

For those of you who were not at the funeral, this intro may help. My father was a Messianic Jew. This meant he was a believer in the Messiah, Yeshua (Jesus Christ), as the savior of his soul. He became a born again believer when I was a little girl and therefore we were really raised as Christian in our early years before divorce tore my family apart. That divorce led to an embittered and unforgiving heart and bore much bad fruit in our lives. However, in the past few years, God graciously granted my father a restored heart and he rededicated his life to Yeshua and embraced his Jewish roots like never before. A clear gospel message was presented at his funeral by his Rabbi-Pastor and friend, Paul Rico, before I spoke

Thank you for being here to honor our father through this memorial service. For those of you who don't know me I am Jerry's middle daughter Dawn. I am speaking today on behalf of my sisters Tammie and Jackie as well as his 8 grandchildren. Although I may speak in first person out of ease of flow, please know that I believe I represent my sisters in all that I will share with you about our father.

I am saddened and honored to be able to share a little about what our father (Poppa Jerry) meant to us and why he will be so sorely missed. Please bear with me as I believe it is best that I just read the words I believe God has given me to share with all of you.

As three little girls, our home was filled with lots of laughter, lots of people, and lots of music. We were an active family and dad was really the center of all that activity. He gave us a childhood full of great memories out on his boat, camping in his rv's, and countless family vacations. We are blessed to have lots of great memories of when we were little that we will cherish forever. Our kids thrill in the countless stories we can share because our dad provided the experiences for us.

Although we had a lot of fun, one of the things that stands out the most when I think of my dad during those years was his generosity. He was the type of man that helped everyone he came across. I cannot count the times he would stop and pick someone up off the side of the road to help them out. He did this so often I thought it was normal to pick up people or hand out money to strangers. He was always giving someone a job that was down on their luck. He always engaged people everywhere we went. He was always taking in one of our friends who were struggling in their own home environment. There are probably a handful of people here today who lived in our dad's home at some time or other in their life. (And there was)

Our father was a lot of fun and he was also funny! Dad always had a joke or a magic trick ready. Every time we went out to eat he would pull out a trick or tell a funny joke to the waitress. He made an impression on people and was what I would describe as magnetic. People flocked to him and adored him. Even as a little girl I remember secretly admiring this quality in him.

Dad loved music and art. As 3 little girls, he filled our home and lives with music through his piano playing and art through his creativity. He was the most naturally gifted person I know. He could play anything he heard and draw anything he saw. I never understood it. One song he always played in our home was called the Entertainer. That was my dad. The Entertainer ...entertaining people with his wit, his tricks, his jokes and his generosity. As little girls we learned to dance on his feet and giggled as he would twirl us effortlessly through the air time and time again. I think we would all three confess that our first crush was definitely our father as we danced around him while he played his music entertaining us. We simply adored him.

Recently, his two brothers shared with me that when my dad was born, he got a triple portion of heart. This is a beautiful description of my father. But he was not only generous and gave of himself; he received with a lot of heart too. He deeply felt, pondered, and considered every word spoken to him. His heart was evidenced in his writing. My dad was a writer. Words and songs just flowed through his heart to his pen.

Similar to Elijah and Elisha , if I was given the chance and asked "What can I do before I am taken from you" I would respond, "I pray that the Lord would give me a double portion of your heart."

Now if you are anything like me..... when I attend a funeral and listen to the glowing accounts of the person's life, I often wonder how the person being honored is always nothing but wonderful and seemed to live the perfect life and leave the perfect legacy.

It would be unfair and untrue for me to paint that picture here today. It would also rob God of the glory He deserves in the work He has done in the lives of our family... first through His own Son and then through this incredible man, our father.

I have considered this deeply and I believe my father's legacy is about the power of forgiveness. His life is a testimony to the beautiful fruit that can come from receiving forgiveness through the sacrifice offered to us through the blood of Christ shed in our place. His life demonstrates the power of restoration and blessings that flow on the

other side of extending that same forgiveness we have received to others. Sadly, his life also demonstrates the bitter fruit that is harvested when you are confronted by the poison of unforgiveness. It's all about forgiveness. First received and then extended.

