

Shirley Rhee Marshall Dec. 17, 1929-Jan. 3, 2011

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Faith! That is one important ingredient to life. Trusting! We add to faith this one knowing that our trust is not in something that will disappoint us, but our trust is in the One who gave us life. Believing! This one is the key. We can believe in lots of things but the most important thing that makes a real difference in our lives on this earth and where we will be spending eternity is what we believe, or better still in whom we believe.

This morning the Marshall family and you their friends gather to remember someone who had faith, trust and believed. She was of a strong faith because she knew in whom she trusted. In fact if it wasn't for her faith and in whom she believed she might not be enjoying that wonderful eternal life we hear so much about and that which we read about in God's Word. If it wasn't for her faith and in whom she believed this would not be her coronation day. But she did have faith. She did trust and she did believe. And when you add all that up you know she has been summoned before her Lord God who has welcomed her home and has given her a hug, placed her crown on her head and said to her, "Shirley Rhee Johnson, welcome to your new home where there is no more pain, no more suffering, no more tears, no more sadness. Come, take your place among those who have preceded you. Come join your mom and dad, your husband Paul, and the multitude of friends you made over those years who reached heavens gates before you. Well done! Yes, well done! Much was given you to do, much you have accomplished, many lives you have touched. Receive now your crown of glory and here are the keys to your heavenly mansion built just for you. Enter this place of peace and joy where you will live forever and ever in my presence. Come stand beside those from

Williamsville who I have called home. Join Burr McVickers, John O'Neil, Wayne Henderson, Paul Lugibil, Norm Doty, Eloise Miller and host of others you have sat and worshiped with at the Williamsville United Methodist Church. Rejoice knowing your love for God and his Son has paved the way for this day in your life. Welcome home.”

Family and friends of Shirley Rhee Marshall that's what life is all about. While we mourn the passing of this lovely lady she celebrates her new life in heaven. While some today fight back tears of sorrow she sheds tears of joy that are wiped from her eyes by her Savior and Lord, for there is no sadness in heaven. So we should rejoice this day for her because all her troubles are gone. No more rushing to the hospital. No more being stuck. No more ER visits. No more feeling yucky. No more cane, nor walker. She is free as a bird. With her angel wings she can soar to new heights. That's how I like to think of heaven. And to add the cake and ice cream she is now with her beloved husband Paul. He met her at the gate. He hugged and kissed her and with a smile on his face told her she still looked good. They remember growing old together until death separated them for a time. But now together again in heaven for eternity.

On this earth Shirley Rhee was a loving wife, mother and grandmother who poured lots of affection on her family. She had two kids, a son Todd, a daughter Paula, a sister, granddaughters, nephews and nieces and lots of friends. When I asked Todd to share some thoughts about his mom he couldn't get by the fact that in his eyes she was the perfect mom. His exact words were, "Mom is mom." In his mind on that day those were his only words to describe the woman who brought him into this world, fed him, taught him, watched him and his sister in school activities, disciplined with a firm hand, yet with love, the one who would give her

children the shirt off her back, wiped back tears and did all those motherly things. Though they may not always have much, she made sure her kids and family were well taken care of. Her sister Joan told me she was a great sister, one who she shall miss because they were so close. When Joan had a few physical troubles her sister was right there to help. The whole family would say she was a loving and caring person. No saint, mind you. After all, she was human. But her flaws were overcome by the love she showed to many people. She was straight forward, a best friend, a religious person who loved her church and most of all loved her Jesus. When health kept her from attending church she would sit in front of the TV watching one preacher after the other so that she could get her Sunday manna from heaven learning about that heavenly home that awaited her, and making sure she had the road map there. God blessed her over and over especially with children and grandkids whom she was proud of and whom she loved.

She loved animals, all it seems except Todd's Chocolate Lab. She thought she was a horse. But while staying with Brenda and Todd these days she and that dog became buddies. She would sleep with her and she would spoil it by giving it some table scraps if she could do it without being seen. And that dog became her buddy.

She was a beautician in her early days with a shop in Springfield and I believe I heard some people come through the line telling Todd they knew his mom through that shop. She met a banker one day and thought she had struck it rich. She figured with a banker for a husband she would be set for life. He on the other hand thought, since his wife-to-be owned her own shop in Springfield well they had a bright future. Once they came together in marriage they realized they were really blessed and rich because of their love for each other. No earthly riches. But eternal riches through their faith.

Shirley Rhee, which most of her home town people from Nebo Illinois would call her, was as independent as she could be, even in her later years. She tried her best to live alone. She didn't want to be a burden to anyone. Even when she faced these last few weeks her thoughts weren't on going to a nursing home but to return to her apartment in Springfield. But God had other plans for her. Much better plans I might say, for now she is in a place where the sun shines all day long because the Scriptures teach us there isn't any darkness in heaven.

