

GRANDPA DEAN

Michael Dean Eulogy

December 14, 2011

Grandpa had the strongest hands I've ever seen. After 40 years cutting out tarps and turning bolts and screws in his auto upholstery shop, he didn't need vise grips any more. I think he started his own business because he didn't like shoddy work, didn't like laziness, and didn't like waiting on other people to do anything he could do better and faster himself, which included pretty much everything he wanted done. I don't think he liked leaky faucets, either, because I remember being at the cabin up north, and he'd tightened the spigot so hard my dad had to get a pipe wrench to open it.

Grandpa was the hardest worker I've ever known, too. But he didn't just work hard, he worked smart. He always knew the best and quickest way to get the job done. Whatever there was to do, he wanted it done right, and he wanted it done now. He thought he could do anything, and he really could.

And every thing he did, he did well. One thing was fishing. I loved fishing with him, learning where to cast, what bait to use, how to tie a good knot, how to clean fish. No one could clean fish like Grandpa. No one could cook 'em like he could either.

He told good stories, too. I loved sitting around Grandma and Grandpa's fireplace roasting smoky links while he told about growing up in Texas, raising animals, chopping cotton, catching crawdads, throwing newspapers out the window of his Willis Jeepster on his early morning route, and a hundred other good things in life. Frying bluegill and okra, listening to Pavarotti and the Three Tenors, or watching Hogan's Heroes with family, Grandpa knew that simple things were good things.

But he knew what the best things were, too. A few weeks before he died, he got out an old picture book and told us how he and Grandma met. He remembered two special things about her – she loved horses, and she loved ice cream. She was the love of his life, and I can't think about Grandpa without thinking about her.

Sometimes Grandpa talked about how he was saved. A few years after he and Grandma were married, their modern pastor asked them to teach teen Sunday School. Grandpa didn't know the Lord then, but he had plenty of common sense, so he just taught the Bible. When he started teaching about Christ shedding his blood on the cross, the pastor told him he'd lose his class if he didn't quit teaching the Bible and use the denomination's lessons instead. I don't think the pastor knew Grandpa very well, because he should have known that wasn't going to work.

Grandpa's world was pretty simple: there was right and there was wrong, and you might as well get busy doing one of them. He and Grandma left the church and kept looking until they found one that preached the Bible. He began reading it for himself, and it wasn't long till he knew he was a sinner and needed a savior. He accepted Christ, and things changed. He loved to pray, and I remember hoping I could pray like that someday.

But Grandpa didn't just pray and hear the Word, he was a doer of the Word. God gave him a special love for his Lord, his Bible, his wife, his family, his church, and the souls of his customers and friends. God gave him two other special loves, too: children, and his Allis Chalmers tractor. He gave us grandchildren hundreds of rides and thousands of memories. Ask anyone who knew him well, and they'll remember him giving rides and mowing the church lawn. I go to college at Maranatha, and classmates still ask, "Is Mr. Dean your Grandpa?" When I say, "Yes," they tell me about riding that tractor with him when they were young.

Grandpa, thank you for marrying Grandma, for raising your family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, for leaving us wonderful memories and a godly heritage in the lives you've touched. I don't know if the Lord's gotten any shipments of Allis Chalmers up in heaven lately, but if he has, I'm pretty sure you've already offered to help with the grass. Whatever you're doing, I know you're finally home with your Savior you loved so much. Grandpa, on behalf of all your grandchildren, we love you.