

**Memorial Service
James Elmer Baird
Message by Mike Baird
November 26, 2002**

I would like today to share with you some thoughts on Grandpa, on hope and on eternity

I would first like to share some of my fondest memories of Grandpa. Some of you may share similar memories. I share some of them already spoken of.

I would like you to picture with me, if you will, in your mind's eye as I paint the scenes in my mind with words.

Here are some scenes painted in my mind as a boy
At the Cabin, fire crackling, the black and white TV tuned to a football game. Grandpa and a young boy in front of the TV eating sandwiches and cottage cheese. The boy insisting he doesn't like salt on *his* cottage cheese.

In the boat, up the Henry's fork above the cabin. Drifting quietly by an enormous bull moose. Another time, the river teeming with bright red spawning kokanie. A little boy, eyes as big as saucers leaning over the edge of the boat wanting to catch them. Grandpa saying they don't bite.
The boat anchored at the hole, a boy holding his pole, not realizing he has a fish on until Grandpa points it out to him in with his own unique style and language.

Scenes painted in my mind, a little older now, a teenager.
The Cabin in winter. Snow very deep, the path goes down into the cabin, dark outside, bright cheer inside. A pair of snowmobiles, Grandpa in a jumpsuit, helmet on. The teen on the double track, slow, wishing he was on the single track.

Scenes painted in my mind, as a young adult now.
Horse Hikes. Yellowstone park, string of horses in a meadow, trees on either side, river rushing nearby. Grandpa on Streak, hat on a little crooked, saddlebags on a little crooked, leading the string of horses because "Streak likes to be in front". Three generations of males, shivering in their bags, under a tarp covered with frost. "Who's going to make the fire?" Fish on the line, fish frying in the pan, fish on the fork.

Scenes painted in my mind an adult now.
At the place on Baird avenue, 4 generations present.
The littlest one is riding Sal. Sitting out in the back of the house, canal water rushing by, the ever present wind whispering through the weeping willow, Grandpa in his chair, bouncing slightly.

At the Golf course. Younger, stronger males with mighty, thunderous swings zig-zagging down the fairway. Turning 350 yard holes into 800 yard holes. Grandpa taking just as many strokes to get there but only covering 350 yards.

Scenes painted in my mind, Grandpa in his later years.
Fishing on the Snake River. Three Generations of males, after the big ones.
Great-grandson with his pole bent double, eyes popping out, fish heading down the river, a whining sound as line is stripped from the reel, Grandpa laughing with delight, helping. Grandpa hauling in a big one, proudly showing it to younger generations of males

Last fishing trip, several years ago, Olallie Lake in Oregon. Grandpa sitting in the chair on the fishing dock, his pole bent. Up he gets, slower now, shuffles to the edge of the dock, with no nonsense he hauls in the 10 inch fish and proudly shows it to younger generations of males.

These are some of the enduring scenes painted in my memory with colors beautiful.

With his death I have pondered this question: Now that he is gone, is he nothing more than these memories painted in my mind, memories that we here share?

The ancient Prophet Job asked the question differently, he asked:
"If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14.)

Some of us have perhaps pondered that question as I have. Perhaps in the time since Grandpa has passed away. Maybe we framed the question with different words, or perhaps we framed a similar question as it became apparent that Grandpa did not have much time left with us? Or perhaps some of us have pondered this question in contemplating our own passing:

I have thought about it. Is Grandpa is gone, never to be seen again? He whom we love dearly, is he now nothing more than memories we share? Does he live on as more than reflections in our lives?

It is my belief, hope and faith that death is not the end of our journey.

In preparing my thoughts for today I found several passages that express my feelings much more eloquently than I can, which I would like to share with you.

First the beautiful words of the poet William Wordsworth:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

—William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimation of Immortality"

The lines from the poem that resonates within me is
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,

Next here are the words of Senator Everett Dirksen, shortly before his death at Easter time in 1965 as found in the US News and World report:

"What mortal being, standing on the threshold of infinity, has not pondered what lies beyond the veil which separates the seen from the unseen?"

"What mortal being, responding to that mystical instinct that earthly dissolution is at hand, has not contemplated what lies beyond the grave?"

"What mortal being, upon whom has descended that strange and serene resignation that life's journey is about at an end, has not thought about that eternal destination and what might be there?"

"Centuries ago the man Job, so long blessed with every material blessing, only to find himself sorely afflicted by all that can befall a human being, sat with his companions and uttered the timeless, ageless question, 'If a man die, shall he live again?' In the Easter Season, when all Christendom observes the Resurrection and seeks answers to many questions, there in the forefront is the question raised by Job, 'If a man die, shall he live again?'"

"If there be a design in this universe and in this world in which we live, there must be a Designer. Who can behold the inexplicable mysteries of the universe without believing that there is a design for all mankind and also a Designer? ..."

“ ‘If a man die, shall he live again?’ Surely he shall, as surely as day follows night, as surely as the stars follow their courses, as surely as the crest of every wave brings its trough.” (*U.S. News & World Report*, November 8, 1965, p. 124.)

And next - Job answered his own question later when he said:

For I ^aknow *that* my ^bredeemer liveth, and *that* ^che shall ^dstand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this ^abody, yet in my ^bflesh shall I ^csee God: (Job 19:25-26)

And finally Jesus said: I am the ^aresurrection, and the ^blife: (John 11:25)

The witnesses of prophets and the words of the Savior give me the belief, hope and faith such that I can say my heart burns with the knowledge that the bands of death have been broken and though separated now by death from loved ones, one day we may be reunited with them. They live on as more than just memories or reflections in our lives.

Truly, “The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, has elsewhere its setting”.

These thoughts I leave with you in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.