

**Abilene High School “A” Association Reunion
April 10, 2022**

Past, Present and the Prospective (Future)

I want to express my appreciation again to Gerald Galbraith for hosting the “A” Association Reunion. I know that there is a lot of work to make this reunion a pleasant one and one where we can relax and enjoy each other’s company. This has been another tough year for many of us. Losing loved ones, friends, and those who have made a difference in our lives. Going to the hospitals, to Nursing homes, and to funerals...Life is not easy. Getting older is not fun...but, it could be worse. Some of you have had to experience the worse. Sherry and I have prayed for you as you are/were experiencing the low points all of us have or are going through.

When I have things going on in my life that I am concerned about (whether it is health problems, our country, our family going through some unexpected problems, etc.), I try to find something positive to read or some funny quotes from individuals we know from television like Steven Wright. He is the comedian that has some quotes that makes sense only when other things don’t make sense. His mind sees things differently than most of us do.

Now...you have to get your thinking cap on as to how this mind twister twists your thought pattern. Here is what I mean:

- **Borrow money from pessimists -- they don’t expect it back.**
- **If you want the rainbow, you got to put up with the rain.**
- **The early bird may get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.**
- **If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.**
- **When everything is coming your way, you’re in the wrong lane.**
- **I intend to live forever... So far, so good.**
- **What happens if you get scared half to death twice?**
- **My mechanic told me, “I couldn’t repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder.”**
- **To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism; to steal from many is research.**

- **If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.**
- **If your car could travel at the speed of light, would your headlights work?**

So...you see why I like to read quotes. They have me laughing when I would normally be crying or worrying about something!

Well...I know you are not here to listen to jokes. You want a more rewarding talk; a more uplifting experience coming from the one that has the bully pulpit (so to speak). Thank you for making a special trip and the time to listen to me. However, I do understand that you probably came for the food and fellowship more than what I might have to say.

I want you to know that one of the greatest gifts our Lord has given us are friends. Whether you believe it or not, you guys and gals are my friends. By the way, all of you are either a guy or a gal...whether other people agree with me or not. You tell me, guys; did you know who were girls and who were boys when you were walking down the hall at Abilene High School. There was no doubt it...it did not take a Biologist to know what a "good looking" girl was versus an "ugly old boy!" The truth has not changed! Sixty something years have passed and girls are girls and boys are boys. Right?? Sherry is saying right now,... "Honey, I told you to leave politics out of it and you have already blown it!"

That is not politics, that is simply "common sense."

Now..back to where I was before I was distracted, disgrundled, and deeply troubled about the state our beloved country is in.

Yes, men and women of Abilene High School and others who have something in common with the Abilene Eagles...you have been instrumental in making my life complete.

I love my family. They are there whether they like me or not. I see them at reunions, funerals, and hospitals. My daughter, grandchildren, and great grandchildren see me quite often and I love it. I would not want it any other way.

BUT...I miss my friends of long ago. Thinking back to "long ago", I miss the Abilene Reporter News and its sports pages (whole section with details of what happened in the way of sports); I miss going to the movies with friends (\$.25 cents in your pocket and that paid for a double feature, Green Hornet serial, a cartoon or two...and a Pepsi Cola and popcorn or peanuts. I miss going to Casey's Drive Inn or "Jumbo Burger," the Chuck Wagon to have a

hamburger and French fries. I loved my friends then...and I love to be with them now. Thanks for the memories, fellow Eagles.

As we look at our life, we cannot complete our journey without looking at the various stages our lives have gone through or will be going through. We could get into a detailed study of our lives and see where we have made mistakes that got us into trouble and see where some of our choices seemed to have come out pretty good.

All of us go through many stages whereby we either have said, "I don't want to experience that again, or that was an enjoyable experience or journey I would not mind repeating." It can be a family thing, occupational thing, a business transaction, or something that made sense at the time and either turned out as "a bummer experience" or a "successful, rewarding adventure." Today I want to speak on only three (3) stages of our lives whereby all of us have to go through. Yes, this is not a detailed experience only you had to go through...but, these stages (for all of us) have, are, or going to be experiencing before we meet our God.

These three (3) stages are what I call the "P" stages of life. Don't laugh...I am using the "P" to help us remember the stages. The stages are:

1. Past
2. Present
3. Prospective, Predicted or Projected (Future) stages
Prospective is defined as "Likely to be or become something at a later time."

The PAST stage is one that all of us can remember because we have gone over and over our past in our minds...at home, at parties, at get-to-gathers, at the dinner table with our families, sitting on the creek bank with your kids, grandkids, and your honey...and at reunions (family, high-school). You talk about the past; like when you could jump and run, get in trouble for being the class clown, the football game in which you were instrumental in winning state, district, etc. We tell about how we made money, built our homes, bought that special car, broke our leg, had our children, lost our children, lost our parents, our husband or wife...That is the past. All of us have experienced some of the most rewarding things in our life to talk about and we have experienced some tragedies...that we don't want to talk about. I love to hear you guys tell about the Abilene Eagles' football games, the wins, the state championships, the individual challenges, the hard work to get to

the state championship...the state track meet. Winning is fun but the losing is something you just can't forget.

