



AHS “A” Association Devotion, 2016

- **Thank you. It is good to be back in Abilene.** Abilene was so good to those of us who grew up here...and AHS provided a good foundation and a good footing to start our quest for success.
- **Thank you, Gerald and Christie Galbraith, for having us out here at this wonderful place.**
- **Although I had to take 15 Zyrtecs** before I came out here, it is indeed perfect for our setting...
- **Reunion of the BOLD Timers...**”YOU SAY WHAT IS ON YOUR MIND.”
- **I would rather be here than in the Crystal Cathedral in California.** (WE DON’T HAVE TO PAY FOR POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE, WINDOWS AND PEWS). We just have to enjoy the GREAT OUTDOORS.

The Best Things in Life are truly “FREE.”

- **Sherry is not here today. She is keeping our special needs grandson, Tyler, while our youngest daughter, Melanie, and her husband, Tim, are attending a wedding in South Carolina.**
- **MOST OF YOU KNOW WE LOST OUR OLDEST DAUGHTER, TAMI, IN DECEMBER OF 2014 (17 MONTHS YESTERDAY), CANCER OF PANCREAS, LIVER, AND BILE DUCT (3 MONTHS FROM DIAGNOSIS TO DEATH).**
- **WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE TAMI’S SPIRIT AND SOUL LEFT THIS WORLD TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**
 - **A pastor (India Missionary) came to our home to bring us a card** from all the members of the church where Tami left a sum of money to build a center of hope (church) for a city in India. It holds 125, has a bathroom, and a baptistery. Tami had gone to India in the summer of 2010 and fell in love with the people.
 - **The missionary pastor brought a picture of the church in which they built with the funds Tami left in her will.**

- **A man called from the Gideons and said,** “We want you to know that 1000 Gideon Bibles have been placed in the hands of the families in the Ukraine and Romania.” Tami had ministered in the Ukraine with her daughter, Brittani, in 2006.
- **Her home church let us know** that Tami’s monetary gift to the church in her will was used for the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ for foreign missions.
- **Left enough for her children to pay off their homes or to help buy one.**
- **Gerald and Sherry Cumby...and Tami’s family have been blessed through a tragedy such as Tami’s. She was indeed a wonderful daughter. There is no doubt, we will see her again.**

Let me remind you...You don’t have to worry, God is still handling problems. God is still in the miracle working business. God is so amazing that it is beyond our imagination as to how he will take care of His own!

- ***To help us understand how God can complete His plan, I have asked one of our Eagles to give a word of encouragement by telling what God has done in his life as he had to deal with physical and emotional problems.***
 - *Stan Cosby provided a word of encouragement. Stan’s testimony was in line with how God can work miracles in some of the most difficult circumstances. Stan has battled a stroke and other physical problems. He loves to tell how God will take us through dark valleys to get to the mountaintop on the other side. He told of how his wife, Michele, had been such an encouragement and help through his struggles to be whole again.*
- ***What is bothering you most about life? Let God help you through your problems.***

We have roses in our yard...some in full bloom; some blooms dying. But, I have found that Roses come back prettier next year after they appear dead in the fall and winter.

Note: I have to keep the roses pruned to get the most out of them. God is like that. He wants to prune our lives to make us better and more productive.

A Song reflecting this thought: “ROSES WILL BLOOM AGAIN”

“Roses will bloom again...Just wait and see,

Don’t mourn what might have been...Only God knows how and when; but,

Roses will bloom again.”

- **Tami's last prayer was that her off-spring would have children.** Tami wanted to be a grandmother. Her daughter, Brittani, our granddaughter, and her husband, Joel, had been trying to give Tami her wish...for 7 ½ years. A few weeks after Tami's death, Brittani called the family and stated, "I'm pregnant with my mom's grandchild." We now have a great grandson, Ethan. What a guy! No...what a God!
- **Tami's other child, Brandon, and his wife, Emily, have just received a foster child, Caleb, into their home. Such a blessing!**

Sherry and I have learned that Roses Will Bloom Again...God is so good through the loss of our daughter, Tami, and working with our special-needs grandson, Tyler.

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- **As you know, we have lost some wonderful Eagles since last year.**

Jim Millerman would have been 79 today (May 1, 2016)! What a wonderful send-off the family had at Jim's home church. Jim was a great Christian example of love for God, country, and family.

Many of you have been through some tough times this year.

Kenny Schmidt and Rosalee...you have shown us a miracle, my friend.

This year I want to do something a little different:

- **I just want to hug on you a while. Sometimes we just need that.**
- **I want to encourage, not discourage.**
- **I want to lift-up, not tear down.**
- **I don't want to judge you; the One who knows all can do that...and do a much better job than I can!**

Why does God have seasons?

He loves variety. He loves color; He loves the creation in which He made.

