

This is the Day...Friday

July 29, 2022

Wendel Albright – True Storyteller

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.” (Ephesians 4:15)

Over the years I have run into some real characters in my ministry. I’ve learned that people can be very complicated creatures and are known to do some very strange and even backward things. Take for example Wendel Albright. I’m not sure how old Wendel was when I met him, but he must have been at least 150! Wendel was a wonderful storyteller, but he would tell me tales from two centuries ago as if he had been there. Obviously, Wendel did not let the truth get in the way of a good story and he did not know how to tell a short story or at least the Readers Digest version of a story. Wendel’s stories went on and on. One time, I glanced at my watch as Wendel began telling me one of his long, tall tales. When he finally concluded the story, I looked back at my watch and the story had lasted one hour and ten minutes. Wendel may have been very old, but he had a mind like a steel trap. He either could remember everything, or he just made up the story as he told it. Either way, they were great stories.

Wendel had other strange peculiarities besides his story telling. They mostly revolved around the food he ate. Wendel rarely ate from a restaurant and claimed that he never ate fast food. Unless of course, I brought it to him. He would always say that fast food would, “Eat your insides up and kill you.” But he never passed up a McDonald’s cheeseburger with fries and a chocolate shake. He would never admit it, but it was his favorite. The most peculiar thing was how he ate his fast food. Wendel did not like his food to be very hot or very cold, so he would let his fries sit on the windowsill for about thirty minutes, cooling off and then eat them. Ever tried to eat a cold French fry? They quickly turn into those Styrofoam packing peanuts. Wendel would also allow his chocolate shake to warm up, so by the time he ate it, his shake was just a warm glass of chocolate milk. What a waste of good ice cream!

If you could get past Wendel’s long stories and strange food habits, you would find a man filled with joy. For Wendel, life was a great story to tell, and he rejoiced every day that he could be a part of the story. I was with Wendel the day before he passed away. He did not have any disease or specific illness. His body was just worn out. But even as he laid in the bed, in the last moments of his life, he told me a story. This one wasn’t nearly as long because he was just too weak. But it was a true story. It was the story of how God had come to him as a boy and saved him. Wendel spoke his story of truth to me with love. He chuckled when he told me Moses was there too, but I didn’t believe him. Wendel’s story became a part of God’s story and he found joy in knowing his Lord every day. On this day God which has given you, learn a lesson from Wendel. Tell your true story with love because the Lord is with you today. On my last day with Wendel, he knew he was dying and ironically the last words he said to me were, “I told you that fast food would eat your insides up and kill you.”