

**A Celebration of Life**  
***Lillian Brown Glenn***

***First Baptist Church***  
***Anderson, SC***  
***James R. Thomason, Pastor***  
**August 3, 2018**  
**11:00 AM**

**Organ Prelude.....Ramona Hallman**

**Processional: *Eternal Father, Strong to Save* (Navy Hymn)**

**Call to Worship.....Jim Thomason**

Good morning, friends. We're here to worship God and remember the life of Lillian Glenn. Most of us know the hymn Ramona played as Lillian's family entered the sanctuary; and those of us who are familiar with her story know why it was selected.

*Eternal Father, Strong to Save* is the Navy hymn. One of the many distinguishing aspects of Lillian's life was her service to her country as part of the WAVES: Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. It was a branch of the Navy.

I'm told that Lillian was motivated to serve in this way by her desire to honor the memory of her brother, Dexter Brown, Jr., who was killed in World War II.

Having majored in English and Latin at Randolph-Macon College, she used that proficiency in language to serve in our nation's capital as part of a top-secret group of military code breakers. Something of that military demeanor seemed to stay with Lillian.

We saw this in her perfect posture, of course, but also in her "steady as she goes" approach to life; and in one of her favorite quotes, "Loose lips... sink ships"—that, too, stayed with her all through life.

Information about herself and others was shared only on a “need to know” basis. She could be trusted with anything—it would go no further!

Don’t you know she served her country well—just as she served her Lord, her family, her church and Sunday School Class, her students, as well as this community in which her roots reach so very deep—she served all of us in outstanding ways.

Lillian has left a most positive mark on each of us. So we count it a privilege to share in this memorial service today.

Something else I need to pass along about Boyce and Lillian. In my 23 years as Pastor of this church, I’ve conducted 700 funerals. Sullivan-King has been in charge of about half of these. McDougald’s has been in charge of the other half—by and large—with only a few exceptions. And from my perspective as pastor, both organizations do a fine job!

But back to Boyce and Lillian. I think we all know that these two cared about everybody. They bent over backwards to be gracious and fair and inclusive.

So when it came time for them to pre-arrange their funerals—and I don’t think I’ve ever encountered this before—but this couple wanted to use both establishments—so that’s what they did—Boyce went with one... and Lillian with the other. No playing favorites with these two!

But now... as to where to have the service, that was never in question. So here we are, gathered in this church that’s just completing its 197<sup>th</sup> year. Boyce and Lillian were part of this congregation their entire lives—but there’s more to the story.

Both of them included as part of their own family trees the Reverend James Burrell, who served as the first pastor of this church!

And those chimes that you heard earlier from the organ--they were donated by the Glens in memory of their young son, Franklin, who died of leukemia.

So Lillian's service had to be here. Through good times and sad times, the roots of this church and the roots of this family have intertwined, strengthening both. I don't know how you could improve on that!

So we're here to worship God and to remember with gratitude the life that Lillian Brown Glenn lived among us. She loved the hymn called "In the Garden." It tells the story of Mary Magdalene being the first to see and spend time with Jesus after His resurrection—she was the first to know this joy.

Now, with the joy of the Risen Lord in our hearts, let us stand, and sing, and worship.

**Hymn No. 187.....In the Garden**

**Invocation.....Josh Hunt**

**Scripture.....Psalms 100, 113,19,103**

**Solo: *He Touched Me*.....Addrian Wilson**

**Message.....*Doing Good*.....Jim Thomason**

**Proverbs 31:10-31; John 14:1-6**

Tuesday afternoon, I met for the second time with the Glenn children to listen as they remembered the lives of their parents. On both occasions, it was wonderful the way they described the relationship between their mom and dad--the love and concern for one another they saw demonstrated in their home, and how they discussed every issue facing the family and found ways to resolve them together—always positive, no cross words or loud voices, just a mutual desire to understand and affirm and arrive at the best decision. What a gift for their children to see this!