He wants you to experience a taste of life...the new life...but,

He wants to remind us that we will have some dreary, cold days in our life and then there comes new and exciting life...to pick up our spirits.

- **However, we are never satisfied as humans;**

Spring...we gripe about the pollen in the air. The bees that sting us when we don't see them working within the beautiful flowers. We are tired of the rains that keep us from playing ball and our grandkids playing outside (where we can get some rest!)

Summer...comes, and we gripe about not getting the rain. Too hot; we want the air conditioning to stay on all the time...and gripe because we have to put sun-tan on to keep us from getting skin cancer....We pray for cooler weather and wish that Fall will come soon.

Fall comes, and we see the trees shedding their leaves...in which we have to rake and live with them blowing around the front door. We gripe about not knowing whether it is going to rain, to get cold, or...in Texas, is there a sandstorm coming?

Winter comes and we pray for spring because it is too cold, the heating bills are too high...and we just want to get out of the house after three days of ice and rain...and sleet. We beg for warmer weather.

We have seasons of life, just as we have seasons around the world:

- **Spring reminds me of new life.** When we are born and growing up, through our teenage years...blossoming out...physically and mentally. **I say Spring would be from birth to about 25.** Some are married by this time and you enjoy the joys of physical attraction and having children.

You remember all the joys and disappointments of growing up. You can build on the joys and improve on making the disappointments to be few and far between.

Remember last year...I told you there was a song that kind of told us about our early years of life when we thought we knew it all. The song is sung by Don Williams: *Living on Tulsa Time*

I believe it kind of gives us a feeling of where we were after we were out to "do our thing."

We thought we knew it all. Our decisions were based on feelings and out-of-control hormones:

Listen: Living on Tulsa Time, by Don Williams.

*I left Oklahoma drivin' in a Pontiac just about to lose my mind
I was goin' to Arizona maybe on to California where the people all
live so fine
My baby said I's crazy my momma called me lazy
I was goin' to show 'em all this time
Cause you know I ain't no foolin' I don't need no more schoolin'
I was born to just walk the line
Livin' on Tulsa time livin' on Tulsa time
Well you know I've been through it when I set my watch back to it
Livin' on Tulsa time*

*Well there I was in Hollywood wishin' I was doing good talkin' on
the telephone line
But they don't need me in the movies
And nobody sings my songs guess I'm just a wastin' time
Well then I got to thinkin' man I'm really sinkin' and I really had
a flash this time
I had no bus'ness leavin' and nobody would be grievin'
If I went back to Tulsa time
Livin' on Tulsa time livin' on Tulsa time
Gonna set my watch back to it cause you know I've been through it
Livin' on Tulsa time.*

- **Summer reminds me of a vigorous and enjoyable time for growing and cultivating our lives.** By this time we have gone to school, figured out what our likes and dislikes are as to the type of jobs we feel comfortable in. We want to be successful as a husband, a father, a business man, and a respected man in the community in which we live. I say that Summer of our lives would represent the age group from 26-50. Enjoying seeing your children become adults. Maybe even having some grandchildren by this time. Even if you don't have children or grandchildren, you realize that this is the time in which you become a successful human being or just one that lives day to day.

May I remind you...Accomplishments are always past tense.

You can't live on accomplishments...but you can build on them.

Then...

- **Fall comes into our lives...reminds me of a great mountain that we climb but realize we must get back down.** The climb was hard, you were looking at new horizons ahead, new growth, new adventures...but coming down is sometimes boring. You have already seen the scenery. You have already accomplished some of your goals. Your family is being spread to the corners of the world. The kids are not coming over; not near as much as they used to. Their interests are not your interests. You realize you are not up-to-date with all the new “fang-dangled stuff.” You are now on the computer to catch up with the modern world; but, you are not tweeting the same tweets that the younger generation is tweeting. Their likes in the style of music is different than yours. The people we want in office (politics) are not the same people your children/grandchildren feel they desire to be in office.

As you climb down the mountain, you realize that you might hurt yourself much greater than when you fall going up the mountain. Like climbing stairs...if you slip...you don't fall up the stairs. If you fall while you are coming down the stairs you can hurt yourself bad.

I call this stage of our lives FALL. This covers the age group about 56 to 70.

Then...There comes the Winter of our lives:

Winter has an early Winter and a late Winter.

The early part of winter is when we are trying to adjust to being comfortable for part of the day and then there are the muscle aches and pains of working in the yard, trying to remember the kid's birthdays, trying to remember the joys of life when we were younger.

Griping about the music we are now trying to adjust to at church. You can't adjust to that stuff...banging on the drums or songs that are sung...7 words sung 11 times.

People wearing cut-off blue jeans with holes in their knees while they are singing in the choir.

