

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." - II Timothy 4:7

FINISHING THE RACE...

When Saturday morning rolled around we could not have imagined that at 10:30 my Dad - Richard Van Allen Hinchey Jr. - would go home to be with Jesus. I am at a loss to even begin to describe the life of this great man of faith. I do not think there is anyone who had more of an impact on my spiritual growth and walk in Jesus than my Father. Some of my fondest memories as a child are of him sitting and holding an open Bible in his hands telling me about Jesus. He set an example for his kids, not just in words, but in actions of what it meant to follow God!

Everything in my Dad's life revolved around serving the Lord. When my Mom passed away last September the very next day my Dad began plans to come over to the Philippines. He dearly loved and would miss his bride of almost 50 years - but he knew the separation was only temporary - he would see her again one day. He did not know how many days God had left for him, but people still needed to hear about Jesus, and he was going to go and tell them! **Philippians 1:21** - *"For me to live is Christ, to die is gain."*



Long before Dad even got on the plane his health had begun to decline. He spent six weeks in the hospital in New York recovering from an infection in his foot, but the Lord allowed him to stabilize for long enough to be able to make the trip. He went with both of his daughters, their husbands, and all five of his grand kids to California to join a team coming over from Calvary Chapel Bible Fellowship. The family spent the week before his trip going to Disney Land (*where astoundingly Dad rode on the Tower of Terror and Thunder mountain railroad as well as other thrill rides*), and also went to see the USS Midway in San Diego (*Dad always loved history*). It was a wonderful way for the his kids and grand kids to send him off into the missions field - and ultimately to heaven!

Last week a friend wrote me and shared, 'How amazing that God let Richard stop by and visit you for a couple of months on his way to heaven!' Dad made the most of that time. He could not wait to get started teaching Bible studies and telling anyone who would listen about Jesus. His health kept him mostly at home but he began to disciple a young man who came to help. He told me he felt like Paul pouring his life into Timothy. He spent his time preparing Bible studies hoping to be able to go into the prisons to teach the Word.

During the last few weeks Dad was hospitalized twice because of increasing problems with an auto immune disease. Even as his health declined - his constant joy was in talking about Jesus. A few days before he passed we talked and he told me he was ready to go be with his Lord. On March 24th, 2012 - with more than twenty of us there with him - he got his wish. Instead of tears there was laughter and joy - Dad was home!

On Sunday the 25th we began the memorial service for Dad. The tradition here in the Philippines is to have a week long period of morning when a loved one dies. In respect of that tradition we had Dad's body brought to the church and for the next 2 days (*48 hours straight - no sleep*) we held his memorial. The first day about sixty or so people came out mostly from the church. We sang worship songs and taught on **I Corinthians 15** - 'The hope of the Resurrection'. The second day more than two hundred people came - friends / family / and people from around the church - many of whom had never been to church before. We again sang worship songs and this time taught from **Matthew 18** - 'What must I do to inherit eternal life'.

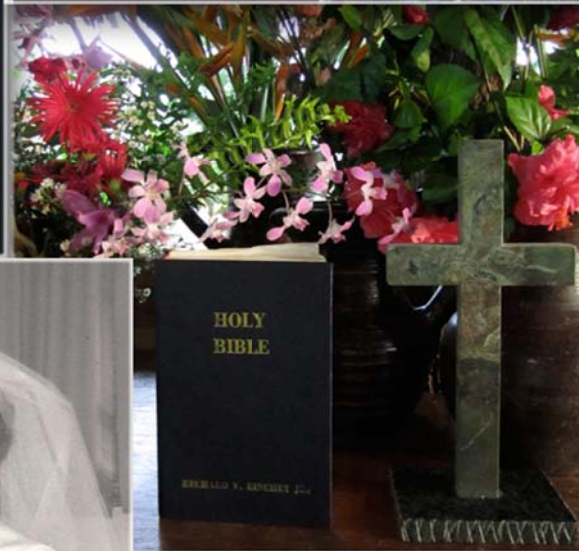
No one could have anticipated the response we received. Funerals here are seen as a solemn event - there is no joy no laughter. Yet there we were rejoicing, singing, and praising God for His amazing grace! When people questioned we answered - 'Dad was not there - he is heaven running (*with two legs*) around and singing praises to Jesus at the top of his lungs. There is no reason to be sorry - because of the cross of Jesus we have hope - **I Thessalonians 4:13-18**. Even after he went to be with the Lord - Dad was still impacting others with the love of Jesus!

Even as I am sorry to say goodbye my Father, my closest friend, I am overwhelmed with joy knowing he is home! *"Well done good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Lord."* - **Matthew 25:21**

Richard Hinchey

MEMORIAL SERVICE

PHILIPPIANS 1:21 - "FOR TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN."



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