

What is Jesus Doing?

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

A Jewish Man's Journey to Faith

It is Memorial Day 2016. It's a great day to remember, think and write about my dad, Bernard Raskin, Staff Sergeant, Communications, 507th Regiment, 82 Airborne, Normandy on D-Day, 101 Airborne, Battle of the Bulge, American hero.

This blog is a perfect place to remember this man as he not only lived his life as a friend, mentor and inspiration to many in his worldly persona as a free-thinking, secular Jewish man for the preponderance of his 94 years, but because he gave his life to the Lord Jesus, Messiah, three weeks before he died.

My dad Bernie had many laurels in the world, and yet was one of the most humble, inclusive, friendly, caring and egalitarian people I have ever known. Here is an excerpt from his obituary from 2008:

Bernard was born in Seattle Washington to Henry and Mary Raskin, on September 24, 1913. Bernie was a Journalism graduate of CCNY in New York City and fought bravely in World War II with the 507th Regiment, attached to the 82 Airborne Division on D-Day and the 101 Airborne at the Battle of the Bulge. Bernard was awarded both the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

A gifted publicist and writer, Bernard was Vice President of Public Relations for the National Maritime Union, and the Editor of its weekly paper, The Pilot, throughout much of the 50's, 60's, and 70's and was also active as a public relations officer in the early days of the AFL-CIO. He had interacted with Mayors, Governors, and Presidents, and had notably been a part of a delegation of American Labor dignitaries to Communist Russia to meet with then-Premiere Nikita Khrushchev in 1960. His brother, A.H. Raskin, was the

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Op-Ed page editor of the New York Times, and a noted authority on the American Labor Movement.

In his retirement for the past thirty years, Bernard was a poet, play-write, humorist, and was active in writer's groups in both Del Mar and in Newhall California, where he participated in many publications at Mira Costa College and the Newhall Senior Center.



Photo by Jeff Petry

U.S. Military Cemetery near Omaha Beach

As I was blessed to be this man's only son and his best friend in the last 10 years of his life, I can attest to my dad's honesty, integrity, genuineness and will say without irony that he exhibited most, if not all of the Kingdom qualities that Paul describes in the "called according to His purpose" as those that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit imparts. These are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control. Bernie Raskin exhibited all of these before he ever became a professed believer in the Lord Jesus.

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I have eluded in past blogs, to my heartfelt and experience-tested belief that the “called according to God’s purpose” are the called even before they say “yes” to Jesus through the heart-agreement and verbal assent with the Holy Spirit that lives, albeit in some dormant until that day, within them. The angels bear them up, and the Lord opens doors for them for peace and not for evil, and they do good works prepared beforehand for them just as do those of us who have come to faith and received our salvation by calling on the Name of Jesus (Psalm 91:9-12, Jeremiah 29:11, Ephesians 2:10, Joel 2:32).

Many that we walking believers meet in our daily lives are those very “saints before the fact”. My dad was one of those who really could be called a good person who loved his neighbor, cared for the poor, and was a humble and meek true gentleman who had integrity in all of his business and personal affairs, giving freely of his talents and abilities to those whom God put in his path.

For years, my dad professed to be an atheist, but when pressed, he would always allow that he was really more of an agnostic, one who did not know if there was such a thing/person as God, but who would always want to do the right thing by his fellow man regardless. I believe now, having walked with the Lord for over 20 years, that God bears with those undecided “future saints” in their unbelief, because they have love for their neighbor, as did the Samaritan man in Jesus’ parable. Is it because God, in His transcendence, who foreknew the saints, and resides with them in His glorious Sabbath rest even now, knows us before and after our heart conversion on earth simply as His saints? (Romans 8:28-30) I like to think this is so, although knowledge of that is too high for me.

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My dad, who lived with me for the last 8 years of his life, always listened intently to my stories of God's healing and restorative miracles among my poor flock with tears of gladness and true hope. Yet, when I asked him if he wanted to become a believer in Christ in truth and with his mouth, he would always gently decline, citing his loyalty to those who died in the concentration camps of the holocaust as his primary reason. I find this to be an overriding factor in the decisions of many secular Jewish Americans in refusing to open their hearts to Messiah. I have spoken of this in previous blogs and will go deeper in future ones, but suffice it to say that this is a world-constructed wall of the enemy that we, the Body of Christ, must make it a daily practice to come against and pray down.

In any event, to the Glory of God and my father's eternal benefit, he had a conversation with my beautiful wife Donna, whom he loved, when he was well into the beginning stages of what was to be his demise, about the love of God and how accepting Messiah as his Lord and Savior did not negate his identity as one of God's Chosen People, but simply solidified it in the act of using his free will to choose Him back. Two weeks later, after his last transfusion, literally minutes before receiving his final death sentence from his Hospitalist, to my joy, my dad asked me what he could do about "my Friend". I smiled at him and said "you mean Jesus?" and he said "yes". I then led him gently to the Lord and gave him some scriptures to meditate upon which he began to do when the Hospitalist knocked on the door, asked me into the hall, and told me that my dad had 2 weeks to live.

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Three weeks later, my dad died in my arms. He was in a medicated coma, but the last time he looked at me I said to him, “Dad, I know how much you love me and you love looking into my face. Just know that when you take your last breath and leave this place, you will be looking directly at the One who loves you even more than I do and who is far more beautiful. You will be looking into the Face of Jesus, the Lover of your soul.” Moments later he was gone.

Happy Memorial Day to all of you who served.

May you all know the love of the Living God in peace forever.

