

T's Eulogy November, 2007

Welcome everyone to my going home celebration. Do not grieve for me, but be happy for me, for I am in a better place. I will be waiting there for you when your time comes. I want to tell you some of the things I have learned.

God blessed me with a wonderful life. I have done things and gone places that were so special. My parents taught me to always try to do the right thing every day, and they gave me a moral compass so that I would have clear differences in right and wrong. I have lived my life trying to do the right thing, day after day. These efforts gave me a clear conscience and a consistent knowledge that I have tried to do my best all my life. I also tried to live a peaceful life, as I did not like conflict. Sometimes when I would not fight back, people took advantage of me.

I have tried to do good deeds and help others on a daily basis. I tried to be a good listener to my friends and family. I tried to do random acts of kindness daily, and expected no reward. Like giving a child a candy bar, like helping out maids in hotels, like sending friends "a happy." I have always felt that doing special things for people shows God's love.

It took dying to realize just how special my life had been. I want you to know that God was gracious to me when He gave me the gift of "Lew Gherig's Disease." When I say it is a gift; that is exactly what I mean.

When you are faced with a terminal illness, I hope that you have already asked God into your life and that He is a viable part of your life. If you have not done this, do it as quickly as you can! God has always had some part in my life, but for many years, it was just a minor part. When people asked me if I were Christian, I would say

yes automatically. I would tell people that what I had with God was private, but in reality I did not have a relationship. It was private because I did not know any better.

Eventually, I started going to charismatic prayer groups, and asked Christ into my life and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. As I read the Bible, scriptures started speaking directly to me. One from Isaiah said that the Lord is the potter and we are the clay, and who are we to question what the potter is going to use us for? I also discovered a prayer from St. Augustine that said "Lord, give me what you have planned for me, create in me that which you desire of me."

I hope that you have a wonderful prayer life and you ask to serve Him. I understood that if I had truly given my life to God, then my life was His to do with as He wished. I asked Him every day while I lay in my hospital bed how I could serve Him. I think of all the times in years past that He called me to be His servant, to be His hand, to be the person to reach out, and I just let them go by, and I failed Him. I was that busy person on the road that Jesus spoke of in the Good Samaritan parable. I had no time to stop and help a wounded traveler, as I was busy doing church work.

If you are ever told that you have a serious or terminal illness, like I was, do not be mad at God and do not scream and yell against His will. Remember, He is the potter and you are the clay. As Scripture says, "what can the clay say to the potter?" View your diagnosis as a special gift. My terminal illness gave me time to say goodbye. To make peace with my family and friends. To try to correct the wrongs I have done in my life.

Your special gift from God could provide you with an opportunity for growth and to be able to say goodbye to those you love. That is

how I see my illness, a special gift from God. We must always remember that God loves us and cares for each one of us.

The days God has given us are so precious that we should never waste a single one of them. We should not put off doing the things that we desire and have planned to do. We never know how much time we have to do the things we really want to do.

I realized that death is just another stage in our journey. At first, I just clung to the "clay and the potter" idea. Then I realized that God will take care of me. Then I began to look forward to the next phase in my journey. Finally, I became excited, or as the Psalmist says, "For God alone my soul in silence waits."

If you have not had a relationship with God filled with faith and prayer, when you get to that point in your life when you are filled with pain, you may have nothing to draw from. At the end, I was so tired and fatigued, that I had little mental, physical or spiritual strength. I could not think well enough even to pray. I had to draw on the prayers of those around me, and on my relationship and prayer life that I had built up over all the years.

At the end of my life, I realized that I should have made a greater effort to worship God when I was younger. I should have submerged my life in His. I always took His presence for granted. At the end, in my bed, I asked to serve Him, and often felt His presence more than ever, because I knew He was there waiting for me and that He loved me.

Please do not take God for granted. Make God the very center of your life. Read His word; search it out; be proactive, don't just let your life pass you by. Take the time to worship and get close to Him. Treasure those moments when you feel His presence. At the end, His presence will be your greatest comfort!