

A Legacy of Faithfulness

By Fred Zaspel

In Psalm 90:16-17 Moses prays,

May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children. May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands.

Faithfulness in the service of Christ is a basic demand that our Lord has placed upon us all. We all have different abilities, but the basic demand is the same—use what opportunities and abilities you have for Christ. The results are likewise determined by God. But we know that it is through us that He has chosen to work, and a large part of the joy of Christian service is to see Him bless our work in His good time. We pray, with Moses, that “the favor of the Lord our God will rest upon us,” and that He will “establish the work of our hands” as we attempt to serve Him. This, we pray, will be our legacy.

There was a man who by the 1930’s was already an old man. He was before my time, but I have heard of him on several occasions. His name was Ezra. I don’t even know his last name, but he was my grandmother’s uncle. Uncle Ezra was a faithful Christian who never married but had determined that he could be a witness for Christ to what family he had. And so he would often invite my grandparents to church. One day he stopped by my grandparents’ house and invited my grandfather to go with him the next evening to the special meetings being hosted by his church. Grandpa was not interested, but he went—peace in the family, and all that, you know.

During the sermon the guest preacher said something that caught my grandfather’s interest. He said, “Don’t think that just because you were sprinkled as a baby you are a Christian!” I say it caught his interest—actually, it roused his anger. Grandpa was not a religious man, but he had attended a Lutheran church as a boy and was sprinkled as a baby. And now this preacher told him he was lost. How dare he!

After the sermon, the pastor gave an altar call, and Grandpa went forward—but not with the best intentions. He wanted to argue with that preacher. Until midnight or better they went at it. “Don’t you tell me I am not a Christian!”

“But what does *God* say?” the preacher replied, as he turned again to his Bible. And on it went. Late that night God broke Grandpa’s proud will. For the first time in his life, he learned what it was to bend the knee before the Lord Jesus. He confessed Jesus as Lord and asked for forgiveness for his sins. Grandpa was wonderfully saved. God had blessed Uncle Ezra’s faithfulness in bringing my grandfather to hear the gospel preached.

But that’s just the beginning of the story. As a result of all that, my grandmother was soon converted also. Then it was their children also—all six of them, eventually, including my father. Then it was their neighbors. And later the grandchildren. And then the great-grandchildren. Now these many years later, many from their family and their neighborhood have served as pastors, missionaries, deacons, Sunday School teachers, church youth leaders, and so on. At Grandpa’s funeral in 1988 I met several who had come to Christ through his witness. Grandpa, Grandma, their children and grandchildren, their neighbors, their friends—through them all collectively, literally hundreds have come to know Christ.

I thank God for Uncle Ezra. I am thankful for his faithfulness in service to Christ. God “established the work of his hands.” It is no overstatement to say that the influence of my great-great-Uncle Ezra lives on, and it lives on for Christ.

Can you think of a better legacy than that?

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