

EULOGY OF JACK BOWER

MY TEXT FOR TODAY IS FOUND IN THE 22ND CHAPTER OF THE BOOK OF MATTHEW, BEGINNING AT VERSE 34:

HEARING THAT JESUS HAD SILENCED THE SADDUCEES, THE PHARISEES GOT TOGETHER. ONE OF THEM, AN EXPERT IN THE LAW, TESTED HIM WITH THIS QUESTION:

"TEACHER, WHICH IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT IN THE LAW?"

JESUS REPLIED: "LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.

THIS IS THE FIRST AND GREATEST COMMANDMENT. AND THE SECOND IS LIKE IT: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. ALL THE LAW AND PROPHETS HANG ON THESE TWO COMMANDMENTS."

WE COME TOGETHER TODAY, FROM ALL ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF WILFORD WHITE BOWER - KNOWN TO HIS FAMILY, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES, SIMPLY AS "JACK."

AND IT IS INDEED FITTING AND PROPER, THAT WE SHOULD GATHER IN THE CHAPEL OF ST. ANDREWS SCHOOL, IN A HOUSE OF GOD AND IN A SCHOOL THAT JACK LOVED.

AND YET, IT SEEMS SOMEWHAT IRONIC THAT THIS SHOULD BE THE PLACE, SINCE IT WAS ST. ANDREWS WHO SAID GOODBYE TO JACK BACK IN 1986.

I CAN IMAGINE JACK LOOKING DOWN FROM HEAVEN WITH A TWINKLE IN HIS EYE THINKING: "OH SURE – YOU WANT ME BACK! - NOW THAT YOU KNOW THAT I CAN'T SAY ANYTHING!"

**I LEARNED SEVERAL IMPORTANT LESSONS FROM JACK –
AND AS HIS FRIEND AND AS HIS LAWYER, I HAD MANY
OCCASIONS TO OBSERVE HIS BEHAVIOR.**

**AND ALTHOUGH HE WAS DEEPLY SADDENED BY LEAVING A
SCHOOL THAT HE LOVED, JACK NEVER BAD-MOUTHED ST.
ANDREWS, AND HE WAS FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR THE
LOYALTY OF FRIENDS LIKE PHIL CRANGI.**

**BUT HOW DO YOU SUM UP THE LIFE OF A PERSON – JACK'S
LIFE OR ANYONE ELSE'S – IN A ONE HOUR MEMORIAL
SERVICE?**

**HOW CAN YOU SQUEEZE 77 YEARS OF LIFE INTO A 15
MINUTE EULOGY?**

IT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE. BUT WE TRY.

**WE TRY BECAUSE WE WANT OUR LIVES TO HAVE MEANING
– WE TRY BECAUSE WE WANT OUR LIVES TO HAVE
PURPOSE - WE TRY BECAUSE WE WANT OUR LIVES TO
HAVE SIGNIFICANCE.**

JACK'S LIFE HAD ALL THREE.

**YOU PROBABLY KNOW THAT JACK SERVED OUR COUNTRY
IN THE ARMY DURING WWII.**

**THE FREEDOM THAT YOU AND I ENJOY, JACK FOUGHT FOR
– IN 1943 . . . IN A FOXHOLE . . . AGAINST THE NAZI'S. HE
WAS 19 YEARS OLD.**

**HE FOUGHT IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE AND BECAME A
DECORATED VETERAN, RECEIVING THE BRONZE STAR FOR
HIS HEROIC AND MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT.**

BUT, DID YOU ALSO KNOW THAT HE SPENT SO MUCH TIME IN THOSE ICY TRENCHES THAT HIS FEET WERE BADLY FROSTBITTEN?

SO FROSTBITTEN THAT THEY ALMOST HAD TO AMPUTATE HIS LEG. FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, JACK'S FEET WERE REDDISH-PURPLE; HIS TOENAILS PERPETUALLY BLACK. HE WALKED WITH A SLIGHT LIMP. AND THIS ALL HAPPENED WHEN HE WAS JUST A TEENAGER ...

