

Lessons I learned From Grandma Edna

I Peter 4:17-18

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Every significant event in our lives shares two things:
 - A. A date we remember.
 - B. Mental images forever etched in our brains.
2. ****** For example:
 - A. Pearl Harbor:
 - (1) Date: December 7, 1941
 - (2) Image: Explosion of the USS Arizona
 - B. 9/11:
 - (1) Date: September 11, 2001
 - (2) Image: Planes hitting the towers and the towers falling
3. **3** Five very significant events in my life (no order of significance, because they are all significant):
 - A. Wedding:
 - (1) Date: May 15, 1976
 - (2) Image: Picture w/Sherry; my mother and father (esp. the smile on my mother's face).
 - B. Ryan's birth:
 - (1) Date: September 21, 1981
 - (2) Image: Holding him and his little hand grasping my finger.
 - C. Mother's death:
 - (1) Date: July 20, 1977
 - (2) Image: Father and aunt coming to tell me the bad news while I was in the hospital.
 - D. Dawne's "gotcha day":
 - (1) Date: September 19, 2005
 - (2) Image: meeting her the first time; white dress; her holding back tears.
4. Before revealing the fifth significant event you'll need some background information.
 - A. This event concerns my mother's mother: Edna Marsh (Grandma Edna).
 - B. Grandma Marsh's life:
 - (1) Born in 1897
 - (2) Married young, husband (Clayton) ~12-15 years older.
 - (a) Five children (3 girls, 2 boys; explain).
 - (b) Husband was a total jerk:
 - (i) Napoleon complex
 - (ii) Survey crew of the *Indianapolis Motor Speedway* (built 1909; picture).
 - (iii) He beat the children (esp. youngest boy; w/treadle sewing machine belt; threatened w/gun)

- (iv) Edna stuck out the marriage to protect the children the best she could then divorced when the last child left the home.
- (3) Edna had so many very good qualities:
 - (a) Hard-working:
 - (i) Hard working to a fault; literally worked herself into an early grave.
 - (ii) She managed two *Howard Johnson* restaurants (explain).
 - (iii) Ran a catering business; state fair food concessions; Virginia State Fair.
 - (b) Dedicated, loyal:
 - (i) Her employees absolutely loved her (Jesse).
 - (ii) Her bosses loved, respected and appreciated her for what she did for them.
 - (iii) Overflowing flowers at her funeral (There were so many the funeral home had to set up an extra room to hold all the floral arrangements sent).
 - (c) Generous:
 - (i) Generous to a fault (lived in a trailer; drove very modest car)
 - (ii) Christmas, Easter, St. Valentine's Day
 - (iii) Often provided financial help to my mom and dad.
 - (iv) Trips, vacations
 - (v) Food from catering business
 - (d) Pleasant personality: obviously very successful; very good leader and motivator of people; BUT:
 - (i) She was never rude; never uttered a cross word.
 - (ii) She never dominated the conversation to draw attention to herself.
 - (iii) She never once showed any indication of an ego that needed to be stroked
 - (iv) Everyone instantly liked her; she was never pushy or aggressive in any way.
 - (v) She was just a wonderfully pleasant and easy person to be around, work with, etc.
- 5. ** That brings me to the fifth most significant event in my life: Grandma Edna's death
 - A. Date: November 22, 1964
 - B. Image: First time I cried because of being emotionally upset.
- 6. 4 I want to briefly look at some lessons I've learned from Grandma Edna.
 - A. This is a very important lesson; we all desperately need to learn and apply in our lives.
 - B. I urge you to pay close attention and apply these lessons to your life.

II. DISCUSSION:

- I. 5** God cannot lie:
 - A. So many people believe that nearly everyone is going to heaven.
 - (1) In their view, hell is reserved for the really "super-wicked" people like Adolph Hitler, Lee Harvey Oswald, Charles Manson, Ted Bundy, etc.
 - (2) Right off the bat that view is sorely mistaken (Matt. 7:13-14).