Have you found out what I have found out in life...that sometimes it takes a loss to make us better, to make us try harder, to help us instead of hurting us. I have learned that God is as proud of us in the way we handled losses, tragedies, and heartaches (the valley experiences) as He is proud of us when we win in the end (those mountain top experiences). I don't like to go through the valleys, but that is how God equips us to make it to the next level. The past...Yes, we all have those stories to tell our kids, our friends, our group of old people...and we see that the past is a stepping stone to the next stage.

That next stage is the Present. Here we are...old, slower, and not near as good looking as we were when we were young. Most of us have had our hospital stays. Many of us are having a hard time hearing and seeing. Yep...many of us are not what we use to be. We see the football games and enjoy others getting popped knowing that we couldn't get up if we were hit that hard. We say to our spouses and friends... "Man, I can't believe it is already Sunday."

And then they tell you, "It is not Friday, Gerald, it is Tuesday."

Remember the joke I told you the first time we met in 2012...ten years ago. No...you don't...because you don't even remember having a reunion that far back.

This was it...it's still funny!

Three old men are out taking a walk one windy day; all of them are hard hearing. The first one said, "Windy, ain't it? The 2nd one said, "No, it is Thursday." The 3rd one said, "I am, too; let's have a coke."

Now that is typical today for many of us. I don't know how many times I say to Sherry, "Now...what did you say?"

At Thanksgiving, Sherry and I were in the grocery store and she asked me where something was. I said I know right where it is and went all the way to the end of the last aisle and she said, "Honey, where are you taking me?" I said, "You said you wanted a box of Tide." She said, "What, I said I needed to know where the Frozen Pumpkin Pies were?" I swore she said something about some kind of cleanser...but, we just laugh now...and when one of us does not hear what the other says, we just repeat "Do you really need a Frozen Pumpkin Pie?"

If we didn't laugh at ourselves, we would cry ourselves to sleep.

Yes, the present...here at the Galbraith Ranch...again. Still have a hard time remembering where to turn in. But, as slow as I drive now, it is easier to find...if I can see the windmills.

It is really a positive thing to lose your eyesight a little bit. I got up this morning, had my underwear and tee shirt on, looked in the mirror and thought to myself. "Old man, it is going to take you a lot longer than 30 minutes to fix you up to get outside."

For the present, I would say, "Make good use of your time. Today is the day God gave you to enjoy and to be glad we had this time together."

Because of what we have done in the past and what we are experiencing at present, it causes us to take note of tomorrow.

Decisions in the past and even today will help us to project or have a good prospective of our future. The past were memories we cherish, the present is happening now...and we want to make good use of our time. With the past experiences and all the good, the bads, and the uglies that have taken place, we can pretty well predict the future.

We know:

1. We can't take it with us...
2. We can't make up for lost time, but we can build on our knowledge and experience.
3. We have a few years at the most to get ready for our walk through this life to the next.

This means if we have prepared for that walk through the door (threshold) to the next, we don't have anything to worry about.

I am a believer that what Jesus said is true.

"I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me will live even though he dies; he that lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

I love living in the present...with my wife, my daughter, my grandchildren and great grandchildren...and all my friends. However, I long to see Jesus and my daughter...and other friends and loved ones.

I can predict my future. I can presume and presuppose that I have a place in heaven waiting for me.

What is it like? Jesus said, "In my father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told so. I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again to receive you to myself; that where I am, you may be also."

I have prepared and I challenge you to prepare also.

What is heaven like?

“What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”— the things God has prepared for those who love him—¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

Today, Eagle friends, we can prepare and make way for our entry into God’s glorious Kingdom. I have chosen Jesus to follow. I try my best to follow His instructions in His book. I blow it sometime, but Jesus knows it. He forgives me and sets me on the right track until I make another mistake. I truly believe He is “the Way, the Truth and the life...and no one will ever come into God’s presence unless it is through Jesus, God’s Son. Choose life, Eagle friends, choose life.

Prayer:

Father God, may my thoughts given to others be not a hindrance, but be a helpful thought-provoking testimony of where I stand before the Lord. Grant to us a willing heart to listen and be responsive to other’s needs.

I am excited to know that heaven is on my agenda in the future. I pray that my friends and family will make preparations for what comes next.

Keep us healthy and willing to serve others as we stretch toward the mark of the high-calling of God. The race is nearly over. I want my friends and family to know I have appreciated the opportunity to be a witness for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In Jesus’ name.

Amen