**MAKE A WISH**

It’s June in Minnesota. Do you know what that means? No, it doesn’t mean the snow season is almost over. But close. It means dandelions are in full bloom and the snow-like puffballs are everywhere! And do you know what that means? Kids (and adults who don’t have yards to maintain) blowing them as they make a wish. Like candles on a birthday cake, if you can blow all of the seeds off in one breath then your wish will come true. When I was a kid I must have frustrated every neighbor on our block by blowing those puffball seeds a thousand times. And my wish came true… every yard in the neighborhood had pretty yellow flowers the next spring! Neighbors hated the Lanning brat. That dandelion tradition has continued for generations.

But way better than dandelion wishes is the ones started by Frank Shankwitz. Growing up in a sad dysfunctional broken home he grew up to become an Arizona Highway Patrolman who drove motorcycles for his job. One day he was hit by a drunk driver and pronounced dead on the scene. A ER nurse happen to come by and began CPR. She revived him. In rehab he was told by his counselor that God must have kept him alive for a purpose, and he needed to find it. Soon after that he was called on his scanner and asked if he would mind meeting a helicopter that was flying a little seven year old boy named Chris Greicius. He was dying of leukemia and had two weeks to live. He was a huge fan of the TV show CHIPs (Calif. Highway Patrol) where Ponch and Jon drove motorcycles. He wished he could be a CHIPs officer too. Frank found his calling that day. He met Chris, got him a uniform, badge and let him ride on his Cop Bike. Chris earned his wings just hours before he died and was made an official Arizona Highway Patrol biker. He was given full patrolman honors at his funeral.

Frank felt if he could make a difference in a little boy’s life like Chris, then why couldn’t he do that for other kids too? Thus began the Make-A-Wish Foundation in 1980. It now has affiliates in every state and on five continents. Every 34 seconds somewhere in the world a child with a critical life-threatening illness receives their greatest wish-come-true. Over the past 40 years it has granted hundreds of thousands of wishes. And, it’s no surprise, Disney has been the giver of over 100,000 of those wishes.

Little boys became official firemen, policemen, soldiers, ball players, wrestlers, singers, musicians, and movie stars. Little girls became rock stars, pilots, hang gliders, singers, actresses, and of course Disney princesses. It’s heart-warming to watch the videos and read the stories of these childhood fantasies giving hope to very sick kids. Read the book *The Wish Man*, or go online to Wish.org to get the full story of Make-A-Wish.

Yesterday I wrote about a wish that came true that was made by a young prince-turned-king who was given the dream of a lifetime by none other than God. In a dream Solomon was told to ask for anything he wanted. He said he wanted “*an understanding heart to judge Your people*.” God was so pleased with his wish that He granted him wisdom beyond all other men on earth (I Kgs. 3:12-14). Sadly, his book called *Ecclesiastes* revealed that possessing wisdom alone is not the secret to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Long before Donovan wrote his famous 1963 ballad “Ah, but I may as well try and catch the wind,” Solomon wrote that finding lasting happiness was like “*chasing the wind*” (Eccl. 1:14). As the old saying goes, be careful what you wish for.

I asked you yesterday what you would wish for if offered the same promise by God. Surprisingly I received quite a number of responses. Let me list a few of them.

Someone struggling with the death of a loved one, and now the serious diagnosis of cancer from a best friend, caused him to wish for “peace in my soul.”

An evangelist wrote: “not wishing that any perish but all come to repentance.”

A wife and mother hurting for what she sees in our present crisis said, “I wish the hearts of all men to serve and love our wonderful Lord and Savior. Filling our hearts with ‘all of Him, and none of me (us).’

A very loving sister in Christ said, “I wish for all to love one another as Christ loves.”

A brother in Christ wished for “Perfect Agape Love.”

Well said. May your Make-A-Wish come true.

I promised you mine today. At every stage in my life I am sure I would have asked for a different wish if God had granted such to me. Solomon, at 20, asked for wisdom. At 60 he likely would have asked for something far different. Perhaps a happy home life with one wife and his children and grandchildren nearby? I’m sure his request would have changed with age.

Me? What I want now is country miles from what I would have wanted as a young man. And I would not make my one wish based on present circumstances, for these always change. I have actually prayed long and hard about what I would ask from God. In fact, I have many, many times (almost daily) asked Him for my greatest wish. I have asked Him this repeatedly since July of 2006 when Richard Jones and I were appointed elders at Northwest. Hardly a day has gone by that I have not shaken down to my bootstraps with the responsibility God placed on shepherds. It is found in Hebrews 13:7,17

*7 Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.   
17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

The thought that I am held up as an example of faith for others to follow is frightening. And the thought that I am to give an account of every soul under my care as a shepherd on the day of Judgment is almost more than I can bear. The weight is a 500 lb. gorilla.

That said, my one wish is this, “God, grant me the faith that always walks toward You, that leads others to You, and that every sheep in Your flock will be saved by You. In Jesus name, Amen.”

The Blue Fairy told the kind-hearted woodcarver, “Good Geppetto, you have given so much happiness to others, that you deserve to have your wish come true.” “I wish that Pinocchio were a real boy.” His wish upon a star came true. I loved that story as a child.

My wish each night to the Bright and Morning Star is for each of you here at Northwest to make it to heaven. May my wish upon a Star come true. Let’s go to heaven, together.

Until tomorrow… I love you. Rick