

A Heavenly Birthday – Saturday night with mom

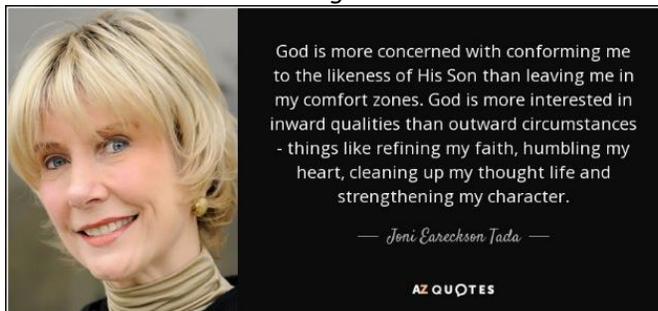
September 16, 2017

I arrived at my mom's at 7:30pm. My family (wife Jane, brothers Pat & Mike, sister-in-law Barbara and niece Becky) take turns spending the evening with Marybelle. Tonight, was special, because it was my mom's 95th birthday. We were postponing a get-together until my 2 brothers return to town. They were at the Silver State Challenge in Ely, NV. Pat was racing his Corvette and Mike was his navigator.

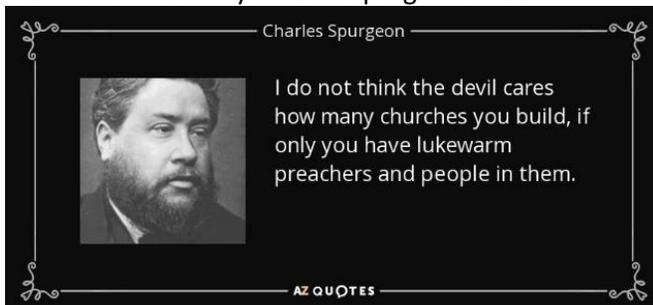
My mom was alert and in a good mood eating some spaghetti and meatballs watching ET (Entertainment Tonight) with the volume up. We were trying to talk and I asked her if I could turn the volume down and she said I could turn it off. I muted it.

We talked about the usual stuff, family updates, Mike and Pat at the race, my niece Becky coming over tomorrow and the fireworks in the neighborhood due to Mexican Independence Day. There was also a very loud backyard karaoke party going on. My mom lives in an old neighborhood just across Tropicana Ave from UNLV.

I must admit, because my birthday was the day before (15th), Jane and I celebrated it today (Saturday) I was very tired and didn't really want to be at my mom's tonight. Earlier, Jane and I used a gift certificate for a restaurant at the Cosmopolitan. Afterwards we walked down to watch the Bellagio fountains. I took some photos to show my mom. I connected to her TV using Chromecast and she really liked seeing them. After the photos, I wanted to look at a YouTube that a new friend at church had shared with me. His name is Joshua Austin. But first I showed her a photo we took after the potluck of the 2 of us and I explained to my mom his motorcycle accident and crushed vertebrae. The 4 min. video sent by Joshua was by Paul Washer giving a short testimony of a book that was published on the life of Leonard Ravenhill, "[In Light of Eternity](#)." The video had the captions turned on and my mom was quite engaged watching it. I also let her look at some of the texts that I had sent to Joshua, including the image of Joni Eareckson Tada "[Celebrating 50 Years in a Wheelchair](#)" and this one which we discussed a bit:



I went to this one by Charles Spurgeon next:



We talked about the word “lukewarm,” and I went to Revelation 3:16 and let my mom read it as I cast it to her TV from my phone. We discussed what it means concerning lukewarm Christians and that Jesus will vomit these people out of His mouth. Mom clearly understood that verse by Jesus.

I was truly surprised how engaged my mom was tonight, so I kept showing her other items that I had stored in my phone. Here was an image of Leonard Ravenhill’s grave marker:



We discussed his quote, *“Are The Things You Are Living For, Worth Christ Dying For?”* My mom wanted an explanation of that, so I gave her a couple examples of hobbies and activities that people can become consumed with; i.e., automobiles, travel, sports, etc. Are they living for those experiences, and if so, how does it compare to what Christ died for? Since we came from a family of “gear-heads,” automobiles were like an idol to us.... my mom really understood that quote.

