

**Eulogy for James H. Lunsford, Sr. by Rev. James H. Lunsford, Jr.
March 19, 2015**

Prayer: Invocation (Rev. Ron Gilbert)

Song: It is Well with My Soul

Eulogy:

Obituary and Biographical Information

- Born June 7th 1931 Ninety-Six SC to James Andrew and Annie Belle Lunsford
- Died March 17th 2015 in Clarksville, TN
- Lived 83 years, 9 months 10 days
- He married a dark haired, brown eyed beauty that caught his eye one Sunday afternoon as she was walking home from church - Ramona Joyce Brown on June 1, 1955. They enjoyed 59 years 9 months and 16 days together. He fathered 5 children. Three of whom survive him. He had 3 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

Jim Lunsford was a man with many talents and interests:

In fact too many for us to take time to rehearse today. His fascination with gadgets and electronics. His love of books. His insatiable appetite for learning. His skills as a gardener, with tree husbandry, carpentry, mechanics, electrical engineering, building trades, languages, computers, mathematics, music, singing, playing the harmonica, teaching others to play the harmonica, writing (and the list goes on and on). So I have selected three specific areas.

Jim Lunsford was a true patriot and my real American hero:

- He enlisted in the Regular Army prior to being drafted fall of 1951 and completed basic training in Hawaii Nov. 1951. While the setting may have been beautiful, what he was being prepared for was not. Dad was sent to battle fields of the Korean War as a small weapons specialist. He spent his first 181 days in what he always called a "forward operations camp", what we civilians call "the front lines". After this time he was "volun-told" that he was going to become a cook and was sent to Ewo

- Jima, Japan for 6 weeks of cook of baking school. He spent the rest of his tour of duty as a Mess Sergeant.
- After an initial 3 year tour of duty, he reenlisted for an additional 6 years and served in the Army Signal Corps in France, Belgium and the United States. He was honorably discharged 8 April 1960.
 - During his active duty service, Sergeant Lunsford was awarded the United States Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal with 3 Bronze Service Stars, the National Defense Service Medal and 2 Good Conduct Medals.
 - Following his active duty years, Dad continue to serve his country as a member of the National Guard. At times serving in the Army National Guard and ultimately retiring from the Tennessee Air National Guard In June of 1991.
 - Beginning in 1962 Dad was a civil service employee. His expertise was in air traffic control and communications equipment and he retired in June 1986 as the Air Traffic Control Maintenance Supervisor at Fort Campbell Kentucky. Jim Lunsford served with distinction. In going through his papers over the last 2 days, I have been surprised. I always felt dad had served with distinction. I know that he had been named the United States Air Force Communications Service Team Chief of the Year for 1975. But I did not realize that he had received tens of special awards for excellence, exceptional service including more than one special honor for sustained exceptional service.
 - I am not a soldier, but I am the son of a soldier. From my father I learned that the freedom we enjoy in this great nation is purchased not only by the blood of soldiers wounded or slain in battle, but by the some portion of the innocence and humanity of every soldier. Most of whom, being young enough to still be considered children, sign a blank check with their lives. All of which are cashed to some lesser or greater degree and used to pay for our liberty. If you are here today and served as a soldier, I salute you. I thank you for your service. Even as I salute and thank my father, Master Sergeant Jim Lunsford.

Jim Lunsford was a loving husband and father:

- I grew up in a home where love was more than a word. Love was spoken, but it was also demonstrated in tangible ways. One of the greatest gifts my father gave his children was how he loved our mother.

On my wedding day, dad told me "never let the honeymoon end." That is the way I remember the love between my father and mother. By the time I was born, they had been married 14 and a half years. By the time, I really start having detailed memories of such things they had been married 20 years. And, I have many clear memories of a vital, fresh, affectionate, even a playful romance. His children have fond memories of the way Mom and Dad closed most every day: most every night as we settled in bed to sleep, we could hear them conversing about the events of the day. Of those who will feel his absence, I have no doubts, Mom will feel it most keenly.