When we came to visitation last night I marveled at the bright colors she had on. She was a classy lady who loved life as much as she loved her family. She stood out with pride. She was bright and funny with a great personality. Todd told me she was proud as a peacock to tell people she once modeled in New York City. How great is that! Then she told the rest of the story. Since she had been to beautician school, she went to New York and during a seminar she was asked to model a hairdo. But in her mind, she modeled in New York City and in reality, that was the truth!

Brenda remembers a time her mother-in-law showed up in Quincy while she was there to work. When Shirley came to her hotel Brenda was shocked. Shirley said she had lived in this area so why not go out to eat and she would show Brenda some of those places she used to live and hangout. While out she went down a wrong street and instead of turning around she began to back up the street. I think it was a one way and she was going the wrong way....backing up. Brenda tried to tell her to stop before she got a ticket. Shirley's remark was, "I'll just tell them I'm new in town!" In Nebo I think it was, the people knew who was driving the family car. If it was going fast, it had to be Joan. If it kind of went slow, drifting from side to side

with someone waving her arm outside the window then it was definitely Shirley Rhee Johnson.

Often she would give Todd money for gas for driving to see her. Though he enjoyed his visits with her and she with him, she felt that she wanted to give him something because he was being such a nice son by coming to visit. After trying to fight over that \$20 for gas, Todd would give up, take the \$20, but before he left her house, he would tuck it neatly back into her purse. He didn't need to be paid to visit. It was a joy to see his mother's smile and hear her voice, even though as he grew older some of the conversations were well, let's just leave it at that.....remember she was a beautician....oh well. Moms will be mom all the time. And did I tell you he said "Mom is well, Mom?"

Shirley came from the old school of hospitality. If she was going to have company she would make sure she had something for them to eat. It might not be much, like cookies and coffee, but she needed to do that for her guests to welcome them to her home. Todd told me that when I called last Thursday to ask if Carole and I could stop by for a few minutes she said it would be wonderful. When we got there Todd offered us some coffee and she some of her candy. Todd told me the other day that before we arrived his mom asked him what they were going to serve us. Todd didn't know. He wasn't worried about it, but his mother was. They needed to be the perfect hosts. His mom then said, "Well get me that candy I got. We'll give them a piece." When we got there Todd offered us coffee and sure enough Shirley shared her candy. But most of all we had an opportunity to be with her one last time. We spent over an hour there talking, learning, laughing a little. It was great. Then we prayed, and asked God's blessing in the days ahead. He heard our prayers because it wasn't long before he took her home. And to show you how

blessed Shirley was, during that last week of her life she had a visit from her sister, her favorite nephew from Utah, her granddaughter Brittni from Tennessee, and of course, her favorite pastor and his wife, me and Carole. It was a great week! Now she begins her new years in a new place waiting for us to join her one day.

She loved buffet eating where she could sample lots of food and often take home some of the things that she did not finish. Whether it was Old Country Buffet, The Maverick or Ryan's she was ready at a the drop of a hat to go and feast on their food bar, then take home the leftovers. On one occasion Brittni and Shirley were going out and Brittni needed a tissue so she reached into grandmother's purse where she always kept Kleenex, and pulled out this oily one and gave some sound to let grandma know something was wrong. Grandma looked over at her granddaughter and the greasy tissue and calmly said, "What happened to my sausages?"

So you see there was some humor in her life as well. God had made the perfect person for the body of Shirley Rhee Johnson Marshall. He molded her together and put just the right mix in His clay that wound up to be the perfect mother, the perfect wife, the perfect grandmother, the perfect great grandmother, the perfect friend, the perfect sister, the perfect Christian, with flaws and all, that touched many of the lives that are here today saying farewell.

That, my friends is who Shirley Rhee Marshall was on this earth. Now she rests from her labors. She has fought the good fight. She has finished the race. She now enjoys her new life in heaven.

On this day we come not to say goodbye, for that seems so final. We say to Shirley today, "Thanks for the memories. Thanks for being a part of our lives.

Thanks for the love and thoughtfulness you gave to us. Thanks for being our friend. And Shirley, we'll see you later. Keep the lights on. Get those heavenly snacks ready for when we come to join you."

Till then, may we give thanks to our God for having Shirley Rhee touch our lives. Now may the peace and love of her God, bring comfort today and the rest of our lives on this earth. So may it be. And Todd I think I can hear a special message to you from your mom. "What's that? Say it again. Oh, okay." Todd mom says something about a brush. She said you'd know what she means. She also said she loves you and thanks for being her son. Yes mom is well, mom, Amen