

Armstrong transcript (pdf)

Author: Multiple, see table

Jan-Feb 2021 estimated

The transcript was made from a memorial service video.

Times	Speaker	Text
00:0-08:15	n/a	slides, videos, music
08:15-11:03	Josh De Koning	<p>Lord God, Father, would you receive our gratitude and thanks in the way in which you used Steve to minister into our lives in so many different ways. Gathered here this morning and gathered online listening and watching a multitude of different ministries and moments of interaction that by your Spirit you have used your servant Steve to advance your truth and love. And so we give you thanks this morning for him and his life and his ministry and his service in the fullest sense of the word. Thank you.</p> <p>And we also ask that You would comfort us. Would You comfort us in the way only You can. Though You may use many other servants as part of that, would You comfort us? Because now we're without him. And we know You have always been the source, and because You are the source, You will choose the means by which You comfort, hold and love us. Lord, we were really attached to Steve as a means of Your love in our lives. So we require comfort. And when Your people require comfort you [unintelligible]. come asking boldly, confidently, but truly needy. Would You grant that to us in Jesus name, we ask. Amen.</p> <p>Good morning, my name is Josh De Koning, I'm the senior pastor at crossway bible church just a little bit down the road and Steve and I were good friends and colleagues and we spent a lot of time on the phone together discussing how to lead churches and really enjoyed doing that and learning from one another. So it is absolutely my privilege and honor to be here this morning to lead this service. So I'm going to ask at this point for Bob Butler to come and open us with exactly what Steve would want and that is the reading of holy scripture.</p>
11:03-15:20	Bob Butler	<p>Good morning everyone. This is going to be a reading from the book of Philippians, Paul's letter to Philippi, beginning in chapter 1 verse 3. [verses 3-27 were read]</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
15:20-16:03	Josh	Amen Bob. Thank you for that. At this point we'd like to hear a letter from the family read by some of the members of the family. So I'm going to welcome them up at this point. Thank you for doing that. [period of silence]
16:03-18:26	daughter	<p>Today there are many many people grieving the loss of our dad, Stephen Armstrong. [audio temporarily out] The whole counsel of God's word changed their lives and gave them eyes for eternity. Because of our dad's commitment and dedication to God's calling on his life, many of your lives have been forever changed.</p> <p>My dad's life was marked by another kind of faithfulness that we want to remember him and honor him today - his faithfulness as our father. Dad didn't just preach the word, he lived it. He taught us about the character of God as our Father by being a father marked by the character of God. In his love for use he was full of patience, he was slow to anger, he was rich in mercy which we often needed and he was generous far beyond our expectations. Our relationship with him was one filled with joy and laughter and a deep trust and security in his love and his provision in our lives. We could not have asked for a better picture of God's love for his children than that of our dad's love for us.</p> <p>But though the grief we feel is very personal, it is also a shared grief with all of you, because we too feel the incredible heartbreak of losing our pastor and spiritual leader.</p> <p>Above all else, our dad was faithful in teaching and leading his family in God's word and our lives also will never be the same as a result. A father can pass on many things to his children, but very few people have the privilege of thanking their father for giving them eyes for eternity. Already we miss our dad dearly and grieve his death and yet we do not grieve as those who have no hope.</p> <p>Many people may believe that today we are here to celebrate our dad's life and mourn his death, but that is not true. Today we celebrate our dad's life and we celebrate his death because we know to live is Christ and to die is gain. We cannot thank God enough for the blessing of giving us Stephen Armstrong as a father and we are so excited to see him again soon. We hope that when we see him again he will be as proud of our lives as we are of his.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
18:26-19:25	Josh	Many of you know Jerry Dike. This morning, some of us were remarking that Jerry Dike is kind of like the matchmaker from fiddler on the roof. And he is in fact how I met Steve Armstrong and that may be true of many of you. Jerry has a way of putting people together and I'm thankful to Jerry for many things, but maybe most of all, introducing me to Steve. And uh, Jerry is going to come now and we'd like to hear from him, a little bit from the church's leadership perspective and his personal perspective of the meaningfulness of Stephen's ministry. Come on Jerry.

