

Mary Jones Memorial
January 26, 2017

INTRODUCTION

- I've known Mary for three years
- Blessed by her baking and her presence in our community of faith
- She lived eighty-three years...it's a long time
- I began to wonder what all she saw during her lifetime. Here's a few things Mary was part of:

WHAT MARY EXPERIENCED

- 1933
 - Work on the Golden Gate Bridge began
 - "Lone Ranger" series began on the radio
 - Walt Disney's "Three Little Pigs" was released
- 1940s - WWII and the atomic bomb used on Japan
- 1948 - The U.S. recognized Israel as a state
- 1951 - First electric computer is made
- 1959 - Alaska and Hawaii become states
- 1960s - Civil Rights Movement becomes prominent
- 1963 - JFK assassinated
- 1969 - U.S. puts man on the moon
- 1970s - Free love and hippie movement shake up American cultural values
- 1980s - Reagan boom, AIDS epidemic, bad hair, and glam rock
- 1990s - Rise of internet and technology, U.S.S.R. formally dissolved
- 2001 - 9/11

WHAT I EXPERIENCED IN MARY

- I knew Mary for three years. She was a gift to me and to those who knew her. As I sat with her just a few hours before she passed, I thanked God for her and her life and what she meant to me.
- I have several fond memories of Mary, but a few characteristics about her stood out:
- I saw Mary as a TOUGH WOMAN
 - This is evidenced by the long life she lived.
 - She never whined about the challenges in her life.
 - She lived a simple life in a simple apartment off her simple retirement.
 - She rarely missed church

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- One time, she even fell down during an evening service, earning herself a doozie of a black eye...but even when it happened, in the midst of horrific bruising and swelling, she brushed it off.
- She wasn't fast on her feet but she was on her feet...She could have been pushed around in a chair but she never did.
- Her toughness sometimes came through as stubbornness and orneriness, all the way up even to the last few months of her life...A trait in her in which I took great pleasure in observing.
- She never gave up...I was there when the doctor asked her if she realized the terminal nature of her illness...She was fully aware, but she wasn't a quitter...She never gave up.
- I saw Mary as CARING AND SENSITIVE
 - She loved her family
 - She loved her church
 - She loved her cat, Xena
 - She loved to bless others with her baking and flower-arranging
 - She was a good friend to her beloved Shirley Coe, always there for her for over thirty years of friendship.
 - She would laugh at my dumb jokes and always smile and give me hugs.
- I saw Mary as LOYAL
 - She was a friend every friend wanted to have...Her friendship with Shirley lasted an entire lifetime of years...Sharing fun times and tough times together, laughing and singing and weathering storms, ups and downs, good times and bad...She was there for Shirley.
 - She was committed to her church
 - She was a member of Parkway for three years and every time she was here she gave in the offering (from the little she had)
 - Attended all the women's events
 - Attended all the senior's events...Usually showing up with a plate or tray of something delicious she had prepared.
 - She was committed to her family...as best as an elderly woman could be... Remained true to her grand-daughter, Connie. I asked her, "Do you want me to help with decisions?" She said, "No, my grand-daughter Connie has all that covered."
- I saw Mary as COMMITTED TO JESUS CHRIST
 - Always came to church

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- Always had her Bible
- There is no doubt about her salvation
- Mary trusted and lived for her Lord as best she knew how.
- I saw Mary as Spirit-filled
 - Walking by the Spirit...Keeping Jesus Christ first in her life
 - She knew her spiritual gifts and used them
 - She believed in divine healing and would often ask me to pray for her

WHAT MARY'S EXPERIENCING NOW

- *John 3:36 (NIV) Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.*
- Mary is now seeing eternal life...In Christ, our loss is her gain
- *Philippians 1:20-21 (NIV) 20 I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain*
- Revelation 21:1-7 gives us a glimpse of what Mary is now experiencing in person, that which we can only imagine...She sees her Lord and knows no more pain, sorrow, suffering, sickness, shame, disease, death...Instead she's dancing on streets of gold and she's eating from the Tree of Life...She's singing the greatest songs ever sang in the presence of her one and only Jesus Christ, her Lord of Lords and King of Kings... Her Lion and her Lamb...her Alpha and Omega...her Beginning and the End
- She's experiencing Life where faith and hope are no longer needed...She's experiencing the greatest of these...which is Love.

WHAT WOULD MARY WANT FOR US

- I believe Mary would want you to know how thankful she is for the rich, wonderful life you provided for her...she would encourage you, above all else, to love one another and be there for each other, and don't stay mad at each other for very long...For in this life, our relationships are all we've got
- Truth: Last-breath moments on the death bed are not spent wanting more money... Those last moments are spent wanting only one thing: to be surrounded by people we love, and to know that everything's going to be okay when we're gone, that there are no loose ends or nothing is left undone and everyone's going to be alright...Mary would want these things...that you're going to be alright.

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- Truth: But there's something even more important than this: Knowing that you're good with God and that your name is recorded in His book of life.
- If Mary were here, she would come right up to you and take you by the hand and lead you straight to Jesus Christ, for Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one gets to the Father but through Him.
- She would tell you everything you've heard about God is real. She would tell you the Bible is true. She would tell you that hell is real. She would tell you the "price" you pay for faith in this lifetime is absolutely nothing compared to the riches God has in store for you.
- She would want you to know that she's got a heavenly figure that would knock your socks off (now that she's got a new body meant to last for eternity)
- Truth: If you believe and obey Jesus Christ you will see Mary again in the fullness of all heaven has to offer...But without sold-out total faith in Jesus, you will never see her again...nor will you see the life God wants so desperately for you to have...and today would be your final goodbye.
- Call for salvation and leading of the sinner's prayer

DOXOLOGY

Jude 1:24-25 (NIV) 24 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.