



Fred J. Bell

July 29, 2016

First I want to say "Thank you!" from the family for being here to honor Dad. When you live to be in your nineties, many of your friends are no longer here, but have gone on to their reward. Some of you have driven great distances and all of you have sacrificed your time. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. And thank you to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and especially to Dad's comrades in service, these officers, who have provided such a honorable and touching tribute to his life and service.

If you asked any of Dad's grandchildren what his favorite verse of Scripture is they would likely say Ps 113:3:

"From the rising of the sun to its setting The name of the Lord is to be praised."

That's a good one to start with, and I'd like to share a few others, and their connection with Dad, like this one Paul wrote to Timothy 2000 years ago:

"You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness," (2 Timothy 3:10, ESV)

STEADFASTNESS

When I think about Dad this is possibly the first word that comes to mind. STEADFAST — Standing strong & Standing long... It's also one of my favorite things about the LORD ... "He Is the same, yesterday, today, and forever." Dad was like that, steadfast.

I'm sure he wasn't always, but he was ever since I've known him. He was human. I heard in his early days he had quiet a temper, and was probably

dealing with a lot of issues young men have dealt with from time immemorial.

If he were here today talking to you, he'd probably give Christ all the credit for the good things about him, and say like Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ." 1 Cor11:1

Reflecting on Dad's greatest qualities this week ... having grown up in his house ... I thought of these...

Service, Sacrifice, Courage, Faithfulness, Justice, Kindness, Hope!

Service Like Jesus would say about Himself, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve..." Humility, keeping others first... his family, his friends, his community, and those in need. Dad was a genuine servant.

Sacrifice

"For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps," (1 Peter 2:21, NASB95) Cigars? Fast cars? His focus changed at some point... more on that later. But he started to lay his life down for others. His was a life of sacrifice, no longer self-centered, but following the way of the Master. I think there is something about seeing sacrifice that touches us all deeply.

Courage

Dad spent most of his life in wild, inaccessible places, among men who carried guns; mostly good men, but some not so much. I watched plenty of tense situations when I road along with Dad where he treated law breakers with the respect due them as humans, using humor and reason to diffuse the situation, but with a steely-eyed gaze that communicated, "I'm going to do whatever it takes to enforce the law and encourage you to obey it in the future." [Spotlighting story and/ cult murderers who were heavily armed in the woods near Parthenon, which received regional media attention. Dad approached them first, seemingly unafraid, and was instrumental in bringing them to justice, and protecting the local citizenry.]

Faithfulness

God keeps His word to a 1000 generations. Dad taught us a man's word is his bond. Mean what you say and say what you mean. Keep your word, even to your own hurt. He was always faithful to his word, and fiercely loyal. His life was a demonstration of faithfulness. [This is illustrated also in how he felt about attendance...story]

Justice

He taught us no one should be or is ultimately above the law. That the rule of law is good. That we should respect the law and respect authority. [He

told Gene and I, when we were hunting age and started carrying BB guns out and about that if he ever caught us breaking the law...]

Kindness

Outsiders might not know this about Dad, but if you were around him long you'd see and sense he was very kind. He had a big heart and a gentle one. He seemed to know and live Proverbs 19:22 that says, "What is desired in a man is his kindness." His friends knew, mostly gone now. Widows, needy kids, and friends knew... we, his kids, watched many acts of generosity and acts of kindness. [Last night I heard of him driving local folks to Little Rock for needed medical treatment, and not accepting a dime.]

Optimism (Hopeful, Positive)

He taught us we were better than no one. But we were as good as anyone, he taught us in word and deed. Be humble. Be confident. Set your sights high. You can do anything you set your minds to do. Make the most of the opportunities the Lord gives you, and your abilities. You have good minds, but keep in mind it's more important to keep a good heart, good character. Your Mom and I bless you and hope you go far. He always looked for the best in adversity or difficult situations too, believing and teaching us to believe that tomorrow will be a better day. I guess it's called "hope" and "faith"; the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. That God was good and big, and would help those who put their trust in Him.

Yes, these traits describe Fred Bell...

Service, Sacrifice, Courage, Faithfulness, Justice, Kindness, Hope!

Where did he learn these things and mold them into his life somehow? Reading this Bible, and studying it daily and weekly for a long time... [hold it up] And HERE [motion side to side] meeting weekly for years with like minded men and women, the community of faith... Then practicing what he learned in the laboratory of life...family, friends, and his workplace ... mostly Newton & Boone Counties, Arkansas. A beautiful place to live. :)

But again, I think he would say, "Follow me as I follow Christ." That's Who taught me. He's my Hope and Stay.

For him it began as a young man about twenty years old, falling in love with a young woman from Omaha Arkansas, Verba Barnes our Mom, and attending her church one night, New Hope Baptist Church, where his body will be laid to rest later today beside her, his wife and love of sixty years.

He told me recently that he was sitting there, hearing Jesus' story, his heart burning, wanting to commit to following Christ, when a man he knew, put his hand on his shoulder and whispered , "Why don't you go on down, you know you want to." :)

Dad did, and since then, it's been, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

This might sum up what captured Dad's heart I believe about the LORD, and the heart of King David as he penned it 3000 years ago... It's in Ps 33

"For the Word of the LORD is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the loving kindness of the LORD."

Maybe this is why Dad loved creation and the outdoors so very much? It reminded him that the Lord of Beautiful Laws, was also loving and kind!

[I want to tell some funny stories about Dad... To show the very human side of him, But there seems too many to choose. Poems and poetry. Funny short verses but also "IF" by Kipling in it's entirety. Gene shooting in the basement. Flood canoe trip to Jasper. The whipping story and policy. Slipping up on people stories, many I heard from people for the first time last night. He seemed to have an Indian-like ability to only be seen in the woods if he wanted to be seen, and to show up most anywhere. :) Name Speedy? Walking story when Gene found him far from his car? VW stories x 3? I haven't scratched the surface, but let me end with this...]

Jesus said, "My Sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." Jn 10:27

Dad's story has been "Follow me as I follow Christ" I Cor 11:1

Then notice what followed Dad...

It's recorded in Ps 23, the last verse, "...surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Happy Dwelling Dad! :) Many in this room will gladly see you soon! :) :)