Times	Speaker	Text
19:25-33:22	Jerry	<p>Good morning. Thank you Annette and Cat, Daniel for giving me the privilege of honoring Steve today. You know what he meant to me. And with God's help, I'll try to share in 10 minutes some of the achievements and some of my memories of these past 20 years. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Jerry Dike and I have known Steve for almost 20 years. He was my best friend, co-laborer, counselor, confidant, pastor, and teacher. Before I tell you more about my friendship with Steve, let me first tell you a little about him and his ministry which most of you, but not all of you already know.</p> <p>Steve Armstrong was the founder and principle teacher of Verse By Verse Ministry International and the lead pastor of Verse By Verse Fellowship church. Due to the influence of his wife Annette and a good friend pastor Brian Michaels of Colorado Springs, he came to know the Lord in his early 30's while serving as an Air Force officer. After becoming a believer, Steve experienced God's call to learn and teach the bible so in 1997 Steve left the military, found a job in Colorado, and began a self-directed course in study in preparation to teach the scriptures. As he devoted himself to study, Steve developed a love for an in-depth verse by verse style of teaching God's word. Believing it to be the best means to persuade the unbeliever of the truth of the gospel and equip the saints for the work of the ministry.</p> <p>In 2001, Steve received God's call to move to San Antonio where he soon found opportunities to teach verse by verse in churches throughout the area. It was around that same time that Annette, Catherine, and Daniel joined a home-school group that my wife Kathy and son Jeffrey were a part of and they all became friends quickly.</p> <p>Despite having no professional religious training, in 2003 Steve was called by God to lead a church planting in the city as pastor of Living Word Fellowship. And at that same time started teaching a bible study on Revelation at a club house in their old neighborhood which Kathy and Jeffrey decided to attend. They would come home all excited about Steve's teaching and I would say - yah, yah, yah. Then I decided to attend one week and came away saying - Whoa.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
”	Jerry cont'd	<p>It was clear that Steve had a gift and he and I quickly became good friends. Despite having no professional religious training, in 2003, Steve was called by God to lead a church planting effort in the city as pastoring living word, as I've said. That same year Steve founded Verse By Verse Ministry of San Antonio, later to be renamed Verse By Verse Ministry International. Out of a desire to offer his unique style of in-depth bible teaching for free to a world wide audience via the internet. Today Verse By Verse Ministries worldwide reach in a substantial catalog and insightful bible teaching is proof that the Lord calls unqualified men and women, but won't leave them untrained.</p> <p>The next year 2004, our family moved to Florida and struggled with that decision for 6 months until we found a really good bible church that taught verse by verse. It was during our 8 years in Florida that I became closer to Steve, constantly seeking feedback on teaching I was doing in a Sunday School class attended by mature bible students. Steve and I had regular phone conversations and email exchanges and our families would get together over the years in both Texas and Florida. And our friendship continued to grow.</p> <p>During the early years of Verse by Verse ministries, Steve taught a bible study at USAA every Monday at noon. Another at Wayside chapel every Wednesday night, and in 2007 he was asked to fill the pulpit at a bible church in southwest Austin. And for 10 years, Steve and Annette would leave early every Sunday morning and drive the 90 miles for those international listeners, a 150 km [drive]. They would drive that one way to serve that local church.</p> <p>When our family moved back to San Antonio in 2012, Steve asked me to join the board of directors of verse by verse ministry. I felt inadequate to serve in that capacity and I told Steve so. To which he said, that's one of the reasons I want you on the board. Always affirming, always seeing the best in people. In 2017, Steve agreed with the ministry board that pastoring the church long distance in south Austin was untenable and agreed to quit his job at USAA and plant a church in San Antonio. So after months of planning on January 25th 2018, Verse by Verse Fellowship had its first church service on a Thursday night in a small church on Redland Rd, that had graciously offered to us to use their facility. We quickly outgrew that space and over the next several months as we looked for a new location, God connected us to Jim Rolan and other leaders at Oak Hills church, who ultimately helped us gain access to the building we now occupy.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