Although I have painted you a beautiful picture of our childhood which is all true, to fully appreciate my father's legacy, I must admit there were years that followed that were very difficult for our family. There was a period of time that dad was not a part of our lives and that was an extremely painful time for our entire family. The music died and he ceased to be the funny, generous, and outgoing, man that we knew. He made decisions that hurt us and we made decisions that hurt him. There is no reason, nor would it be appropriate to go into detail but I share this with you to share the message of hope, forgiveness and amazing restoration that took place in our lives.

We are a living testimony to the power of forgiveness and of God returning tenfold the years the locusts have eaten. We have experienced the amazing blessings waiting on the other side of forgiveness that you cannot even imagine are available to you. After years of estrangement, much prayer, and much work of the Holy Spirit, God graciously restored all that we had lost and so much more.

These past years with our dad have once again been filled with the generous, kind, funny, outgoing, music filled father we knew. Once freed by forgiveness, He was that same magnetic man that I now openly admired. He became the entertainer once again, filling our lives and homes with his music, wit, and contagious humor. He blossomed into the most incredible poppa to his 8 grandchildren who simply adore him. They were truly his pride and joy. It was written all over his face when he was around any of them. It poured out of his mouth to anyone willing to lend an ear. He fell in love with his children, grandchildren and the Lord all over again. He took his rightful position as the patriarch of this family in so many ways. He shared his love for Yeshua (his Savoir) with us openly. It was a beautiful and precious gift that I will forever be grateful for. His loss will leave a huge gap in our lives and the lives of our children that only God can fill.

My hope and request would be that when you think of my dad, you don't think of the final moments of his life. I hope you think of the victory and joy he found in Christ through the power of forgiveness, first received and then offered. I ask that you deeply consider where you need to be forgiven because it is available to you through the power of the cross and then consider where you may need to extend forgiveness. Based on our testimony, consider what amazing blessings you may be giving up or missing out on if you refuse.

I would like to leave you with a blessing and words that my father penned for me....I especially would like to dedicate these words to my sisters and our children.

May you walk in sunshine... the light of the Lord
May you always speak with guidance... the word of the Lord
May you always keep from temptation..... the truth of the Lord
May you learn from your mistakes.... the forgiveness of the Lord
May you always love your father... the Love of the Lord
May you always rest in peace.... the Grace of the Lord
May your cup runneth over with love

If ever God calls me home, I want you to always know that I stand with your heavenly Father always proud, always loving, and most of all, always grateful.
I love you always and in all ways, Dad

My dear sisters, as you will no doubt question why God allowed this or why He did not prevent these final moments, allow me to mingle my words with the words of John Piper and answer this way,

"I believe God's answer to your questions would be that "My ways are higher than your ways, my thoughts than you thoughts. You can no more grasp my wartime strategies than a child can read the graphs of the Chief of Staff. And remember, if I hadn't broken through the prison of unbelief and unforgiveness, you would never see him again. But rest in hope, He is with me, and I am now filling his heart and life with music and he is joyfully Entertaining the Saints in heaven."

Ironically, or maybe poetically somehow...Today at 2pm (the exact time when this memorial gathering began) my sister and I had tickets to take dad to the play Fiddler on the Roof. When I ordered those tickets and chose this date and time, I never would have imagined I would be speaking at his funeral instead of sitting next to him holding his hand at the show. There are three empty seats right now at that show. There are multiple empty hearts in this room. Yet, we are filled with hope because we know where dad is and we rest securely in the fact that we will be with him again in heaven. I know he is hearing music in heaven that we cannot even fathom is possible here on earth, but as a loving tribute to my dad, the man who filled our lives with music, I would like to ask Melinda Pino to come and play in honor of and for dad today.

I love you dad and thank you for filling our lives with the music of your life.