

Good Morning,

I am privileged today to be able to share with you about my big brother. We have many fond memories about Rich, his sense of humor, and also his thankful spirit. Rich was very creative, and he could take anything apart and figure out how it works. He also could build anything he put his mind to. As a teenager, he built a working pinball machine, with bumpers and everything. He even charged me & Cherie to a quarter to play it! I have a story about Rich's sense of humor. He liked to play little jokes on Cherie & me, and I remember on one summer day Cherie has been eating salted sunflower seeds out of a Dakota Kid bag. We were out in the yard and Cherie went in for a few minutes, and while she was out, Rich put a grasshopper into the bag of seeds. I think he only meant to scare her by it being in the bag, but what happened was Cherie poured some of the seeds into her mouth. She started chewing, and the grasshopper started moving. You can imagine how surprised Cherie was and she spit out the grass hopper and the seeds.

Another funny thing that happened to Rich was a time when he had two really bad days when nothing would go right. It started with a Martha Washington Geranium. Mom was proud that she had this beautiful Geranium and had put it on the table in the porch. Rich walked in and threw a ball at me, but I ducked, and the ball hit the Martha Washington and it along with all the dirt and the pot crashed to the floor. Well, this made Mom angry, but she very calmly asked Rich that he was to clean up the mess. So Rich got the shop vac and vacuumed up the mess. Later that night, Mom and Dad were at a FGBMFI dinner at the International Inn. Mom always told us not to call unless of an emergency. (This was before everyone was carrying cell phones) So when she was told she had a call on the house phone, she wondering what was going on that someone would call her there. She went to the phone and it was Rich. He said it was raining very hard and his basement room was taking water very quickly. So mom told him to start vacuuming up the water with the shop vac, and that they would deal with it when they got home. They got home and discovered that there were two reasons that the water came in. First, Rich had mowed the lawn earlier that day and forgot to put back the drainpipe, so the water from the gutters was flowing right into the window wells. Second, the windows were open. So Rich was in the doghouse so to speak and after getting the rest of the water vacuumed, Rich had not emptied the dirt from the Martha Washington and the shop vac canister was now filled with mud.

Not knowing about the mud, mom told Rich to empty the water from the shop vac. Naturally, the closest drain was the easiest place to empty it, so Rich dumped the muddy water into the shower stall. Later, while getting ready for church, Rich ran from the bathroom to announce that the shower had backed up and now the bathroom was flooded. At this point, Rich was really in the doghouse with Mom, but he still wasn't done. He went to iron his shirt for church, and proceeded to melt the design on his shirt onto the iron, which ruined the iron. Mom of course dealt with all this very calmly. And if you believe that she was calm, I have some oceanfront property in Rugby I'll sell you cheap.

We are grateful for these moments we can remember and look back on to remember Rich. But Rich also left us all with some character lessons that we can all use. First, Rich had a grateful heart. He was touched by the smallest gift or gesture. He would cherish things like a hunting knife from Grandpa, or even some old electronics that someone would give him. Rich held on to these gifts and to acts of kindness and he was truly touched by them. Recently, Mike told Rich how happy

he was to have him around again. Rich was so touched that he told several people about what Mike said. He took pleasure in simple things, he was proud of his inventions, his truck, his camper. He was happy with what he had. I don't remember any time that Rich wished for wealth or a fancy car, or a big house. He looked forward to spending time with family, and he loved climbing the towers.

Finally, I want to share with you the changes Rich had made in his life in recent years. After battling alcohol for many years, he had attended Teen challenge and started to study God's word. He decided to give in to Jesus and with that, made an amazing transformation in his life. Now all he talked about was trying to keep looking up. The radical change was a testament to what God can do when we let him.

Rich learned what he needed to do to change his life. The Bible says in Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities have separated you from God; your sins have hidden his face from you that he will not hear." Rich realized his way of living was keeping him from God. But he learned what Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." and Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8,9 "For it is by grace you have been saved through faith ? and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God ? not by works, so that no one can boast. There was nothing Rich could do on his own, but he merely had to accept Jesus' promise. The Bible says, "Believe on Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I know that Rich would want his story told, of how he found salvation through his belief in Jesus Christ. Our family believes in the saving power of Jesus' death and resurrection.

A year and a half ago, my Grandma died. Rich was an encourager to all of us then, he told us we didn't need to cry for Grandma, because she was with Jesus and we would see her again. The crying was for us, not for her, he said. He would want us today to rejoice for him, that he is now with his Savior, and with the relatives that went before him.