"	Jerry cont'd	<p>Both the online ministry and the local fellowship have continued to thrive over these past 3 years as more and more people hungry for the deep teaching of scripture have been connecting with both ministries. In fact, our latest metrics for both the web site and mobile app shows that 10,000 people a day worldwide are logging in for a bible study or other information. And verse by verse fellowship has estimated 600 regular or semi-regular attenders. Now let me tell you my thoughts about Steve Armstrong, the man. We all know that Steve loved God with all his heart and loved studying and teaching scripture. He was a fast learner, retained tons of knowledge, and was quick on his feet. I think we all loved his Q and A sessions.</p> <p>Steve also loved traveling, exploring, he loved guns - he had lots and lots of guns. Technology - he had a lot of that stuff too. Music, photography, he loved stupid jokes. And in spite of what he might say, he loved poodles. Steve had a quick wit and many of the texts he and I shared were silly back and forth fool-hearty kidding. Ridiculous really. It was hard to outwit Steve, but one of my favorites was telling Steve that when I couldn't sleep at night, I would listen to one of his sermons. That would usually do the trick.</p> <p>Above all else, Steve loved his family. He was devoted to Annette and always treated her with respect in public and in private. He loved his kids and was so proud of their accomplishments, and he loved their spouses as his own children. Steve was always teaching his kids and they loved learning from him. I'll never forget one night Steve and I were sitting out on their back patio discussing life and ministry when Daniel came out to ask a what if question that didn't seem to be all that important or have any biblical solution. So I asked Steve, does it really matter? And Steve said I never discourage scholarship with my kids no matter what the question might be.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
”	Jerry cont'd	<p>There are countless testimonials from people all over the world who have been influenced by Steve’s teaching. Everyone participating in this memorial service, either here at the church with us today or those online could share their own personal story of how God used this man’s gift of teaching to change their life. One testimony in particular that I’d like to share is from a young man I know very well, our son, pastor Jeff Dike. This is taken from a message he preached at his church in Steenvill this past morning. He starts off by saying if you have been redeemed by Jesus, you have committed your soul to a faithful God and you can have full confidence that He who has redeemed you will preserve your soul for all eternity. My confidence in Jesus’ promise to preserve their life, the life of their saints, was put to the test this week. I got the word Friday that a long time friend of our family Steven Armstrong died unexpectedly. Steve and his wife Annette are very close friends of our parents and their children Catherine and Daniel grew up together. Steve is a bible teacher and pastor, and I don’t think I can overstate just how influential Steve was in my life.</p> <p>I was 11 or 12 years old when I first sat in a bible study with Steve. It was the first time I had ever heard the bible taught expositively. He was the first person who modeled for me serious study of the scripture. At the age of 13 after having spent a couple of years in bible studies under Steve’s teaching in San Antonio, my family was preparing to move to Jacksonville Florida. And one of the things I was going to miss the most about living in San Antonio was sitting under Steve’s teachings. When I told him that he said you don’t need me, now you know how to study the bible for yourself. At the time as a 13 year old I thought ”yeah, right”. But as it turns out, he was right. Those years laid a foundation for me for how to study the bible, not only as a teenager, to this day I’m reaping the fruit of the influence that Steve’s teaching had on me in those years. He goes on to say God used Steve Armstrong in my life in many instrumental ways. One way I’m most grateful for is that it was from Steve that I first heard the term the sovereignty of God.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
”	Jerry cont'd	<p>When our family moved as I mentioned, as a 13 year old I really struggled. And it was in the midst of my struggle, that I listened online to a teaching series that Steve did on the sovereignty of God. God used that teaching powerfully in my life to bring me comfort and stability in a way that can only come from confidence in the sovereignty of God. And just so you guys know, Jeffrey had been preparing a sermon that week from Acts 7 about Stephen the first Christian martyr. He goes on to share that. As soon as he hung up the phone he looked up at his screen and realized that seconds before receiving my call he had typed these words - hope in the preservation of Jesus. It then dawned on him that the sovereignty of God he had been preparing a sermon about Jesus receiving the Spirit of Stephen the first Christian martyr. As he received the word about our friend Stephen whose spirit Jesus was faithful to receive that morning.</p> <p>Yes, God is sovereign. And when we don't understand his plan we continue to trust him. As the Psalmist writes in Psalm 9:10 [verse read]. To Annette, Cat, Mitch, Daniel, Miriam we love you. We're here for you. You can count on this local fellowship, the ministry board, and our partners all over the world to pray for you and continue to build on the legacy that God established through the leadership and teaching of your husband and dad.</p> <p>And to all of you who are watching and listening online, so we stay focused on the task at hand. Let me leave you with this quote from the last message Steve taught in the gospel of Matthew on Sunday January 3rd, 2021. And I quote, the great commission requires we cultivate a concern for the unsaved for those who don't have what we have in Christ. Going means evangelism. Going beyond the gathering, beyond serving believers, beyond the church doors and to the world. Kingdom work is fundamentally being ambassadors. By teaching we prepare a new generation of disciple makers because eventually new disciples will be stirred by what they learned. Hearts are stirred to go, new disciples are made, more teaching takes place, and the cycle repeats by Christ's authority and power. Set your mind in 2021 on kingdom work. Keep your eyes on eternity, going to the world, welcoming new believers into our body, and teaching them to obey. Thank you.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
