

HUGS

Heartfelt, Uplifting, Guest Stories

DEVOTIONS FROM OUR CHURCH FAMILY
APRIL 2, 2020

My Mother's Prayers

I was drafted in 1941 with my best friend Woodrow Holland. We made it through basic training, and we were assigned to the 359th infantry 95th division of the U.S. Army.

After basic, we were transported to Boston to catch the *Mariposa* to England. This was the third largest ship in the world. It had been a cruise ship that had been converted to transport troops overseas during the war.

It was in France that I was assigned the job of driving a truck to haul supplies to the front lines. My trucking company was called the "Red Ball Express."

Somewhere in Germany, in an old house during the heat of battle, I could not sleep. Bombs were falling nearby, and shells were going off overhead. I would think of my mother at home praying for me and would be able to drift off to sleep for a while.

When the war was over, we came back to Louvre, France, and caught the same ship, the *Mariposa*, back to Boston. From there, we caught a troop train. We went all the way to Camp Polk, Louisiana. I can well remember crossing the bridge at Gilbertsville and being able to see the back of my parents' house.

I came home and that's when I met Ernestine, the prettiest girl I had ever seen. We were married on September 8, 1947 (and were married 69 years).

I've had a good life and am getting up in years. I know without my mother's prayers (Romans 12:12) I would not have made it through the war.

--Rudell Noles

Discipline

Biblical writers sometimes used athletic events as metaphors to help explain spiritual matters. For example, Paul described an athlete competing to "receive a perishable wreath" being like Christians living so as to receive a prize that is "imperishable." He further explains that this prize cannot be won by running aimlessly but requires self-discipline and self-control (1 Corinthians 9:25-27). The Hebrew writer also mentions that we are to "run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

In these references, there is no indication that the race (living the Christian life) for the imperishable prize (heaven) is going to be easy. In fact, the references to self-discipline, self-control and endurance all indicate that this race will be more like a marathon than a walk in the park. In other words, there will be many hills and valleys along the way that will test us and challenge our commitment to finish the race. Jesus reinforces this when he says "...the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life..." (Matthew 7:13-14).

Difficult things can be unpopular in a culture that is always seeking a faster and easier way for just about everything. However, we must not let today's cultural drive for "easy" carry over into spiritual matters. Paul warned against such a time where people would have itching ears and seek teachers to

suit their own passions (2 Timothy 4:3). While many today seek a shortcut to heaven, their search will be in vain. Jesus tells us "I am the way...No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

--Jeff Hall

Kindness Is the Rule

My grandmother left so much of herself behind, as a pattern for all who knew her. I remember so many things about her hospitality, helping the needy and visiting the sick. She was a gentle and meek soul, always having a sweet smile to share.

I canned grape juice every year for my family, buying grapes from an older Christian man, who had grapevines and a bountiful orchard. "Mom Filbeck," as I called her, had moved to town and didn't have grapes anymore. She visited those in her neighborhood who were sick and always took a jar of homemade grape juice when she had it. I told her that I would get the grapes for her to do that. I told Mr. Don about my grandmother and he said he would take her some grapes. So, he did, but wouldn't let her pay for them. He said, "I'll do my part, you do your part and we'll have a part in glorifying the Lord."

At the age of 82, she went to the convalescent center to help "take care of the old folks," as she called it. Proverbs 31:25 tells of a virtuous woman wearing strength and dignity as her clothing and my grandmother certainly wore them well. What a wonderful example we all had to follow! She did what she could (Mark 14:8), where she was, with what she had.

I felt a great peace when she passed, knowing that she was finally with the one she had glorified for so many years. "She opens her mouth with wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue" (Proverbs 31:26).

--Marie Norsworthy

Somebody

About twenty of our church members and some from Missouri met in Frenchburg, Kentucky to conduct a clothing giveaway. The group consisted of men and women ranging from teenagers to golden-agers. Many were there to receive clothing and other items. The line ran through the parking lot and the sheriff volunteered to direct traffic. It was hot.

Patty knew nothing about the church but heard about the giveaway. School was starting and her children needed clothes. As she arrived somebody waved Patty into a parking space. Somebody directed her into the line. Somebody offered her a bottle of cold water. Somebody greeted her with a smile as they completed paperwork. Somebody asked her if the minister could contact her. Somebody helped her find the

correct sizes. Somebody helped bag up the items as she finished her selections and headed to her car.

When Randy, the local minister, contacted Patty she expressed her thanks for the clothing and for the hospitable treatment she had received from everybody. Yes, she was willing to study the Bible with Randy and in a little while she put on Christ in baptism. She stated she was most influenced to become a Christian by all the things "somebody" had done.

When Randy told me of the events leading to Patty's conversion I was reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 25:35-36, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me..."

None of the things somebody did were difficult. They were simple things we can do daily. Be somebody.

--Gayle Hall

That Takes the Cake!

We had made plans to attend our daughter's junior music recital. This was a special event for her, so I wanted to make it special for her by having a cake made for the reception. After picking up the cake we left home for our five-hour trip to Searcy, Arkansas.

When we picked up Shelby and she got in the car, she looked at the cake, and said "Oh! Is the cake supposed to look like that?". I immediately went into panic mode because it was 6 o'clock on Wednesday night. We were going to Bible study and I was trying to decide what in the world I was going to do with the cake!

It just so happened that the mother of one of our daughter's friends there had made cakes for her children. I asked if she could help me fix the cake and she agreed to do so. After Bible study was finished, we went to Walmart. We got icing and another sheet cake from the deli. When we got to Ms Ruth's house, she said, "Oh! It is worse than I thought it was!" We lifted off the top layer and saw that the bottom layer had split in three places. We had to put in a false layer with blue foam insulation and cover it with cling wrap and aluminum foil. We re-iced the cake and took it to the music building at about midnight.

The next day was the recital and Shelby did a wonderful job on her pieces of music. The kids who came all thought the cake was so pretty. Little did they know the interesting transformation of that cake! The main thing is the fact that we have wonderful Christian friends in our lives who are truly godly people who would do anything to help us in our time of need.

--Amy O'Bryan