

Dad's New Body



Dad liked to put on a ball glove and go out back and play “catch.” He was a better athlete in his day than I was, but I was 30 years younger. It was easy for me to jump for a ball I misjudged or chase after one that got away. Dad’s shoulder would get sore sometimes and he couldn’t play long. It was too bad he couldn’t get a new body, or at least new parts to replace the worn out ones.

Humor was important in our family, too. A good joke or bit of wit could make up for most short-comings.

When I was perhaps 10, Dad had an operation to correct a deviated septum. I did not quite know what that was; still do not, except that the doctor had to do something to Dad’s nose. When we went to visit Dad at the hospital, it was only natural for me to wear an oversized, false nose.

By age 50, Dad had his nose fixed, a bad shoulder, his appendix was gone, tonsils taken, hair history, he was overweight- you know, typical American. Too bad he couldn’t get a new body. His brain was better than ever. Now I know what it’s like to be 50 and a bit how Dad might have felt.

Dad was very active at church, a good Bible-teaching church. He must have come across the following scripture along the way, because I know he held out hope for a new body some day:

For you have a new life. It was not passed on to you from your parents, for the life they gave you will fade away. This new one will last forever, for it comes from Christ, God's ever-living Message to men. Yes, our natural lives will fade as grass does when it becomes all brown and dry. All our greatness is like a flower that droops and falls; but the Word of the Lord will last forever. And his message is the Good News that was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:23-25 The Living Bible

Eventually things got worse for Dad’s body. He got diabetes. That took its toll on one of his favorite hobbies- eating. Cookies, ice cream, pies... Then he had to part with his gall bladder. That was even tougher on his hobby. Then he got that dreaded “C” word. We were able to get through everything else, even the diabetes and gall bladder surgery, with some humor. We did not find any humor in this cancerous illness at all. That does not mean Dad did not have an outlet to ease his sorrows. Although the outcome of the cancer was uncertain, Dad had hope in the conclusion.

He kept a diary. On May 17, 1992, he entered, “When I leave this earth, don’t mourn for me- be prepared to join me at the end of your (life).” This was written before his first bout with cancer. In 1996, Dad began successive years of fighting cancer. The chemotherapy and other treatments were painful and a lot to bear for a 75 year-old man. Dad was looking forward to his eventual new body as he endured these treatments. Here are the thoughts of a man knowing what God had waiting for him:

- April 24, 1996. “I can’t do much work anymore. To anyone reading this, put your trust in Jesus Christ and come see me and my new body. ”
- May 6, 1996. “I am a coward, even though I know that for me to die is gain. I’m so glad I love Jesus. I’m so glad He loves me.”
- December 18, 1996. “I’m not very confident of my condition. I just have to repeat, I’m so glad there is a Heaven that we are promised.”
- March 7, 1997. “Another not so hot day. Things are sure to get better for me someday.”

Dad knew some other scripture, such as the following, which were implied in his entries:

⁵¹*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* ⁵²*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* ⁵³*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* ⁵⁴*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* ⁵⁵*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* ⁵⁶*The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* ⁵⁷*But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

In 1997, Dad successfully beat cancer a second time. The following year, on the Fourth of July, Dad had a lump above his left eye. It so happened that all of us kids were home visiting. We took Dad to the hospital where upon visual examination the doctors believed that the lump was an infection. Dad, having feared this to be another bout with the “C” word, was ecstatic. The next day his second great grandson was born. The next day... the next day he found out that the lump *was* a tumor, not conjunctivitis. It would prove to be cancerous.

Dad was able to see his great-grandson, as he had seen the other two great grandchildren before him. He would not see the second and third great granddaughters born a couple years later. I stood by Dad’s bedside the last night of his life on this earth. I don’t know how you personally feel about these things or the writings of Billy Graham’s on angels, but Dad saw someone else in the room with us that night and asked me who it was. I know who I believe it was.

The next day, July 25, 1998, my Dad joined Jesus in Heaven. We who know Jesus as our Savior can take comfort in the same promises that comforted my dad.

Dad left a legacy of kindness. If it were up to Dad, everyone would go to Heaven- everyone. It is not up to Dad. It is up to someone perfect and just. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We all deserve death, the wages of sin. But by God’s grace, through the shedding of the blood of His son, we all can have eternal life, and a home in Heaven:

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23).

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:1-3).

Don’t you want a new, incorruptible body someday? Salvation and a free new body can be yours. If you want eternal life, accept Jesus as your Savior. Pray these words, “*Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner and have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature, and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus now as my Savior who shed His blood for me. I give my life to you and will strive to live for you. Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.*”

Excerpted from Lerch, Harold, Sr., *Two Wrongs Don’t Make a Right, but Three Lefts Do*, Fairfax VA 22030, Xulon Press 2003

Word to the World Ministries



Harold A. Lerch, Sr. P.E.
Middleburg PA 17842

Web www.word2world.com

E-mail HalLerch88@gmail.com