JACK WAS A HERO.

ON VETERAN'S DAY, I WOULD CALL HIM TO THANK HIM FOR HIS SACRIFICE. I WANTED HIM TO HEAR THOSE WORDS FROM SOMEONE WHO KNEW WHAT HE DID.

JACK WAS POLITE ABOUT IT, BUT ALSO NONCHALANT – YOU SEE, HE FOUGHT FOR FREEDOM, BECAUSE IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

AND JESUS SAID "GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS: THAT HE LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS." JACK WAS WILLING TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY.

AFTER THE WAR, JACK LED AN INTERESTING LIFE.

HE MOVED TO NEW YORK CITY TO ATTEND COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. HE WAS PSYCHO-ANALYZED BY DR. ROLO MAY, AND JACK'S DREAMS WERE PUBLISHED IN MAY'S CLASSIC TEXT "MAN'S SEARCH FOR HIMSELF".

JACK WORKED AT EASTMAN KODAK TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL MOTION PICTURE CONSULTANT WHERE HE

PARTIED . . . WITH ELIZABETH TAYLOR.

**AND HE EVENTUALLY WENT TO MGM AND MADE FILMS . . .
WITH ALFRED HITCHCOCK.**

**JACK WAS A CELEBRITY. HE WAS THE ORIGINAL FORREST
GUMP! AND JACK'S STORIES WERE LIKE A BOX OF
CHOCOLATES – YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU WERE GOING
TO GET!**

**LIKE THE TIME HE HAD TO HAVE SOME SKIN CANCER
REMOVED FROM HIS FOREHEAD -**

**THE SURGEON TOLD HIM NOT TO BANDAGE THE STITCHES
FOR THE FIRST DAY, SO THE AIR COULD DRY HIS SKIN.**

**JACK WENT INTO A RESTAURANT AND WHEN HE WAS
PAYING HIS CHECK, SOMEONE SAID "MY GOD! WHAT
HAPPENED TO YOU?"**

JACK REPLIED: "I HAD A BRAIN TRANSPLANT."

"WOW! THE GUY SAID. "I DIDN'T KNOW THEY COULD DO THAT?"

"YEAH", JACK SAID. " I LIKED THE OLD ONE BETTER."

JACK SPENT THE MAJORITY OF HIS LIFE AS AN EDUCATOR FOR OVER 43 YEARS. HE TAUGHT PHILOSOPHY AT WOOSTER AND PSYCHOLOGY AT WESTERN RESERVE.

IN 1962, JACK JOINED THE MILLBROOK SCHOOL TEACHING ENGLISH; EVENTUALLY, HE WOULD BECOME THE ASSISTANT HEADMASTER.

BUT WHEN HIS MOTHER BECAME ILL, JACK DECIDED TO MOVE TO FLORIDA TO HELP TAKE CARE OF HER. HE LEFT BEHIND A HOUSE THAT HE BUILT, FRIENDS THAT HE LOVED AND HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS THAT HE TAUGHT. JACK CAME HOME TO MAKE SURE HIS MOTHER WAS SAFE.

HE DID IT, BECAUSE IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

AT ST. ANDREWS AND PINECREST, JACK TAUGHT ENGLISH AND A WONDERFUL COURSE CALLED "GROWING PAINS" WHERE WE HAD TO KEEP A JOURNAL.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF THAT JOURNAL AS JACK'S WAY OF GETTING TO KNOW US, BUT IN REALITY, IT WAS REALLY HIS WAY OF GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OURSELVES.

MY FIRST CLASS WITH JACK WAS LOGIC.

YOU REMEMBER THE ARGUMENT OF THE SYLLOGISM:

ALL MEN ARE MORTAL

SOCRATES IS A MAN

THEREFORE, SOCRATES IS MORTAL.

