

The Old Paths

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“Thoughts On A Death”

Jarrod Jacobs

As most here are aware, my grandfather, Henry Jacobs, passed away on March 6, 2007. There are several here who met him when he and my grandmother have visited, and know how he influenced my life in many ways. Some have told me that I was “old-timey” in my raising. Much of that had to do with his influence on me.

In this issue, I thought it would be good to print excerpts of the funeral sermon from last week (3/9/07) because his was a life that showed us that it is possible to obey the Lord’s commands in this world (Rev. 22:14). Henry Jacobs was not a perfect, or sinless man (Rom. 3:23), but he was a forgiven man (I Pet. 3:21) and had many good characteristics because of his relationship with God.

Faithfulness In Marriage

My grandparents were married for 63 years and 17 days. They are examples of love, commitment, and honoring vows made before God and man. There was never a question concerning their faithfulness and love for one another. They knew that they were married “for life” (Rom. 7:2-4), and their vows bound them together. Solomon said, “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be

few...When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed” (Ecc. 5:2-4). Truly, marriage vows belong in this category, and my grandfather respected his! Jesus spoke about marriage, and said, “*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”* (Matt. 19:6). The Bible speaks of those married being “one” (Matt. 19:6). My grandparents were one for many years. It was evident in their actions toward each another for over 63 years.

Generosity

This is another godly characteristic we observed in my grandfather. Folks who knew him and my grandmother see them as generous to a fault. Of course, the children and grandchildren were recipients of their generous nature numerous times. At the same time, those who knew my grandfather outside of the immediate family also saw him living out the Bible in his life. For example, the Bible teaches, “*Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth”* (Eph. 4:28). Through his years of employment, he gave money and goods to others. He continued to give to others even after his retirement.

In the epistle to the Galatians, we read, “*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith”* (Gal. 6:10). Henry was a man generous not only with

money, but with time, abilities, with his volunteerism in the honor guard, VFW work, and other charities. He taught his family what it means to give to others. Here was a man who remembered Christ’s words, “*It is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35).

A Christian

The greatest thing we can say about Henry Jacobs is that he is a Christian. He has been a Christian for 49 years. In fact, this is the only relationship I know of that does not end at physical death! (Think: Who are the “saints” Christ will bring with Him? Aren’t Christians being discussed in I Thessalonians 4:13-16?) Therefore, he has been a Christian for 49 years, and continues to be such. Though enduring physical death, he is still a child of God!

Thanks to the good influence of Walter Dillman and his wife, as well as Charles and Nina Neal, both he and my grandmother were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and became Christians on Sunday, April 27, 1958. Their children (aged 7 and 2 at the time) were raised in the Lord (Eph. 6:4), and they were later baptized into Christ, as have been three grandchildren thus far.

When speaking about the work involved in raising children, one person said, “I am raising my grandchildren’s teachers.” This is exactly what my grandfather (and grandmother) did! They did something similar to what we see described in II Timothy 1:5 and 3:15. There is no question that the reason I am here today is due to my grandfather’s influence, teaching, etc., imparted to his children that was then passed down to me!

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Some Things We Can Learn From This Death:

In the long ago, Solomon wrote by inspiration, *"It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart"* (Ecc. 7:2). In addition to what we can learn from various aspects of Henry Jacobs' life, there are some other things we ought to be able to "lay to heart" when thinking about this death.

Life Is Short: Regardless of how long we live, our life passes quickly. When describing life, James asks, *"For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"* (Jas. 4:14). In Psalm 90 Moses prayed, *"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away"* (Ps. 90:10). Though my grandfather lived for 81 years, I'm sure he would tell you that the time went by too fast! Life is but a moment at it's longest! Since this is true, we need to take advantage of every moment we have while upon this earth (II Cor. 6:2).

Death Is Sure: Physical death entered the world because of sin (Gen. 3:17-19), and my grandfather was no exception to this rule. Neither am I! Neither are you! Solomon tells us, *"the living know that they shall die"* (Ecc. 9:5). James compared faith without works to physical death. He said, *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"* (Jas. 2:26). In simple terms, this is all that happened when my grandfather passed away. His body was unfit to house his spirit. So, it slipped out of the body and into God's keep-

ing (Ecc. 12:7), producing physical death! In fact, it is appointed unto man once to die (Heb. 9:27). This is an appointment all of us will keep!

Eternity Is Long: At death, we do not simply fade out of existence! We still live on, just not under the confines of time and space like we do here on earth! This is seen in the Old Testament when folks were *"gathered to their fathers"* and then *"buried"* some time later (Gen. 25:8-9; 35:29; 49:33-50:1-3, 7, 10, 13). We know that *"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"* (Matt. 22:32). We live on even after this earth-life ends. This is made clear when we learn of the rich man and Lazarus and their respective lives after they left this earth (Lk. 16:19-31).

The Judgment Is Set: Regardless of whether we are dead or alive on earth when Christ returns, we will appear at the Judgment Day! It is not a "maybe" situation; it is a certainty (Rom. 14:11-12; II Cor. 5:10; Acts 17:31; Ecc. 12:13-14)! Therefore, the time for us to prepare for eternity is NOW!

There is a judgment to come, and that judgment day will be experienced by all (Matt. 25:31-46)!

Conclusion

Henry Jacobs' race is run. With

it, all the plans, dreams, wishes, thoughts to be expressed, etc., are gone as well. However, could he come back, I believe he'd say exactly what has been said thus far! He would want you to get ready for the Judgment Day and prepare your life for when the Lord comes. In order to prepare for death, do what my grandfather did 49 years ago when he followed the Lord's plan for salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38, 16:30-34; I Pet. 3:21)! If you have not done this yet, do it today. We have no promise of tomorrow. Make corrections in your life today before it is too late!

Thank You!!

I wish to once again thank each one for their kind words, the multitude of cards, the expressions of sympathy through hugs and tears, and the multitude of prayers that have been offered on behalf of me and my family at the passing of my grandfather, Henry Jacobs. This will not be forgotten. You are truly a great group of caring people. Our fellowship in Christ is significant and is carrying us through much at this time. I continue to solicit your prayers in the coming days and weeks as we grieve and cope with our loss.

Love, Jarrod

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