



In Remembrance of Chad and Chris Miller - June 14, 2009

Eternal God, Giver of life and defeater of death, we are still struggling to awaken from this horrific nightmare – the heartbreaking loss of Chad and Chris, brothers and best friends. Assaulted by the relentless aftershocks of grief, we are still trying to regain a foothold for our faith, to find steady ground while in the throes of the seismic shifts set off in our lives by their deaths. And so we pray, Precious Lord, take our hand, lead us on, help us stand and walk (with you) through this perilous, shadowed valley of unspeakable sorrow, knowing that you (indeed) comprehend our grief for Your heart was the first to break on Tuesday. Your tears were the first to fall, and You grieve with us over the loss of Chad and Chris, Amy's brothers and our brothers, Paul and Ellie's sons, but first and foremost Your sons. We mourn the world's loss of their love and laughter, their bright minds and caring hearts, their passion for justice and thirst for knowledge, their vibrant faith and inspiring discipleship. We suffer over what could have been, and will not be; and we cry out for you to hear our prayers, catch our tears, hold us in your encircling arms, heal our broken hearts, and help us know that death is not the victor, that You can redeem even this monstrous tragedy. Remind us that in the wake of the crucifixion of your own Beloved, You revealed the resurrection to Eternal Life, and Love's ultimate sovereignty over death. And so we pray, come and fill our hearts with your peace, saturate our souls with your comfort and hope, enliven our spirits with your ceaseless strength and steadfast love. Surely it is only through the powerful gift of faith that we can give thanks in these circumstances, and this we do.

We thank you, Holy God, for the brief but bold lives of Chad and Chris Miller, we bless you for the family in which they were raised – for loving parents and big sister Amy who palled around with Chad and helped raise Chris. We thank you for lessons gleaned in their household – that love is far richer than material possessions, that learning is a lifelong enterprise, that listening is the best gift you can give someone, that laughter is music to the soul, that following Jesus means serving others.

We bless you for precious family memories: Each son building a pinewood derby car with his dad – Chad insisting on doing it himself, while Chris watched Paul and asked questions on construction, ever-lively political debates around the dinner table, Family wrestling matches, horsing around, or playfully terrorizing their niece Kylee, the men drinking coffee late at night while discussing the philosophy of life, Chris building a river raft with Paul, the uncles attending Kylee’s 4H events, and Christmas morning war games in the family room with rubber band guns and an arsenal of marshmallows.

We bless you, for expanding the Miller family with the birth of granddaughter Kylee, Amy’s marriage to Wes, and Nicole’s marriage to Chris. We thank you for the way Nicole and Chris became partners in life, balancing and complementing each other – Chris the extrovert, Nicole the introvert; Chris the philosopher, Nicole the artist, Chris the lighthearted one, Nicole the more serious. Their relationship spanned 10 years, five as husband and wife, and we bless you for the way these two became one – for their lives as students, as struggling newlyweds, as wanderers navigating the Mississippi River for a month on their homemade raft, as soul mates, sharing coffee and conversations of the heart on their porch in Yonkers.

We thank you for all that made Chris your unique son and servant: his passionate curiosity about the world, his easy ability to turn strangers into friends, his knack for cracking jokes and making others laugh, his empathic listening and inquisitive nature, his bright aura and innate capacity for lifting the atmosphere all around him, his incredible mind and gift for teaching. We bless you for all in this life that ministered to Chris’s spirit: Reveling in the outdoors – fishing, hiking, camping, boxing in high school, playing soccer in college, and ultimate Frisbee whenever he could; reading dense philosophical texts or enjoying an action film, digesting as much world news as possible through daily papers, Jim Lehrer, and NPR, spending time with friends, traveling with Nicole, debating politics or discussing history with Paul and Chad, imparting his passion for political theory to his students, spending time with his families – the Millers and the Andersons, sharing his life and love with Nicole. We thank you for all that wife and family meant to Chris, and for what he will continue to mean to his loved ones throughout their lives.

Compassionate God, the Miller family has lost two treasured sons, Nicole her husband, and Westminster a beloved pastor. We thank you for bringing Chad to us, even for such a short time. We thank you for Chad’s loud, frequent, eruptive laughter and beaming smile. He radiated a desire to please, an eagerness to help, a delight in study, and a deep faith which informed his living. We will always

remember his love for red meat, his abhorrence of meetings, his rapid speaking, his robust singing, his innate restlessness, his lawn chair living room décor, his Pez collection, his simplicity of life and minimal carbon footprint, his ever-changing facial hair, and his impatience with tasks he deemed a waste of time – such as making up his bed!

We thank you for the real and radical manner in which he chose to follow Jesus: serving breakfast to the homeless, building houses for the poor, partnering with Christians in Guatemala, tithing 10% of his income. We bless you for the role Christ played in Chad's life, as personal savior and daily guide. We will be ever grateful for his fierce determination, his powerful reading of scripture, his self-deprecating humor, his personal vulnerability, his depth of emotion. We thank you for Chad – precious son, beloved brother, perennial risk-taker, fervent student, engaging shepherd, gifted colleague, cherished pastor, rebellious saint.

We bless you for all those things which nurtured Chad's spirit: studying scripture and reading theology & speeches by Martin Luther King, watching Star Wars, eating bacon and hot wings, grilling meat, drinking beer and turning his compost pile, listening to podcasts and Bob Dylan and working out at the Y, walking to church or running with Greg, clowning with Chapel Club kids or hanging out with the 180 group, mentoring a child or leading worship, building his Facebook farm town and connecting with family.

We bless you for Chad's passion for mission and desire to serve God without words by walking the walk. We thank you for the trips he found so meaningful to Mexico, Guatemala, New Orleans, and for his belief in the power of such trips to transform us as disciples and thereby transform the world.

Gracious God, we will miss Chad's ready enthusiasm, rich laughter, quick candor, and dynamic faith. May Chad's enduring love strengthen our hearts, and his ministry among us to inspire us to follow Christ by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting the imprisoned, and bringing good news to the poor.

Merciful God, in the wake of these sudden deaths, many may bear unfinished business with Chad or Chris. Forgive us anything we wish we had said or done, but did not; and assure us that you are doing more for them in your eternal realm than we could ever ask or imagine possible.

Eternal God, we bless you for the revelation of Yourself in Jesus the Christ. We thank you that deep in the human heart lies an unquenchable trust that life does not

end in death; that the One who made us will care for us beyond the bounds of vision even as You have cared for us in this earthly realm. We praise your name that our hopes have been so wondrously confirmed in the life and death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has taught us when we pray to say:

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever amen.