**ONLY SOMEONE AS BRILLIANT AS JACK COULD MAKE LOGIC
FUN AND EXCITING!**

AND HERE IS WHAT JACK TAUGHT ME:

**THE VALIDITY OF THE SYLLOGISM AND THE PRINCIPLES OF
TRUTH ARE OFTEN MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE.**

**THAT IS TO SAY THAT AN ARGUMENT CAN BE VALID AND
STILL UNTRUE.**

**SO WHILE IT MAY APPEAR LOGICAL TO CONCLUDE THAT
SOCRATES IS MORTAL, IS IT, IN FACT, TRUE?**

ABRAHAM LINCOLN SAID:

"SURELY GOD WOULD NOT HAVE CREATED SUCH A BEING AS MAN TO EXIST ONLY FOR A DAY! NO, NO, MAN WAS MADE FOR IMMORTALITY." MAN WAS MADE FOR IMMORTALITY.

JACK WAS A SCHOLAR.

HE SPENT HIS DAYS TEACHING CLASS, COUNSELING STUDENTS, MEETING WITH PARENTS, GRADING PAPERS, AND WRITING PERSONAL LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.

HE LIVED IN MCINTYRE HALL – WHICH USED TO BE RIGHT OVER THERE.

HE SPOKE IN CHAPEL AND ATTENDED ATHLETIC EVENTS. HE DIRECTED PLAYS AND WROTE POETRY AND ESSAYS.

HE WROTE BEAUTIFUL ESSAYS.

JACK WAS DEDICATED. HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO HIS SCHOOL.

**DID YOU EVER STOP AND WONDER WHY JACK WAS SO
DEVOTED TO HIS SCHOOL?**

**I THINK IT HAD TO DO WITH A FACT THAT YOU MAY NOT BE
AWARE OF UNTIL NOW. YOU SEE . . .**

**WHEN JACK WAS A YOUNG BOY, HE WAS PHYSICALLY
ABUSED BY AN ALCOHOLIC FATHER. AND BASED ON THE
TRAGIC STORIES THAT JACK TOLD ME, HE WAS
EMOTIONALLY ABUSED AS WELL. THIS ALL BEGAN WHEN
HE WAS JUST A LITTLE GUY, ONLY 7 OR 8 YEARS OLD - AND
THE ONLY PLACE WHERE HE FELT SAFE - WAS AT SCHOOL.**

JACK SOUGHT REFUGE IN THE LIBRARY, WHERE HE READ ALL THE TIME. HE SOARED ACADEMICALLY, AND WAS THE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER AT HIS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION. JACK RECEIVED SEVERAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS.

BUT WHAT DID HE DO WITH ALL THE RAGE AND ANGER THAT HE MUST HAVE FELT TOWARD HIS FATHER?

IN HIS OWN WAY, JACK MANAGED TO TURN THAT ANGER INTO LOVE, AND THEN HE GAVE THAT LOVE BACK TO HIS STUDENTS.

AND I THINK THAT'S WHY JACK ALWAYS SEEMED TO CHAMPION THE CAUSE FOR THE UNDERDOG: FOR HE HIMSELF HAD TO OVERCOME GREAT DIFFICULTIES.

JACK WAS ALSO A PHILOSOPHER. LISTEN TO WHAT HE WROTE IN 1965 TO RAY DELAMARTEL UPON HIS GRADUATION FROM WEBUTUCK SCHOOL:

"FIND OUT WHAT IT IS YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE, AND IF YOU WORK AS HARD AT EARNING IT AS YOU HAVE WORKED AT WEBUTUCK, YOU ARE BOUND TO SUCCEED. BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, REACH HIGH AND MAKE YOURSELF WORK, AND BE A GOOD MAN: YOU WON'T ALWAYS FIND HAPPINESS, BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS USE YOUR GOOD MIND AND CHARACTER TO CHANGE THE UNHAPPINESS TO HAPPINESS. IT IS KNOWING THAT ONE CAN ALWAYS GROW AND CAN ALWAYS CHANGE HIS LIFE WHICH IS THE GREAT GIFT OF EDUCATION. GOOD GRADES, FOR THEIR OWN SAKE, MEAN NOTHING UNLESS YOU CAN USE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED TO MAKE YOU THE KIND OF PERSON YOU WANT TO BE. AND YOU CAN DO IT."