The young people at church wanting people to fund their mission trip to Argentina in the summer. You saying, “Wait a minute, what happened to kids working for their funds to get to go to Argentina??” You tell the pastor you have post holes to dig in the back and you need the kids to do that for you...and you will pay them \$10 per hour to do that. You don’t get one to take you up on it.

You find yourself trying to cope with society, trying to face the reality of growing older, trying to adjust to retirement...when you already feel like every part of your body has retired from living. You find yourself bending over to pick up your socks and look for other things to do while you are down there.

Your body is not adjusting, your mind is not adjusting, and your doctor is not letting you adjust...He just keeps giving pills to supposedly help you.

I call this early Winter of your life. Probably from 71-80.

Then comes late Winter of your life.

- **You go to the doctor more than you go to the grocery store.**
- **You wake up in the middle of the night and find yourself having to make another trip to the bathroom. You forget where the bathroom is.**
- **You are now in the stage of life where you either grin and bare it...or bare it and don’t care who is around to see your bareness.**

No, this is the stage of life you can either enjoy and live in peace...or you can continue to gripe about everything. You can tell your kids you love them no matter what...you might not like their likes...but you can still love them. **They have to make choices in life. But...we also have to make choices in our life.**

Did you see the 1st game at Ranger Stadium this year? A 105-year-old Texas great-great-grandmother threw out the 1st pitch. Elizabeth Sullivan...was asked, “What do you think helped you live as long as you have?” She stated, “I drink 3 Dr. Peppers a day...and I feel good at 10, 2 and 4. The rest of the time it’s not really that good.”

Free Dr. Peppers were given to the fans that day.

We are in one of the stages of life I have mentioned...probably either early or late Winter.

Yes, most of us have accomplished much in our life time. Children, a good job, pretty good retirement. But, what about now?

Since we can only build on accomplishments, what have you done to build on them?

I say “Challenge Yourself to the very end.”

I watch the 100 meter dash man throw his chest out stretching for the string...the finish line. But...life is not finished when we cross the finish line. The 200 meter dash person doesn't stop at 100 meters. The quarter miler doesn't stop at the 200 meter mark.

Life must go on...and when we do reach the finish line of our lives, we will either complete the journey home or we go into a black hole...of darkness and separation from the God who made us. Our choice...accept the fact that God had a Son, Jesus, and He loved us so much that He gave His life for us. He was raised from the dead...we can do likewise if we accept by faith this “Fact of Life.”

Paul said, *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race (the course), I have kept the faith.” 2 Timothy 4:7.*

Hebrews 12:1-2, Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”

“I stretch toward the mark of the high-calling of God. I have finished my course, and what lies ahead...”

Remember, Challenges keep us alert and reaching for something better!

It is not what we have done in the past that will help us achieve our goal....it is what we are doing and are striving for that will make us achievers...and eventually winners.

Remember...Prizes come cheap when the goals are low and the team we are playing are losers!

We Eagles are not and never will be losers. We want to go into the sunset and say, “To God be the glory for the things He has done.”

Make right choices...Make the choice of yielding to the Spirit of God. He will be our judge. Not you, not me, not your family and friends.

May God grant you wisdom to endure life and live it to the time we have to cross the finish line of life...when we step into eternity with Him.

Alison Kraus...My favorite singer, tells us the truth in a song:

In the Palm of His Hand...Alison Krauss

*If I could have the world and all it owns
A thousand kingdoms, a thousand thrones
If all the earth were mine to hold
With wealth my only goal*

*I'd spend my gold on selfish things
Without the love that Your life brings
Just a little bit more is all I'd need
'Til life was torn from me*

*I'd rather be in the palm of Your hand
Though rich or poor I may be
Faith can see right through the circumstance
Sees the forest in spite of the trees
Your grace provides for me*

*If I should walk the streets no place to sleep
No faith in promises You keep
I'd have no way to buy my bread
With a bottle for my bed*

*But if I trust the One who died for me
Who shed His blood to set me free
If I live my life to trust in You
Your grace will see me through.*

*I'd rather be in the palm of Your hand
Though rich or poor I may be
Faith can see right through the circumstance
Sees the forest in spite of the trees*

Your grace provides for me.

Prayer: Pray for peace in times of stress...peace in times of pain...peace as we see the finish line ahead and we are still on our feet stretching for the mark of the calling of God.

Sherry and I have a new website (still in work), but there are many devotions and thoughts I know you will enjoy. Some of the Bible Studies Sherry and I have done over the last few years are there...over 30 devotions...and some training materials. We will have a place where you can buy our books and also a visitor's corner where other authors, materials approved by us, are placed for your study/reading.

Love you guys. I always enjoy our meetings. We are indeed "friends forever."

Devotion given by Gerald E. Cumby, AHS graduate, 1959