

## All Saints Sunday, November 4, 2007

### Luke 6:31-38

It was a strange funeral. O he'd been to funerals before and you couldn't say at their age it was unexpected but for both of them to go at the same time. What were the odds of that? What were the odds of Nordahl and Selma, his grandma and grandpa dying in their sleep at the same time? It was so perfect that if you didn't know them you might have thought that they had taken matters into their own hands.

But anyone who knew them at all would know that they never would have done anything to force the hand of God. Yes, they were strong in the faith; the faith he had left when he was just a teenager. They were strong in the faith, though they went about it in very different ways; that was probably because of their very different personalities.

Grandma was right out there. She never had a thought that wasn't verbalized and that included her faith. She was as strong a Christian as he had ever known, not that she was perfect or pretended to be, she was very out front about that too. She took to heart the Luther quote about "sinning boldly". She didn't try to sin but she wasn't going to limit her life and her energies to just trying not to sin. She was going to live her life like her faith, boldly. She would live in the grace of God. And when she messed up, as she often did, when she said things she shouldn't have said, as she often did, she would confess it to God and everyone else who happened to be around, relying on God's grace.

Grandpa was just the opposite. He never said a word about his faith unless he had to. He never said anything unless he had to. That's why he and Grandma were such a good match. Grandma would say something whether she had to, or not and even when no one wanted her to. Grandpa, wasn't the strong silent type. Grandpa was the "you just know he's got all this love inside but can't tell ya" type. He was the "live his life and show you his faith" type.

If he would compare his grandparents to people in the bible he would say: Grandpa was kind of a silent Jesus full of love and grace. Grandma would be more like the Apostle Paul, loud and obnoxious. But you just knew she was full of faith. Every so often, if you watched her closely, she let slip, that there was love in there.

So how was it that with such faithful old saints as grandparents, grandparents he was very close to, how was it that he had fallen away from the faith?

Grandma was not happy about it and neither was Grandpa. She would get right in his face. So, he tried his best to avoid her or change the subject. She let him but she wasn't being fooled. Grandpa wouldn't say anything of course, but he worked on him too, he did it in some subliminal way. So he tried his best keep his distance from Grandma and Grandpa. In recent years that meant hardly seeing them at all, which he really regretted right now.

So here he was sitting in church at their funeral. The church he had come to many times. He was trying to pretend he was listening to the preacher which was really hard because he is so boring and everything he said seemed so irrelevant. As he sat by himself in the pew, it seemed like he wasn't alone. It was the weirdest thing. He felt like he was sitting between Grandma and Grandpa. He felt the way he used to when he was little and went to church with them. On those cold winter mornings in that church where the cold breeze went right through the crackles in the bricks. But sitting between Grandma and Grandpa he felt warm and cozy. That's how he felt right now. He also felt that same feeling of being close to God and afraid of nothing. He was getting the feeling that he was not going to be able to avoid Grandma and Grandpa the way he could when they were alive. Somehow in their death their faith seemed more real to him than it ever did. God seemed more real to him than God ever did.

Whenever you caught Grandma doing something really nice for someone she would be quick to say: "It wasn't me. It was the Holy Spirit. Maybe that was true. Maybe it was also the Holy Spirit that let everyone know about Grandpa's love for God even though he never said a word. A thought came over him, Grandma probably sent that Holy Spirit after him.

When Grandma did talk to him about his faith, she's say "you might have given up on Jesus but he hasn't given up on you". Maybe that's true.

Today we remember the Saints. We try to remember that Saints aren't perfect godly people but people chosen by a perfect God. There are people out there in that cemetery as well as other people that God chose to bless, people he put on earth to touch our lives with faith. We are thankful for their blessings. The blessings they received and the blessings they were.

He was not sure who that preacher was talking about. He had good intentions but he was trying to make his grandparents out to be these holy good goodies; that never made mistakes, who didn't sound like real people. My Grandma and Grandpa he thought were real people. They weren't perfect people they were real people of God. He loved those old people and would miss them but they weren't perfect. They weren't perfect people but God had made them the perfect Grandparents for him. Come to think of it God also made them the perfect witnesses of the gospel for him.

Let us give thanks for the Saints in our lives, and let us be saints in someone's else's life. Amen