th Sept 2010

Revd David Somerville

Funeral address for Stuart Wilson

Psalm 84:1-4

Matthew 18:1-5

Tribute

- Stuart Wilson was a wee treasure. He was the child you noticed in a crowd; the one whose name everyone knew.
- He was full of life and lived life to the full. I remember baptising him here in St John's and I took a real interest in his progress as he grew up.
- When I called at his parent's home he'd be there bringing me a painting he'd done in school or offering me a piece of his Mummy's shortbread to go with a cup of tea.
- If the truth were told he was much more interested in his computer games or whatever was on Cbeebies than in sitting quietly on the settee talking to the minister.
- When he came to church with his family he was always up like a flash for the children's talk and he kept an interested eye on the bag of chocolate bars, no doubt wondering when I would give-over and start giving them out.
- At the end of the service as the congregation filed out he'd sometimes juke in behind his daddy so that he wouldn't have to shake my hand.
- Maybe he'd hold it out and whip it away before I'd get a chance to shake it. He was a regular wee imp but adorable with it.

- Stuart was born at Daisy Hill Hospital on Sunday 2nd November 2003. He was the 4th of four children and his brother and sisters Ashleen, Gareth and Hanna are here with us today.
- I remember visiting his home one evening when Stuart was just out of the bath - he would have been about 3 years old. It was before our son Dan was born but my wife May was expecting him.
- Gary and Heather had told Stuart earlier that we were expecting a baby and as he eyed me across the sunroom he said in a big voice "Is he the one that's going to be a daddy?" Out of the mouths of babes – you might say!
- Gary and Heather would wonder what he was going to come out with next and I'm sure his teachers were in stitches. But in reality, in school at least Stuart was more interested in break-time.
- Lesson's over he was first out the door – would they play tig or did anybody have a football today?
- He loved his sport – especially football. He played with the juniors at the football Club in Iveagh Park and faithfully turned out for the practice sessions on Wednesday nights.
- The youngest team at Iveagh was the under 9s & it would have been a while before he made an impression there.

- But the club had lots of events and the odd game for the juniors. They would play friendly matches but Stuart always wanted to win
- He loved to be around Iveagh Park on Saturdays when the senior teams were playing and the big ones loved him with his quaint turn of phrase. He loved the craic.
- As well as all that he couldn't wait to start playing rugby. He was promised that he could go to the juniors in the local rugby club this September and the idea filled him with excitement; but it wasn't to be.
- He came into his own for School sports days. He could run like the wind. Gary said you could hardly catch him around the house and he was never off the go.
- At home there was a myriad of sports equipment and he played with all of them in turn. He would shout "Granny, Granny wait till you see this" as he did a summersault on the trampoline. He had no fear
- He battered the lawn with his little golf clubs and took the light from his granny's eyes as he kicked up stones round her shins skidding his bicycle in a semicircle at her feet.
- Granny Ashley would tell him to stop but the more she said it the more he did it. He threw himself into everything he did.
- He loved anything to do with water – whether it was boating or getting a ride on the back of a Jet-ski and he lived for his annual summer breaks in the mobile home at Cranfield.
- The family will feel very differently about that much loved place from now on.

Development

- I, like you, wish I didn't have to be here today. I'm sure you'd rather be down at Iveagh Park, on a golf course or having retail therapy somewhere.
- We all learn early that death is a part of life but we expect to lose grand parents and parents first. Death is for old people isn't it? Sadly that's not always true.
- Celebrating the life of someone who died in their nineties feels very different from what we are doing here today.
- We don't expect to lose our children. When we do it's crushing. It devastates even the strongest among us
- As I sat with the Wilsons in the family room off the paediatric Intensive Care unit I could see the family strength that was holding them together.
- They took turns to sit with little Stuart through three long days and nights in the RVH. Lesser people would have shrunk in the face of their ordeal but God gave them the grace to rise above it and be there for him.

- As I've been at pains to point out - <u>He was a super wee man</u> and when I was thinking about that I remembered the other real <u>super-men</u> who were part of this story.
- The super men and women who were there on the beach at Cranfield and pulled little Stuart out of the water.
- The doctor and nurse on the beach who administered first-aid and kept his little body going till he got to hospital.
- I thought about the medical staff in Daisy Hill and the Royal Victoria Hospitals who explored every avenue to bring Stuarts little body back from the trauma: Super-men, all of them.
- The medical teams went over and beyond their call of duty. They used their skills and experience to push the envelope and see if anything could be done.
- Even those case hardened professionals who deal with life and death situations day and daily were softened by the plight of a little boy whose life was hanging on by a thread.

- When we think of Super-man we think of the red-caped blue clad comic-book hero who caught the bad guys and saved people from all sorts of evil.
- If you haven't read the comics surely you have seen the movies. I know I have.
- The first part of the story gives us the background for the rest. Superman was born on the planet of Krypton. The son of Jor-El.
- Jor-El knows that Krypton is going to be destroyed but the ruling council won't let him tell

anyone so he sends his son in a space ship to Earth before it happens.
- When Superman gets to earth, he's discovered by a country couple and raised as their own.
- If the spaceship in Smallville wasn't enough, his miraculous powers help them to know that he's "not from around here" as they said.
- One night, a glowing green crystal leads him to the Arctic to discover his abilities and his mission on earth.
- After some years of training, he sets off to save the world and does some pretty miraculous feats.

- The similarities between Superman and Jesus are fascinating - Even Wikipedia acknowledges that.
- Jesus, like Superman, came from a place "not from around here" and was endowed with miraculous powers because He is God.
- He too was raised by human parents, who saw that He was special. He too had a calling and was sent out to fulfil it. But *His* calling was greater. His job was to save the whole human race.
- Jesus gave up some of his divine power for our sake when he came to our world to live as one of us.
- He took on the forces of evil in a most unusual way. He died. He gave his life on the cross for us.
- And by rising up from the dead, He has defeated our last enemy - death.

Application
- Those of us that trust in Jesus as Saviour and Lord don't have to be concerned about death. Death becomes a doorway into eternal life. It's not the end.
- Jesus is coming back again, for us. We will live forever in his presence without the physical limitations that bring us pain and suffering.

- The good thing for Stuart and for us all is that Jesus loves children even more than we do.
- He said that unless a person becomes like a little child, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
- We all have to become like little children – that means trusting in Him as saviour and Lord in the same way as a little child trusts his daddy when he jumps off the 3rd stair into his arms.
- A child never entertains the thought that daddy won't catch him. They just take that leap of faith.

- This is the saddest of occasions but wouldn't it be so different if *you* could take that step of faith and give a reason for the angels to rejoice.
- Wouldn't it be wonderful if this was the moment that you found Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

- In Sunday School Stuart was an active member and took part enthusiastically in everything that went on.
- He knew the Bible stories that his teachers taught and I can just see his bright little face with his hand up saying "yes, yes I know – ask me".

- I can have no doubt today that Stuart has been taken home to be with his Saviour and Lord. We want him here but that can't be.
- He is in a far better place. He is absent from the body and present with the Lord.

> "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor 15:55-57 (NIV)