- Dad worked hard to provide for his family. He was a diligent worker. A good protector and provider. He expressed his love in many ways to his children. He could be playful and affectionate. He could be stern and demanding. He always made it clear he wanted his children to do whatever they did to the best of their ability. While that was not always a fun process, in the final analysis, it has made us who we are today. While I will not say too much about how I turned out, I will commend my sisters to you. Jim Lunsford raised two girls who became fine women of excellent character full of integrity and strength.
- He loved to fish. And we all have memories of dad taking us fishing. Dad started teaching me to fish early in life. Once, when I was about 5 years old, Dad, my sister Becky and I were fishing from a pier in Gulfport, MS. Dad had baited and cast a line for me, and I was holding a blue spin casting pole with a Mitchell 300 reel on it. I got a bite, started squealing and trying to reel, but the fish was too much for me. My sister took over the reeling, dad moved down onto the rock pilings of the pier and began to help by handing the line in for Becky to reel in. After a short fight, dad was lifting a flounder that was nearly 2 feet long out of the water and it managed to flip off the hook, landing on the rocks. He leapt into the water, landing on the fish and pinning it to the bottom. He then reached in and sticking his finger into the fish's mouth discovered that flounder have teeth. But, he did not let go. We successfully landed that fish. The only photo of it is of me holding the flounder. He always said it was my fish. In this way and in a thousand other ways, Dad shared the love of fishing with his children.
- Dad loved and encouraged his children until the end. Dad had the habit of calling all of us regularly and most every day would call Becky about

8:00 and say with exuberance "GOOD MORNING!" If he thought I was fishing he would call me about 8:30 and all but yell into the phone "wake up the fish."

Jim Lunsford was a practicing Christian and Churchman of the first order:

- When my dad was in the 6th grade, a young preacher came to pastor the small, rural Methodist church. That young pastor had a significant influence on the direction of young Harold Lunsford's life. I recall Dad talking about that minister taking time to go fishing with him and his brothers. Later when he was 12 years old, Dad accepted Christ as his personal savior in a revival meeting and began a lifetime of following Jesus.
- Later while in Korea, Dad came to a deeper level of commitment and consecration to God, something he would later come to identify as being entirely sanctified and filled with God's Holy Spirit.
- While no man except Jesus lived a perfect life, I give testimony to the fact that for as long as I can remember, I have seen in my father what it means to be a true Christian. A person committed to Christ and to becoming more and more like Jesus with every passing day. A man who studied scripture, prayed fervently, served Christ and his church with his whole self, who gave of his time, talent and treasure regularly, systematically and sacrificially. Dad prayed often and closed many of his prayers with these words: "be with our loved ones, friends and neighbors and all those who are sick in the hospital or at home."
- My father's life has been one constant living lesson to me and will remain a testimony and challenge to we who remain to the saving and sanctifying power of God's Holy Spirit. I think the greatest compliment I can pay my father is that the man who died Tuesday morning was a better man than the man who bounced me on his knee when I was a child. His spiritual journey was one of daily surrender to the will of God and cooperation with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit so that in my lifetime, I saw a good man become a better and better man. As we continue to remember Jim Lunsford today and into the future, if you were to commit yourself and strengthen your resolve to emulate this quality, namely following Jesus and cooperating with the Holy Spirit to become more and more like Jesus every day, that will be the best tribute you can offer my father.

- When I think of my father's life the first passage of scripture that comes to mind and which is especially poignant in light of the last month:
 2 Timothy 4:6-8
 6 As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come.
 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
 8 From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
 (2Ti 4:6-8 NRS)

I am confident today that my dad, Jim Lunsford died as he had lived, a devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

In the last few years, Dad's health has been failing him. The inevitable effects of use and age had all but robbed Dad of the ability to walk and when he did use a walker to get around it was increasingly more painful for him. Which makes it such a blessing to have this testimony from my mother that in his last days at home, they prayed and read scripture together and the last scripture Dad read was from Isaiah 40 verses 28 through 31:

28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.
 29 He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.
 30 Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;
 31 but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.
 (Isa 40:28-31 NRS)

Song: What a Day That Will Be

Thank you for being here today. Your presence honors the memory of my father and is great comfort to his family.

I have heard it said that you can best measure a tree once it has fallen. The mighty oak that was James Harold Lunsford Sr. has been laid down. And, in taking his measure, I find my feeble instruments inadequate. I can only say that such is my reckoning of this man that I pray God, may I become a tithe of the man sired me.

Let us pray.

Prayer: Benediction - spontaneous.