Of course, they had their differences of opinion. Boyce liked to have fun, while Lillian leaned a little more toward keeping proper order. Here's a story I like from the Glenn household:

Boyce loved the circus. So he did what any circus-loving father would do—he constructed a trapeze in their backyard and had the children swinging on it and learning tricks.

But Lillian didn't really share his enthusiasm for that particular activity. She was soon frustrated by this, and said, "I'm going in, Boyce—we're not raising these children to go into the circus!"

Memories are so important. Do you recall that line in the movie, *Steel Magnolias*, where Truvy says to the others: "Laughter through tears is my favorite emotion." We experienced a lot of that exact emotion as we met together and talked on Tuesday.

Lillian Glenn was a steel magnolia, wasn't she? A gracious and beautiful lady, and yet so strong.

I always felt like we had a special relationship, but I think a lot of folks felt that way toward Lillian. And we all admired her. She had a presence about her that was always calm and reassuring and uplifting.

And she was steeped in faith—rock solid in her devotion to the Lord, His church, and His word. She was such a student of the Bible. I've got her Bible here. It was a blessing to go through it.

There were lots of underlined passages. Some, as Josh mentioned, had two stars—indicating favorite passages.

And then there were check marks—passage after passage with fourteen check marks. I finally realized that's how many times she had read through those passages since she got this Bible.

You see, she kept a schedule in this well-worn Bible for reading the entire Bible over the course of one year. Each time Lillian finished a section, she would mark the place where it ended. So, from Genesis to Revelation, after every few chapters, there are 14 checkmarks—14 complete readings of this Bible.

No wonder she was so appreciated as a Sunday School teacher. She knew her Bible well. She prepared thoroughly—putting in several hours of study each week—in order to teach those lessons to her class. But then, Lillian was thorough with everything.

I spent a lot of time looking through her Bible, taking note of passages that she underlined and starred.

But after everything I heard from her children, combined with my own observations of her life, I felt we must turn today to the passage about the virtuous wife found in Proverbs 31.

We could well place her picture by this passage to serve as an example of the kind of woman it's describing. Listen for the parallels to Lillian's life as I read it now.

### **Proverbs 31:10-31 The Virtuous Wife**

**<sup>10</sup> Who can find a virtuous wife?**

**For her worth *is* far above rubies.**

**<sup>11</sup> The heart of her husband safely trusts her;**

**So he will have no lack of gain.**

**<sup>12</sup> She does him good and not evil**

**All the days of her life.**

Lillian Glenn was the kind of woman the writer of Proverbs had in mind—a woman of solid faith, combined with a strong sense of responsibility... a woman who went about her life both in the family and out in the public with a lot of grace and integrity. Boyce did well to put his "trust in her."

Lillian was strongly loyal to her family; and when she married, that loyalty shifted to her husband. I guess this sounds rather "old school" today, but she would say of Boyce, "his bread I eat, his song I sing." I'm told that phrase came from other women who had been influential in Lillian's life.

There was a hot breakfast every morning, a well-balanced lunch on the table at one—when Boyce took his lunch break; and when he returned home from work in the evening, mom and sometimes children too greeted him at the door!

Now, I haven't seen any videos to confirm all this—but that's what his children told me—so Boyce Glenn may well have been the originator of the saying, "a man's home is his castle!"

To be sure, Lillian did Boyce good and not evil, all the days they shared together. And she also did good by way of the children. Later in this passage, we're told "**Her children rise up and call her blessed...**"

Lillian's children certainly did so. She cared for them well—"she was always there for us," they said. She taught them well—lessons including the importance of speaking clearly, looking people in the eye, extending a firm handshake, and being courteous and respectful always.

And also, of course, there were lessons on faith and devotion to the Lord, His Church, and His Book. As they put it, she talked the talk and walked the walk.

So it wasn't just her words, there was also the example she set—the good example of living a disciplined life: physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally.

Lillian was so good at this, it was hard for others to keep up—but she provided an inspiring example of how to maintain balance in life while doing many things very well.