I then went to my email and saw one sent from a dear friend on the front lines for persecuted Christians. His name is David Witt. I told my mom who he was and that we had actually brought him to Las Vegas about a half-a-dozen times to speak about the Persecuted Church. There was a testimony on his website about a man from India, Havi, that came to know Jesus Christ – delivered out of Hinduism. It was a profound testimony where Havi talked about his father demanding him to worship the idols. After we read it, I made a comment to my mom of the similarities of Hinduism to Catholicism. The Hindus pray to idols as do Catholics (Mary and the saints). I asked my mom what the difference was and after a bit of discussion, tonight she saw little difference (note: I had been talking to my mom about Mary for over 25 years). We camped on Mary for a bit and went to a verse sent by a brother in my men’s group, Tony Hills, who was praying for my mom. While still casting to the TV, I went to Luke 11:27-28, *While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him....., “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.” But Jesus said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”* So we discussed this verse in great detail and my mom started to see it in a new light.

We then went to Galatians 5:19-21, *“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* I asked my mom what she thought idolatry was and she was indeed understanding it. We then went to 1 Timothy 2:5, *“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”* So mom really understood after this one, even though we had discussed this verse many times. Why in the world would you take a chance praying to anything other than the Blessed Trinity. Then mom admitted that Mary was not divine and I said if not divine how can she hear any prayers directed to her? She agreed..... whoa! When she agreed that Mary was not divine, that floored me! Something was truly going on with my mom because to my mom, Mary had been everything: “Co-Redemptrix” and “Mediatrice of all graces.” My mom was seeing the idolatry of her worship for the first time.

I went to the daily devotional from my brother Lyle Brennan, sent early Saturday morning and we read the quote by D.A. Carson, "*The cliché, God hates the sin but loves the sinner, is false on the face of it and should be abandoned. Fourteen times in the first fifty Psalms alone, we are told that God hates the sinner, His wrath is on the liar, and so forth. In the Bible, the wrath of God rests both on the sin (Romans 1:18ff) and on the sinner (John 3:36).*" ~ Don (D.A.) Carson is president and co-founder of the Gospel Coalition

We went to those verses and this discussion really got to my mom. Then my mom turned to me with a look I will never forget and asked, "**How can I repent?**".... In utter disbelief I walked over to her on my knees and I let her in a prayer of repentance, acknowledging all her sins and now making Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ only, Lord of her life. She made a commitment that she would stop praying to Mary and Joseph and all the saints. She knows it will be difficult after doing this her entire life, but will ask Jesus and the Holy Spirit for help.

We went to Romans 10:9, "*that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*" We both had a wonderful time of rejoicing. She would not let go of my hands, squeezing them really hard for a 78lb frail woman and saying out loud, Hallelujah..... Hallelujah..... Hallelujah (over and over again)! I had never experienced my mom saying that.

I pulled the Bible from the back area of a table that I'd given to my dad years ago and flipped to the page where the cloth marker was and believe it or not, Colossians 2:8 was underlined and highlighted!!! "*See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.*" I explained this to my mom in detail and she agreed that the Catholic Church has made up many human traditions based on worldly principles rather than on the person of Jesus Christ. She committed to start reading through the Book of John.

I can only stand on the fact that everything that happened tonight appeared to be genuine and leave everything to the Lord God Almighty.

My mom and I had a great time of prayer. For the first time ever, she didn't want to get ready for bed and kept holding my hands desiring to pray more. I mentioned to her that this was the most amazing Birthday present of all. She agreed, and then she finally went to bed a little after 11pm.

Postscript – Sunday 9/17/17 @ 1:30pm

I stopped by my mom's the next day unannounced. She was at the dining room table studying in the Book of John using her highlighter!! She already had some questions. We spent about an hour and a half going through some relevant things, including her questions about receiving communion. We went to Galatians 1:8-9, "*But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!*" We also read the 23rd Psalm and went to Joshua 24:15 "*.....But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*" My mom wants me to get her that plaque to put in her kitchen.



Photo: We were discussing Galatians 1:8-9