- B. If one were even to hint that people like Grandma Edna would be forever lost in hell; you would be ridiculed, rejected shunned, banished, hated, etc.
- C. So, I want to make three things crystal clear:
- (1) I would love to find a way to believe Grandma Edna will be in heaven.
 - (2) I fully recognize God is the judge and will decide her eternal fate (and all of us!).
 - (3) I know God will make the right decision in Grandma Edna's case; and in every case.
- D. However, sadly I firmly believe (based on what I know) Grandma Edna is lost.
- (1) To my knowledge she never regularly attended any "church."
 - (2) To my knowledge she never obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - (3) I don't even know whether she owned a Bible.
- E. I say that with profound sadness.
- (1) Again, some act as if God will save nearly everyone, especially what you and I would call "good people" such as Grandma Edna.
 - (2) Most people, even members of the Lord's church, somehow, some way believe God is going to make exceptions in such cases.
- F. This is a very dangerous way of thinking for the simple fact "God...cannot lie..." (Titus 1:2).
- (1) God has given **ALL** need to know in order to live a life that will end in a heavenly home.
2 Tim. 3:16-17: *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*
2 Pet. 1:3-4: *"as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,"*
 - (2) So, we must guard against the temptation of imagining God will make exceptions.
 - (3) We can only know God's mind **IF** He reveals it to us:
1 Cor. 2:9-12: *"But as it is written:
'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'*
10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God."
 - (4) God revealed "all truth" (Jn. 16:13) and what we see (i.e., Bible) is **ALL** He chose to reveal; there is no more!
 - (5) The Hebrew writer tells us God's "counsel" is "immutable" (Heb. 6:17-18); it cannot and will not be changed; there will be no exceptions; no "do-overs"; no special cases.
 - (6) The "word of the Lord endures forever"! 1 Pet. 1:23-25; Jn. 12:48-49
Num. 23:19: *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*

Eccl. 3:14: “I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. nothing can be added to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him.”

- G. Nothing I think or say, no matter how many prayers I might pray; God isn't going to change His Word; He will not change the terms of salvation for Grandma Edna or anyone else.

2. **** Christ only saves:**

- A. God's Word is as plain as day: no one is going to be saved unless it is through Jesus Christ.

2 Tim. 2:10-13: “Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. I I This is a faithful saying:

For if we died with Him,
We shall also live with Him.
I 2 If we endure,
We shall also reign with Him.
If we deny Him,
He also will deny us.
I 3 If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He cannot deny Himself.”

- B. The gospel is everything! It is the only “guidebook”!

Rom. 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. I 7 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

- C. It doesn't matter how “good” of a person I thought Grandma Edna was; or how “good” anybody else thought she was.

- D. If we don't obey the gospel; if we don't do what God says we need to do to get “in Christ” and to stay “in Christ”; we are lost! **“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed...”**

Eph. 1:3-12: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have **redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him. I I In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

- E. Nobody will be saved:

- (1) Because others thought they were a “good” person (Acts 10 & 11).
- (2) Because others thought they were “nice.”
- (3) Because they helped people in need.
- (4) Because they donated a billion dollars to build a hospital, etc.

- (5) Anyone (rich/poor, famous/not-so-famous, tall/short, fat/thin, etc.) not “*in Christ*” will be lost:

Jn. 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

Acts 4:12: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

- F. For whatever reasons, Grandma Edna chose to brush aside the gospel of Christ; didn’t do so in a mean, spiteful way.

- (1) The gospel is God’s only “life line.”
- (2) If we ignore it; no other will be offered.
- (3) From all I know, Grandma Edna simply ignored the only “life line” God will ever offer.

3. ****** Is God fair?