33:22-48:49	Josh	<p>Thank you so much Jerry. Really appreciate hearing from you and the family. I have the privilege and opportunity of spending a little time with you, reflecting on God's truth.</p> <p>As I said, Steve and I were friends and colleagues and one of the things Steve and I did together was a radio program. Steve and I thought it would be a great idea to have a call in radio program - a talk radio about scripture. And so we recorded a number of episodes of this radio program, and by the number, I mean the number 1. Because we were boring. And here's why - Steve's certainly not boring. And I'm a little more boring than Steve is, but the reason we were boring is because we agreed so much. If you've ever listened to a couple of guys get together and just agree with one another, it makes for really bad radio. So we canceled that idea, and that show, that spot on the radio, became a spot that was just dedicated to Steve's bible teaching.</p> <p>And that is what it should have been, and was. That is what it was meant to do because that was Steve's passion when it came to communicating was opening up God's word and communicating verse by verse the truth of God's word. And he was so gifted at that and that's what that radio program became and that's what this church knows and what you who are listening online have tuned into this ministry for so long its what you know and love about Steve and he just had a way, a confident way of communicating God's word. He had the kind of confidence you got to borrow. You know what I mean? Its one of the things that made him such a great leader - he had confidence to borrow.</p> <p>I showed a clip of Steve's teaching to my teenagers, my 2 oldest. I showed them the clip of the last sermon that Steve preached. As he preached one of the central truths in the letter to the Philippians, about the central meaning of the life of the Christian. The purpose and meaning and central joy of the Christ follower. And as they listened to that quote from that sermon, that clip, understanding already that Steve had passed, they were just stunned, and flabbergasted, and tearful. Not just because of loss but tearful because they recognized that God was doing something special in what Steve was uttering that morning, just 11, 13 days ago. I'm going to read to you a short portion of that sermon. Listen to this.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
”	Josh cont’d	<p>Steve said this. The only answer to the question of why the Lord has left you a minute longer than necessary for salvation is that there is some work he intends to use you that advances the gospel in the meantime. That’s why you’re still here. So the question you have to ask yourself is - are you doing that work? Or are you wasting all this time? To live is Christ, to die is gain, there’s no loss in a death coming early for a Christian. But as long as you’re alive there’s a question waiting. Why am I still here? Everything in your life from now until you die is about serving the needs of the gospel. It’s about what you do now with a gospel mentality. If you’re a person for whom joy and satisfaction, purpose and meaning are hard to get and hard to keep, may I suggest to you it’s because you’re living for the wrong goal. Change your goal - change your life.</p> <p>Some of you remember that very well. Steve had a clarity about that goal, that ended up filling his life with a realization of purpose, filling his life with a realization of meaning and of joy. He saw that goal so clearly, purpose and meaning just kind of oozed out of his life. And he clearly led his family in understanding the clarity of that goal as well. Because if clarity about that goal for a Christian results in a realization of purpose, meaning, and joy, then the fruit of joy is clearly plain to me in Steve’s family. I told my wife this week I was just on a conference call with Steve’s family. I was on speaker phone and the family was gathered around and Tom was there. And I was helping them prepare for the memorial service and I don’t think I have ever done that in a more joyful context. The joy that came from this family that Steve has taught and led and disciplined, was clearly the joy of a family that understands the clarity of God’s goal for Steve and God’s goal for them. It was just clear. There was laughter in the air - sorrow for sure, they grieve not as those without hope, they understand.</p> <p>Steve’s life radiated with the biblical truth that God had purposes for him, that He had prepared good works beforehand, for Steve to walk in them, as Ephesians 2 says. And we all witnessed that didn’t we? We all saw the way Steve walked, we could see it. What we couldn’t see was how close he was to completing that course, that God had laid out for him, set for him, bounded for him. In his sovereignty marked it out - we didn’t see that, Steve didn’t see that. That’s left in God’s hands and God’s mind.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
