

**DON ZELEN MEMORIAL SERVICE**  
**MAY 4, 2017**

**Psalm 23**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
    he leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul:  
    he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:  
    for thou *art* with me;  
    thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
    thou anointest my head with oil;  
    my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
    and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

**CHORUSES BY EILEEN, JENNY, AND LAURA**

**HOW GREAT THOU ART**

Oh Lord my God - When I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made  
    I see the stars - I hear the rolling thunder  
Thy power throughout - the universe displayed

**(Chorus)**

**Then sings my soul - My Savior, God, to Thee**  
**How great thou art - How great thou art**  
**Then sings my soul - My Savior, God, to Thee**  
**How great Thou art - How great Thou art**

And when I think of God, His son not sparing,  
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;  
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing  
He bled and died to take away my sin

**(Chorus)**

When Christ shall come - With shout of acclamation  
And take me home - What joy shall fill my heart  
    Then I shall bow - With humble adoration  
And then proclaim My God, How great Thou art!

**(Chorus)**

**HE IS LORD**

He is Lord, He is Lord  
He has risen from the dead  
And He is Lord  
Every knee shall bow  
Every tongue confess  
That Jesus Christ is Lord

**THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THAT NAME**

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus; there's just something about that name.  
Master, Savior, Jesus, like the fragrance after the rain;  
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, let all Heaven and earth proclaim  
Kings and kingdoms will all pass away,  
But there's something about that name.

**BECAUSE HE LIVES**

God sent his son, They called him Jesus  
He came to love, Heal and forgive  
He lived and died, To buy my pardon  
An empty grave is there to prove  
My Savior lives

**(Chorus)**

**Because he lives, I can face tomorrow  
Because he lives, All fear is gone  
Because I know, He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, Just because he lives**

And then one day, I'll cross the river  
I'll fight life's final war with pain  
And then as death, Gives way to victory  
I'll see the lights of glory and  
I'll know he lives

**(Chorus 2xs)**

## **EULOGY - Dr. Frank Foreman**

Don Zelen was a force of nature. And a man of God. The world calls such men overachievers. We in the church call them overcomers. There was a dynamic energy within him. It pushed him far beyond what his father ever expected him to accomplish. There was also a Spirit within him. That Spirit of His heavenly Father that channeled the energy of this force of nature into the ways of God. There were many achievements during his long life in business. But of greater value to all of us here today is that the force of his powerful personality wasn't confined to his professional life. He allowed his Lord to mold and fashion his great passion and heart. The result was a long and fulfilling life of dedication that greatly blessed his family, his Lord, and many that crossed his path.

I never knew a Don without a Jeanne. This is because I was born, just as Jeanne was starting her Junior year at George Rogers Clark high school. The spring before the Foreman family had to say good-bye to her big house among the wooded green hills of Bellaire Ohio and moved to the little house on Lake Avenue among the urban streets of Whiting Indiana. It was during that September of 1951 that Jeanne started going to the football games and watched this #85, Zeleznik, from the stands. After the games, they met at the student hang out called the Chatterbox. Jeanne got to know this big handsome hunk. But if Don was a force of nature, the fiery Germanic spirit of this pretty high school girl's personality was more than a match for Don's quiet strength. For me it is a foundational pillar of reality. Don and Jeanne. Two forces of nature. Like two swiftly flowing streams merging into one powerful river; swirling together in multiple whirlpools and eddies and dancing whitecaps. That was the Zelens that I grew up with. The Don Zeleznik and Jeanne Foreman branches flowed separately for only 19 years. But, once merged, the Zelen river surged together for another 63 years.

Don was born and raised in a small house on 119<sup>th</sup> Street just four blocks from the school. Like Chris and I, Don attended GRC from kindergarten through high school. That Fall of 1951, Jeanne got to meet Don's parents, John and Rose Zeleznik, and his married big sisters, Roseanne and Lola. Don's father, John, was a very Old World Russian immigrant. He arrived in Whiting in the mid-1920's seeking work at the steel mills. There he met and married Rose Orgazali. Rose was born in Missouri, the youngest in a large Polish immigrant family. She had moved up to Whiting at about the same time as John to join her older brothers who were working the mills. John and Rose's three children were all born during the Great Depression; Roseanne in 1928, Lola in 1931, and baby boy Don in 1935.

Such Old World men as John Zeleznik highly valued hard work, jobs of any kind, and some way, anyway, to support their children. Both John and Rose never got much past the third grade in school. But they succeeded in raising a family in America. When they were children, both had to work to support their families. But America was different. Children went to school until they were adults. Now John's only son was beginning to talk about going to college. Maybe it was so he could just keep playing that children's games, football. John never had any interest in seeing his son play. He had stopped playing games and started working as a young child. Working to survive was what men were required to do.

But Don had ambitions. And he found a fan for those ambitions in this pretty girl with her cute south Ohio accent and her big family. She too had a father named John. And, like Don, he had been a star high school football player. He was even offered a scholarship to play football for Ohio State University. But John Foreman had graduated from high school in the deepest part of the Depression. He couldn't afford to go to college. And he always regretted that missed opportunity. So when he met Jeanne's new flame, he was all encouragement for Don's ambitions. Jeanne and her parents were at every the football game and school event. Don started spending a lot more time at that house on Lake Avenue and less time at his house on 119<sup>th</sup> Street.