- A. Many would think I was the one of the worst people that ever lived for believing anyone of Grandma Edna’s good character would be eternally lost.
- (1) They forget Cornelius in **Acts 10:1:** “a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.”
 - (2) But even this “good” man needed to hear “words by which you and all your household will be saved.” (Acts 11:14)
 - (3) Cornelius, an undeniably “good” man, was not “*in Christ*”; that means he was lost!
 - (4) Grandma Edna was not “*in Christ*”; she is lost!
- B. If people like Grandma Edna are lost (they are!) some would get mad at God and shake their fist: “If _____ is not going to be in heaven, then I don’t want to be there either!”
- C. The implication is clear: they don’t believe God is being fair for requiring men to be “*in Christ*” to be saved.
- D. When I was at the Grand Canyon looking at the awesome “bigness” of the canyon several thoughts came to my mind.
- (1) First, I thought about the grand evidence the canyon provides to prove God’s existence.
 - (a) The Universe screams, “There is a God!” Rom. 1:20 (eternal power & deity)
 - (b) The evidence is so overwhelming, Paul says if we deny God’s existence we “*are without excuse*”! Even if we just ignore the evidence.
 - (c) For whatever reasons, Grandma Edna chose to deny God’s existence by ignoring Him and His will; like all who do so she was “*without excuse*”!
 - (d) Harsh? No! God was not “unfair”; He went to the extreme to get Grandma Edna’s attention! He does the same for all men!
 - (2) Second, the canyon was so massive; so many trillions upon trillions of tons of rock.
 - (a) As I considered all the massive rock the thought occurred to me that all those trillions of tons of rock are composed of atoms (neutrons, protons, electrons).
 - (b) Jesus Christ is deity; He is God (Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:23; Jn. 8:58; Acts 20:28; Heb. 1:8-9).
 - (c) As God, as deity, Jesus is:

- ☛ Omnipotent: **Jer. 32:27**: “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?”; Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3; Heb. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 3
- ☛ Omniscience: **Psa. 147:5**: “Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.”
- ☛ Omnipresent: **Psa. 139:7-10**:

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
 Or where can I flee from Your presence?
 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
 If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
 9 If I take the wings of the morning,
 And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,
 And Your right hand shall hold me.”

- (d) Then the thought occurred to me: At any given moment in time, in all these trillions upon trillions of tons of rock, Jesus knows the exact position of every electron, proton, and neutron! At any given moment, He knows that for the entire Universe!

E. **Application**: the application is very simple and most profound!

- (1) He who knows the position of every subatomic particle in the Universe at any moment in time is the one who died on the cross so you and I could be reconciled to God:

Col. 1:19-22: “For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight...”

- (2) Think of the love that demonstrates (Rom. 5:8).
 (3) Think of the humiliation that required (Mk. 15; Phil. 2:5-11).
 (4) So, on the Day of Judgment God will say, “Oh, that’s ok you turned your back on Me, you ignored My Son and His great suffering and sacrifice. You’re a “good” person so come right into heaven!”
 (5) Only a fool would even entertain such thoughts! Only a fool would think God is unfair!

4. ****** Man’s all:

A. I pondered long and hard on this lesson.

- (1) At first I thought I would end this lesson by explaining that being a faithful Christian is “the most important thing in life.”
 (2) But the more I thought about it, that seemed inadequate.

B. Being a faithful Christian is not simply “the most important thing in life.”

- (1) It is the “only” thing in life!
 (2) Solomon said,

Eccl. 12:13-14: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God and keep His commandments,
 For this is man’s all.
 14 For God will bring every work into judgment,

*Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil."*

C. If we don't live life as a faithful Christian we've missed "*man's all*"!

(1) All there is to life! Nothing else really matters!

"perfect, entire, and wanting nothing; whereas, without this, he is nothing, let him have ever so much of the wisdom, wealth, honour, and profits of this world." (*John Gill's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*)

(2) A billion, trillion years into eternity the only thing that will matter will be if I'm "*in Christ*"!

******"Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important."

—C.S. Lewis

D. Sadly, I believe Grandma Edna is in the same position the of the rich man in Luke 16:19-31.

(1) Like the rich man she is in torment because she ignored God (maybe different reasons, but same result).

(2) But, like the rich man, if she could, she would come back and warn us, "*lest they also come to this place of torment.*" (Lk. 16:28)

III. CONCLUSION: 5

1. ****** I decided this lesson doesn't need much of a conclusion.

I Pet. 4:17-18: "*For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now*

*'If the righteous one is scarcely saved,
Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?'"*

2. ****** If you don't get the point; can't or won't make the application, please say hello to Grandma Edna for me.

3. Invitation