

Nick Scheffer Funeral

02/27/2006

All of you knew and loved Nick. Please accept my thanks for your love and support of Claire and his family during this time. I am sure he would be happy to know you are here for them.

I also want to thank Aunt Claire, and Mark, Tom, Nicki, and Al for the privilege of standing here before you today. I, too, loved Uncle Nick. And because all of our lives here are intertwined, we can all reflect on who he was to each of us and the impact he's had on us. Actually, probably one good measure of a person is what can be said of him in the final summary of his life.

Historically, Nick Scheffer completed nearly 79 years amongst us. And during his time, he was quite notably a husband once, a father 4 times, a grandfather 10, and a great grandfather 11, with one more on the way. I also consider him to be an uncle/grandfather to me of sorts, in that he seemed to have been a surrogate father to my own dad, his nephew. Nick was a World War II Navy Veteran, serving in the South Pacific while driving a troop carrier from the USS Gilford. Afterwards, during his long career, he was recognized as a fine painter and decorator in the Region, a craftsman profession now spanning four generations of Scheffer's.

Along the way, he found a love for fishing. He had the opportunity to twice fish Canada with longtime friends Dick Pruitt, and Bob Sheldon, and Andy Swart, and Bill Blackmore, and Harry Jasperson. Over many trips to Minnesota - his favorite times were the family fishing trips to Minnesota - he sent countless panfish to the fryer, and taught almost as many kids how to love it, too. I doubt I'm the only person here who was convinced I had caught my first "big one" all by myself off of the pier while my fishing pole was left unattended. He and Uncle Bob taught us youngsters how to water ski with our sneakers in the ski boots, too.

Retirement brought the opportunity to travel; several times to Florida and Hawaii, and even once to Australia and New Zealand - and with it new friends wherever he went. Nick was easy to love that way.

These are some of the notable things I have to say about Uncle Nick. But I believe,

even more notable, is the truth spoken to us in a marriage of 53 years to his Bride, Claire.

This lifetime they have shared together has, without doubt, brought its share of ups and downs along the way. Any of us who have also been engaged in matrimony know this is certainly true for all of us, and it's an expected part of the territory. The part I especially admire is their devotion to one another, especially during the trials of the past few years as Nick's health waned.

Marriage has been given to us for many reasons, but one of the main purposes is that we might understand God better. He gave it to us, in part, that we might really understand the love He has for us.

To see this, don't make the mistake of confusing love with affection. In a good marriage, self-sacrificing love is the basis, and affection is one of the results. A marriage built upon self-sacrificing love will withstand the ups and downs, but a marriage relying on affection alone will fail when our affection wanes. Real love serves the other person. Affection is a wonderful emotion in response, but it is still merely an emotion, not a devotion of our will to love and serve somebody.

My observation has been that Aunt Claire and Uncle Nick loved each other, sacrificing themselves for each other. I have heard and seen Aunt Claire's devotion to Uncle Nick, even if he was having a bad time of it and wasn't always so loveable. Claire remained devoted to him. And through the course of their marriage, they have both surely seen times when affection faltered, but love and devotion remained. That is why their marriage survived, and thrived, a lifetime. Affection is conditional; love is not. Real love is patient, kind, forgiving, and slow to anger.

This can give us a proper perspective of God's love for us as people. The Bible says that everyone has offended God, and fallen far short of His requirements. We all have. The Bible also says that every single offense against God must be paid for, and that anyone finally found guilty of any offense will be cast away from God, into Hell. If this were the end of the story, all of us would be in deep trouble when we finally give an account for our lives. But the good news is that the Bible says God loves us and offers His Son Jesus, who has paid for our offenses. Jesus loved us and died for our punishment, in our place, even though we aren't always so loveable towards

Him. This is again a self-sacrificing love from Him, offered to anyone who would take Him for His word and believe Him. But to have it, we must take Him for His word and believe Him - that is the condition. Jesus is the only way God offers us for forgiveness. And our forgiveness is not automatic - we must ask Jesus for it and believe He will follow through. Otherwise, we can't have it. If I don't ask, I won't be forgiven, and I will be in deep trouble.

I am so thankful for His unconditional love and His offer to Save me. As Aunt Claire and I talked outside the hospital room, I saw a picture of love for another person, and I admired it, and I was thankful again.

As I met with Tom to prepare for today, he told me one of the main things most of us will surely remember about Nick is his sense of humor. He kept it intact through all of his trials, right up to the end. Even as I was getting ready to say goodbye and leave the hospital, he was trying to get me to "pull his finger". Ha Ha! That was Uncle Nick, too. He was and will always be loved by us who knew him, and he leaves us with many good things to remember about him, now in this summary of his life.

Nick Scheffer

Committed, February 27, 2006