ISN'T THAT GREAT? DON'T YOU JUST LOVE THAT? IT IS KNOWING THAT ONE CAN ALWAYS GROW AND CAN ALWAYS CHANGE HIS LIFE WHICH IS THE GREAT GIFT OF EDUCATION.

JACK SAW EDUCATION AS THE SOLUTION FOR MANY OF LIFE'S PROBLEMS, AND, HE NOT ONLY KNEW IT, HE DID SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

ONE OF JACK'S GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS WAS THE CREATION OF BROAD JUMP – A RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN FROM HARLEM, THE BRONX AND THE LOWER EAST SIDE OF NEW YORK CITY.

AND WHAT DID JACK DO? HE TOOK SOME PRETTY TOUGH KIDS - SOME FROM BROKEN HOMES, MANY EXPOSED TO DRUGS AND VIOLENCE. HE TOOK THOSE KIDS TO A SAFE

PLACE – THE MILLBROOK CAMPUS – AND WHAT DID HE DO?

HE TAUGHT THEM TO READ.

HE SHOWED THEM AN ALTERNATIVE. HE GAVE THEM HOPE. HE LOVED HIS NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF.

HIS GOAL WAS TO EDUCATE "AT-RISK" CHILDREN, WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY RETURN HOME WHERE THEY WOULD HOPEFULLY BECOME POSITIVE ROLE MODELS. JACK WOULD DO HIS BEST TO CHANGE THE WORLD – ONE LIFE AT A TIME.

JACK DID THIS IN THE EARLY '60s, AND KEEP IN MIND THAT IT WAS ONLY SINCE 1954 THAT THE SUPREME COURT HELD THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATE BUT EQUAL UNCONSTITUTIONAL IN BROWN VS. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

PRIOR TO THAT, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR REV. THOMPkins AND I TO ATTEND THE SAME SCHOOL BASED SOLELY ON THE ISSUE OF THE COLOR OF OUR SKIN. SURE, WE NOW TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT WE HAVE THIS FREEDOM, BUT PEOPLE DIED OVER THIS ISSUE 50 YEARS AGO.

JACK WAS A VISIONARY. HE CROSSED THE RACIAL BARRIER BECAUSE IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO. AND TO QUOTE FROM A FAVORITE SONG - "SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW" - JACK FOUND IN PROJECT BROAD JUMP THAT SPECIAL PLACE, WHERE THE DREAMS THAT YOU DARE TO DREAM - REALLY DO COME TRUE.

AND IF FRIENDS ARE RICHES, THEN JACK WAS A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE! I ONLY HAVE TIME TO MENTION A FEW . . .

HE HAD LONGTIME FRIENDS, LIKE EWE AND DORLY GEERTZ, WHO UNSELFISHLY NURSED JACK BACK TO HEALTH IN THEIR OWN HOME AFTER HIS HOSPITALIZATION IN THE CLEVELAND CLINIC.

HE HAD KAREN AND REID HOTALING, WHO DEMONSTRATED THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY BY THEIR LOVE AND ENDLESS SERVICE, WITH NO REGARD WHATSOEVER FOR RECOGNITION OR COMPENSATION.

HE HAD MRS. D. AND HAROLD WHO WERE LOYAL AND LOVING TO THE END.

AND HE HAD RAY SESSMAN, WHO TOOK THE TIME TO HELP HIS FRIEND IN NEED, EVEN WHEN HIS OWN FATHER WAS DYING.

