

Joyful in Hope – 28 – April 18, 2020
(thoughts and ideas to encourage and challenge)

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”
Romans 12:9

Good morning, Heritage Family,

God has blessed with a sunny day, and the promise that temperatures will rise, at least for a while. I hope you can take advantage of the positive change in the weather and maybe get outside for a walk.

By now, I think most everyone has heard the sad news about Tina Hauser's passing. We are grieving with Bruce and Jamie, and their entire family. Tina was a dear woman who always worked hard for the underdog. Prayers for that family.

And great news! Ward and Lisa Bartlett are pleased to announce the arrival of their latest grandchild. Libby gave birth to a son this morning. Everybody is doing well. Congratulations to the Humber family. Thanks to the Father.

Yesterday, **Mel Storm** sent me this tribute to Don, and asked me to share it with Janet. I asked if I could share today with all of you.

Tribute to Don Smith

I believe I first met Don Smith in the spring of 1991. At that time, the leadership of the Clawson Church of Christ and the Birmingham Church of Christ had initiated exploratory discussions about a merger between the two congregations. Prior to these meeting, I knew virtually nothing about the Clawson Church. The only person from Clawson that I knew by name was the minister, Jack Duty. For the past year, I had served as Birmingham's pulpit minister and was transitioning from preacher to elder. Even in those first meetings, Don had for me a larger than life presence. Besides his physical size, Don clearly had a commanding presence in those meetings. From then on, I was always impressed with Don's thoughtfulness, wisdom, strength of conviction, and yet an openness to learn new things and rethink old ideas.

I understand that in his younger days, Don taught Bible class at Clawson very often. By the time Heritage, there were other teachers, young bucks like me, Leonard Knight along with Bill Powers and others who took on that role. However, I do remember Don taught a class on Galatians and I was impressed with the level of study he put into that class. He was a good Bible class teacher and people benefited from his class. Also, while Don never regarded himself as a preacher, he gave one of the best sermons on giving I have ever heard; again, deeply rooted in the text of Scripture.

There was a graciousness and friendly spirit about Don that was only enhanced by the love and support of his life partner and spouse, Janet. Every time Don and Janet walked into the room or if you entered their house, it was a positive experience. On a personal level, Don was very encouraging to me. Despite being my senior by more than a few years, Don treated me as an equal and colleague. I never felt out of place or unaccepted when I was with Don. He was a cherished mentor to me.

When the elders wrestled with the questions of gender roles, I remember Don willing to rethink his previous views. I know it was not easy for him to reach a new understanding. When Heritage experienced serious fallout after the elders presented the results of our study, Don stood firm in the face of criticism. That takes character.

Don was a faithful husband, loving father and grandfather. For me he was a wise and godly church elder and mentor to me, wonderful singer, devoted churchman, and genuine disciple of Jesus. I will miss Don. Such a good man. Now he can rest and enjoy the blessings awaiting a child of God.

Of course, one cannot think much about Don without remembering his deep and rich bass voice. Congregational singing was so much better when Don was present carrying the bass part. Sometimes, though not often, he consented to lead singing. It was always such a treat for me. And there was the Silvertones quartet. I had heard of the Silvertones from one of my former students long before I met Don. When we finally did meet, the Silvertones had essentially disbanded or retired from performing. But they did give a couple of special performances at Heritage, sort of a reunion concert. I am so glad I got to hear them sing, to hear that bass voice. What a treat. What a blessing!

Blessings to All. We'll see you tomorrow for worship.