Let's continue with our passage now:

**<sup>13</sup> She seeks wool and flax,  
And willingly works with her hands.**

**<sup>14</sup> She is like the merchant ships,  
She brings her food from afar.**

**<sup>15</sup> She also rises while it is yet night,  
And provides food for her household,  
And a portion for her maidservants.**

Something that comes to mind here is when you spoke of your mother bringing lemonade and cookies out to the neighborhood children... who were all playing in your yard—but bringing these goodies not on paper plates, but on silver service!

And they loved it! They felt very special, even more so when Lillian, and Boyce, too, would engage them in conversation. They really cared about each child. In fact, these two seemed to be interested in everyone.

By the way, in the Glenn household, coffee was always served in a cup with a saucer, never a mug! Let's keep going:

**16 She considers a field and buys it;  
From her profits she plants a vineyard.**

**17 She girds herself with strength,  
And strengthens her arms.**

**18 She perceives that her merchandise *is* good,  
And her lamp does not go out by night.**

**19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff,  
And her hand holds the spindle.**

**20 She extends her hand to the poor,  
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.**

Lillian and Boyce provided leadership and financial support for the starting of Anderson Interfaith Ministries and also our FBC Childcare Center. They would also have children from the Connie Maxwell Children's Home visit with them in their home. They saw needs in the community and looked for ways to help.

Also, I was touched to hear of Lillian's work as a Middle School Guidance Counselor. She was very aware that she grew up with advantages that most children didn't have.

She had a heart for children, especially those who faced struggles that she hadn't had to face in her own life. She did what she could, often making personal visits in their homes. She cared—they mattered to Lillian--and they knew it!

Years later, these children, a few years older now or even full grown, would see her at the store or in the mall and hurry over to speak to her and tell whoever was with them that Mrs. Glenn was their Guidance Counselor.

She made an impression on their lives—in many cases, I'm sure it was a lasting impression. Let's continue:

**21 She is not afraid of snow for her household,  
For all her household *is* clothed with scarlet.**

**22 She makes tapestry for herself;  
Her clothing *is* fine linen and purple.**

**23 Her husband is known in the gates,  
When he sits among the elders of the land.**

**24 She makes linen garments and sells *them*,**

**And supplies sashes for the merchants.**

**<sup>25</sup> Strength and honor *are* her clothing;**

**She shall rejoice in time to come.**

**<sup>26</sup> She opens her mouth with wisdom,**

**And on her tongue *is* the law of kindness.**

**<sup>27</sup> She watches over the ways of her household,**

**And does not eat the bread of idleness.**

Whatever “the bread of idleness” is, Lillian Glenn had no clue how it tastes! She was always busy doing something productive.

She was meticulous in her housekeeping and her yardwork. Boyce liked his easy chair, but Lillian steered clear of such creature comforts. She always needed something to do!

Now, the children told me that her interest in yardwork may have been a response to the loss of young Franklin. Lillian grieved terribly over his death, and she initially turned to working in the yard as a way to cope.

But she had a knack for it—a “green thumb,” they said; and she grew to really enjoy her time spent caring for the yard.

Now, the passage ends with this:

**<sup>28</sup> Her children rise up and call her blessed;**

**Her husband *also*, and he praises her:**

**<sup>29</sup> “Many daughters have done well,**

**But you excel them all.”**

**<sup>30</sup> Charm *is* deceitful and beauty *is* passing,**

**But a woman *who* fears the LORD, she shall be praised.**

**<sup>31</sup> Give her of the fruit of her hands,**

**And let her own works praise her in the gates.**

Well, there is much more that could be said about this lady who had such incredible energy and strength, combined with generous amounts of graciousness, kindness, and love.

I don’t know about you, though, but I’m beginning to feel a bit guilty. Lillian set the bar high!

Now, before we close with a hymn she loved, I want to share a final passage of Scripture. Lillian requested it be read in the service back when Boyce passed away.

It was one of their favorites, and, I trust, one of ours as well. It's found in John 14:1-6. Jesus said:

**Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**

**3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.**

**5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

**Hymn No. 407.....Because He Lives**

**Benediction.....Jim Thomason**

**Postlude.....Ramona Hallman**