

Gordie's Crown

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" — Psalm 116:15

We gather today to remember and pay our respects to one of God's saints: Gordon Amos Raatz.

Obituary:

- Gordie was born November 12, 1927 in Iron Mountain, MI to Edward and Alm Raatz. He would have been 87 years old next month. He had five brothers.
- He served our country in WW2 in the 58th Signal Battalion.
- Gordie when home to be with His Lord on July 27, 2014. He is survived by his dear wife Beveline, two daughters, Sandra Koenig and Pamela Boggs. He also has five grandchildren.

SECOND BIRTH: Gordon always said his life did not start until he was "born again" at the age of 37. There is no doubt that the faithful prayers of his loving wife, Bev, had a lot to do with Gordie coming to Christ.

Someone has said, "Whenever a loved one parts, they blossom forth in memories in the garden of our hearts." This is certainly true of Gordie...

Anyone who knew Gordie knew he was not only a dedicated Christian, also but a **LOVING FATHER**. He was a father to Sandy and Pam, and a grandfather to Joshua, Stephanie, Lindsey, Brent, and Brandon.

SPIRITUAL FATHER: But, he was also a father to me. As Paul referred to Timothy and Titus as his sons in the faith, I am Gordie's son in the faith. It is because of Gordie's faithful witnessing to me that I stand before you today.

DIKAR TOOL: I met Gordie 47 years ago at Dikar Tool Company in Southfield, Michigan. He worked the day shift and I worked the night shift. I wasn't there very long when several guys at the shop warned me, "Watch out for that guy Gordie. He's a religious fanatic. He'll try to convert you!"

Sure enough, when our supervisor went on vacation for a couple of weeks, Gordie came on the night shift as his substitute. From the first

night, Gordie zeroed-in on me. Every time he came close to where I was working, I'd duck into the bathroom. When the coast was clear I'd come back out.

Finally, one night, Gordie cornered me. He looked me straight in the eye and asked, "Al, are you a Christian?" I answered, "Sure. I'm American!" In my thinking, America was supposed to be a Christian nation, therefore since I was an American, I must be a Christian. Gordie proceeded to tell me what the Bible said a Christian was. He showed me from John 1:12 that if I had not received Christ, I was not a Christian. Although I didn't become a Christian immediately, Gordie planted the seed of the Gospel.

Then in December, 1967 Gordie send me a Christmas card with a gospel tract called, "God's Simple Plan of Salvation." I read it and trusted Christ as my Savior. My life immediately changed.

The next day when I saw Gordie at work, I told him how I read the tract and was born again. He immediately began to disciple me. He gave me my first N.T. and several booklets by Evangelist Oliver Greene of the Gospel Hour.

Soon God called me to preach and after graduating from Bible College I came to Washington State to begin a new local church. I'm now in my 40th year of full time ministry. Anything the Lord has enabled me to do for His glory during the past 40 years can be traced back to the witness and influence Gordie has had on my life.

➡ **BIBLE STUDENT:** Gordie loved studying Bible prophecy. Gordie's favorite book in the Bible was the Book of Revelation, which deals with end times events. I'd like to take a text from Gordie's favorite book in the Bible to apply to Gordie's life.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. —Revelation 14:13

50 YEARS SERVING THE LORD: Gordie faithfully labored for His Lord for almost 50 years. He said, I want to twice much for the Lord that I ever did for the devil! I believe he succeeded! He served the Lord as a deacon; a

church usher; taught a Sunday School class, and in the jail ministry. But the thing he loved best was witnessing for Christ. He was certainly a zealous and bold witness for Christ.

Proverbs 11:30— ***“He that winneth souls is wise.”*** Gordie was a very wise man. Only eternity will tell how many souls will be in heaven because of Gordie’s testimony.

Gordie’s ministry could be capsulized in this verse—*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast [he was solid in his service], unmoveable [he never strayed from what he believed], always abounding in the work of the Lord [he served the Lord from the day he was saved], forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* (1 Cor. 15:58)

REWARDS: Gordie now rests from his labors and has gone on to his reward...

There are rewards for serving Christ. These rewards will be received at the judgment seat of Christ where every Christian will someday stand to *“receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done”* (2 Cor. 5:10). Paul wrote about this judgment, *“Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward”* (1 Cor. 3:13-14).

➡ One of those rewards is called the *“crown of rejoicing”* identified in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 (read).

It is sometimes called the *“soul winners crown.”* Winning souls brings joy to the Lord... joy to ourselves... joy to the church... and joy to the one who is saved.

I have no doubt, this crown will be given to Gordie for his faithful witnessing to others about Christ.

RAPTURE: Someday, in the not too distant future, the Lord will come to rapture all His own from this world. This event is described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (read).

REUNION: There will be a reunion in the sky with those Christians who have preceded us in death. There is going to be a meeting in the air. I look forward to seeing Gordie in the clouds on the way up to meet the Lord in the air. Gordie will see me and others he has lead to Christ—We will be his crown of rejoicing *“in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.”*

➔ **Will you be in that meeting in the air?**

Gordie’s favorite song was ***Standing On The Promises.***

Standing on the promises of Christ my King,
Through eternal ages let His praises ring,
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain:

Standing, standing,
Standing on the promises of God my Savior;
Standing, standing,
I’m standing on the promises of God.

Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
By the living Word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

Standing on the promises of Christ the Lord,
Bound to Him eternally by love’s strong cord,
Overcoming daily with the Spirit’s sword,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

Standing on the promises I cannot fall,
Listening every moment to the Spirit’s call
Resting in my Savior as my all in all,
Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

CLOSING PRAYER: Dear Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, we now return the earthly remains of Gordon Raatz to the earth—ashes to ashes—dust to dust.

We await that day when You return and these remains will be reunited with Gordie's spirit and raised incorruptible to meet the Lord in the air. Until that day, we say "good-bye"... for now. Amen.