”	Josh cont’d	<p>We don’t know the fullness of God’s sovereign plan. But that makes me think of the precise meaning of Psalm 116 verse 15. That’s my text that I’ve been meditating on in regards to Steve all week long. Psalm 116:15, you’re probably already familiar with. That verse says Precious in the eyes of the Lord are the death of his saints. Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints. What does that mean? You know Steve would never let me get away with not explaining exactly what that means. He would want me to goto the original languages, which I have. He would want me to goto the context, right? Steve would always walk you through the context right? Well here’s the context of Psalm 116.</p> <p>Psalm 116 is not about one of God’s people dying. Psalm 116 is about one of God’s people being preserved. Psalm 116 is about one of God’s people not dying. What Psalm 116:15 - Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints - what that means is not precious as in adorable, that God is just feeling warm and fuzzy, about the death of his saints. Its not precious as in adorable. Clearly the context doesn’t mean that. What the context shows us is the word precious means costly, purposeful, dear. That God does not take his people home carelessly. As you might spend something that is precious and dear to you, you do it with intentionality and purpose. Dear, intentional, purposeful is the death of his saints. So its easy for us to ask - how can that be? How could God have been so intentional and so purposeful in the death of Steve Armstrong? And that’s because we can imagine sermons that Steve would still preach. We can imagine moments that we would still have with Steve. We can imagine more opportunities for God to use Steve in sharing His good news.</p> <p>How could God have been intentional and purposeful in Steve’s death? But if we hold that question with humility for just a little while, it begins to rotate. God rotates that question, if we’ll hold it humbly. And we realize that really the question isn’t from us to Him, what are your purposes in Steve’s death? The question is from Him to us. What are His purposes in your life? As Steve would say, why are you still here?</p> <p>And the answer is embedded in the last sermon that Steve preached. The answer is embedded in the central truth of the letter to the Philippians, that our lives are lived as gospel responses. That the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. Pressing on towards the goal for prize of the upward call of Christ Jesus. That’s why you’re still here. And its with those intentions and purposes that God has given you life and its with God’s sovereign intentions and purposes that he has marked Steve’s course to be just so.</p>

Times	Speaker	Text
"	Josh cont'd	<p>That we would live lives responding to this news. That the living God, the sovereign king of the universe is reconciling you to himself through Jesus Christ. That you can live in joyful allegiance to the rightful King. And you can only do that because you have been united to Christ Jesus in faith. And that you, in all of your rebellion and treachery against the living God can be completely forgiven by his grace because every ounce of punishment and judgment that would be right for a rebel against the King to receive, has been taken by Jesus. So that you can come confidently to him understanding mercy is for me and life. And not only that, a life full of purpose, and meaning, and joy. He's prepared good works for you to walk in. You have a whole life, you don't know how long it is, but you have a whole life marked out for you, where you get to live in joyful allegiance - not to yourself anymore, but to the King.</p> <p>That is the appeal that God is making through His word to you. That is the appeal God is making through my voice right now. Live your whole life in response to the opportunity for joyful allegiance and mercy, that is the appeal God made every time we heard from Steve Armstrong, wasn't it? Would you pray with me: Lord God, would you grant us strength and wisdom, diligence, discernment to live in response to that truth. Lord if this is a truth that we have rejected heretofore, if everything up until now has been nothing but rebellion from us Lord, would you by the Spirit of God break through and draw us to you in submission and humility crying out for grace. Lord, if we are listening right now and we know this truth, would you still grant us the ability to live in response to it. You're not done with us yet, why are we still here? We're still here to continue to respond to your grace. Lord, would you open our eyes that we might see that more clearly, and live as Steve lived, walking in response to your gospel. We ask for these things in Jesus name. Amen.</p> <p>Charlie, would you lead us?</p>
48:49-54:15	worship song	"This Blood"
54:15-59:30	worship song	"Cornerstone"
59:30-01:04:25	worship song	"Great are You Lord"
01:04:26-01:05:35	Josh	Glory to God. Amen. If I could ask you to remain standing and to stand as we receive the presentation of the United States flag, as Steve Armstrong is presented with full honors by the United States Air Force. Airmen.
01:05:35-01:14:36	Airmen	flag folding ceremony

Times	Speaker	Text
01:14:55-end	Josh	<p>Pray with me. Honorable and faithful service, Lord we thank you for Steve's honorable and faithful service to you His king, to us his fellow servants. We come with prayers of gratitude and petition of thanks and request. We thank you for Steve's life, for his love, his care for us, his ministry. All are things that You put into his hands to steward and then gave him the diligence and the power and the Spirit to steward them well. And so we thank You. And we come requesting that You would give us the power and the diligence and the spirit to do likewise. Steve was always teaching, always serving as an example, even in his last address in this assembly, calling us forward, to live in such a way as to respond to the gracious good merciful call that You have on us as our King and the living God and so we ask, we request, we petition, that we would walk that way. That would be an honor to him, and most of all, and honor to You. And we ask all of these things and we give you thanks in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.</p> <p>Thank you for joining us online. Thank you for your time and your attendance to this honor and this memorial. And so from the family and from this church we want to again give you thanks for that effort, that energy, that you've lent your heart to remember him. You are loved.</p>