**HE HAD HUNDREDS OF FRIENDS. AND, I SUSPECT THAT'S
WHY YOU'RE HERE TODAY – BECAUSE JACK TOUCHED
YOUR LIFE IN SOME SPECIAL WAY.**

**HE CERTAINLY TOUCHED MINE. I HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF
BEING JACK'S FRIEND FOR 27 YEARS.**

HE LISTENED TO ALL MY PROBLEMS . . .

AND GAVE ME WISE COUNSEL . . .

HE TOLD GREAT STORIES . . .

AND MADE FUN OF LAWYERS WHO ADVERTISED ON T.V. . .

HE KNEW THURGOOD MARSHALL . . .

HE RECOMMENDED GREAT FILMS . . .

HE WROTE BEAUTIFUL LETTERS . . .

HE FAXED ME POETRY . . .

HE NEVER THREW ANYTHING AWAY . . .

HE COLLECTED FOUNTAIN PENS . . .

HE LIKED SUSHI . . .

**HE ACTUALLY CARED ABOUT WHERE MY WIFE AND I WOULD
SEND OUR DAUGHTER, CASEY, TO KINDERGARTEN . . .**

HE LOVED TO LAUGH . . .

HE LOVED HIS DOGS – MISS BOO, SEBASTIAN AND SATCH.

HE CRIED WHEN HIS SISTER DIED . . .

HE SUFFERED FROM DEPRESSION.

AND DESPITE HIS CONDITION, HE LOVED HIS FRIENDS.

AND HIS FRIENDS LOVED HIM.

AND SO WE REMEMBER JACK.

**NOW HERE'S A GUY WHO NEVER ASKED FOR SYMPATHY
FOR BEING A VICTIM OF SEVERE CHILDHOOD VIOLENCE.**

HE NEVER COMPLAINED ABOUT BEING WOUNDED IN WWII.

**HE NEVER SOUGHT REVENGE WHEN HIS COLLEAGUES
CALLED FOR HIS RESIGNATION.**

**AND YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF – HOW COULD HE BE
LIKE THAT? I CAN TELL YOU WHY.**

THE REASON WHY JACK CHOSE "LOVE" IN RESPONSE TO EACH SITUATION IS SIMPLE: JACK HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS CREATOR.

EVEN AFTER A STROKE, WHEN JACK WAS PARALYZED AND KNEW HE WAS DYING - HE WAS AT PEACE.

HE WAS AT PEACE BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT GOD HAD A PLAN AND THROUGH IT ALL, GOD COULD BE TRUSTED.

JACK BOWER'S GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT WAS WHEN HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF BEFORE GOD AND ACCEPTED JESUS CHRIST AS HIS SAVIOR.

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THIS DECISION IS THE ONLY THING THAT REALLY MATTERS FOR ALL ETERNITY.

BECAUSE IN THE END, JACK KNEW THAT LINCOLN WAS RIGHT WHEN HE SAID "MAN WAS MADE FOR IMMORTALITY."

AND JACK KNEW THAT JESUS CAN BE TRUSTED WHEN HE SAID "DO NOT LET YOUR HEARTS BE TROUBLED. TRUST IN GOD; TRUST ALSO IN ME. IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY ROOMS; IF IT WERE NOT SO, I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU. I AM GOING THERE TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU. AND IF I GO AND PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU, I WILL COME BACK AND TAKE YOU TO BE WITH ME, THAT YOU ALSO MAY BE WHERE I AM."

SO YOU SEE, IN THE END, JACK GOT AN A+ ON HIS FINAL EXAM OF LIFE. – I THINK THE MODEL ANSWER WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

ALL CHRISTIANS ARE IMMORTAL

JACK IS A CHRISTIAN

THEREFORE, JACK IS IMMORTAL.

BY THE WAY, JACK WOULD HAVE YOU KNOW THAT THIS SYLLOGISM IS NOT ONLY VALID, BUT UNDENIABLY TRUE.

GODSPEED JACK, DEAR, PRECIOUS JACK.

THE WORLD IS A BETTER PLACE BECAUSE OF YOU.