So in 1952, applications for colleges and football scholarships were made. Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo thought they could use another good lineman and said yes. So after graduation, Jeanne got a job at Standard Oil as a secretary and Don headed up to Kalamazoo to play college football and to major in Business Administration. They were married the next March. But Jeanne wasn't the only one to change her name. They were married as Zeleznik. But Don had decided that Zelen was more American. It was legally changed and Debbie was born a Zelen later that year.

In 1957, Don became the first Zeleznik or Foreman to graduate from college. But his father was disappointed again. After four more years of school, Don ended up taking a job at the same kind of mill that he worked in. But Don was management. He was an Industrial Engineer at the Youngtown Steel Mill. John Foreman understood the difference. He was as proud of Don's achievement as he was of his own sons when they were to receive their degrees. Unfortunately, John Zeleznik didn't live to see any more of his son's achievements. One year after Don's graduation from college and the day after his first visit to see his newest granddaughter, Susan, he went to work and died of a heart attack. He was 53 years old.

After college followed six years in Whiting. Don loved his Ma and helped her through the transition to widowhood; a widowhood that was to last 44 years. He inherited a lot from his mother. In the video that follows look at Don and Rose in his high school graduation picture and at the wedding when Jeanne is kissing his father. But they shared a lot more than just their profiles. Don got his love of kids from Rose. She doted over her grandchildren and was always willing to help mothers as the recovered after giving birth. Charlotte can say "Amen" to that. With this heritage from Rose and the Foremans it only seemed natural that three more children would come into the Zelen family during this six year season in Whiting. Nancy arrived two years after Susan and then Don John just before they were about to leave Whiting.

During this season a real bond grew between Don and John Foreman. Don became the Explorer leader of the older boys in John's Boy Scout troop and helped the three Foreman boys become Eagle Scouts. Don also became a deacon in the Church of Christ where John was an elder. This was new to Don. Church was unfamiliar to him. His parents were Roman Catholics and this might have been a big problem in Whiting. But neither Don nor his parents had a problem with having the wedding in the Church of Christ.

Don continually witnessed the open love and hospitality of the Foreman household. The neighborhood kids were constantly coming and going and were always welcome. As his kids grew up, his houses were to take on that same flavor. When a widow in the Christian church died, leaving a teen-age son, Don and Jeanne took him in for his last two years of high school. As with the Foremans this open door hospitality became policy for the Zelens. From Jack's girlfriend, Sandy, until Jim Walker and Paul Kaminsky empty bedrooms never stayed empty long in the Zelen houses.

Don's season in Whiting was when he got his professional legs. He progressed rapidly up the management ladder. He needed more credentials so he drove up to the University of Chicago once a week for a couple years to earn a Certificate in Industrial Engineering. His confidence was getting high enough that, when he saw a better paying job with Reynold's Aluminum, he took it. So in 1965, the family moved to other side of Chicago to Lisle, Illinois. At Reynold's he progressed even more rapidly. Within a year Reynolds moved him to Florence, Alabama to a new management position. Those two years in the deep south were a real culture shock and an adventure for the growing family.

But again after only two years in Alabama, Reynold's promoted Don to be the manager of a brand new plant way out in Longview, Washington. I have great memories of the 1968 cross-country move that Rose and I shared with the Zelen family. But the first impressions of the Great Northwest were very different from their reactions to Alabama. Not only was the scenery beautiful, but somehow, it felt like coming home. When John Foreman came out and saw it that summer, he was sold. Before the year was out John and Jenny bought the house next to Don and Jeanne and John was working at the Reynold's plant. Don became the catalyst. He could never induce his Ma to leave her home in Indiana. But eventually all six of the Foreman children made the migration out to the Great Northwest. None of us would be here today if it wasn't for Reynold's Aluminum and Don's transfer. But as is often true in life, after the sweet came the bitter.

Within two years of managing the plant, new pressures came upon Don from higher management. They wanted the union squeezed out. Don came from a family of union workers. He couldn't ethically do it. So he was asked to leave right in the middle of a pretty deep recession. So what was an industrial engineer to do? It was time for some risk taking. Don wrote up what he called his "pie in the sky" letter. It worked. Don was hired to be the first manager of the new hardware store in Chehalis, Thurman Electric & Plumbing.

Then came the five year long season that I think was Jeanne's favorite. They bought a big house on a small farm in tiny Napavine, just outside Chehalis. As Don learned to manage in a retail business, the family was absorbed in 4H, horses, rabbits, chickens, gardens, and the Lewis County Fair. Part of the magic of that time too was that the Foreman family and all its branches were being swept up into the Charismatic Revival. They all, including the Zelens, had been faithful to the conservative Church of Christ for decades. Throughout their pilgrimage most every Sunday morning would find Don and Jeanne and their kids in a Church of Christ in Whiting, Lisle, Florence, Longview, and Chehalis. But when John Foreman got Baptized in the Holy Spirit, this force of nature became a Spiritual Hurricane. To a greater or lesser degree, every family member would be effected by this powerful move of the Spirit. Don and Jeanne hopped on board early, eager, and excited. The depth of Don and Jeanne's faith in and

understanding of God increased exponentially. They would never be the same. And this new life in the Spirit was manifested in another way: new life in the family. So in 1974 Don welcomed a new son, Nathan, into the family. A couple years later another son, Ben, was on his way. But then another curve ball got thrown Don's way.

Stan Thurman's son had joined the business and wanted to manage that highly successful Chehalis store. Stan really felt bad about asking Don to leave. But he knew of an opportunity in Eugene, Oregon. He loaned Don the funds to restock and restart another hardware store there. Don would finally enter the realm of the American entrepreneur and own his own business. It opened in December 1975. He called the store UCan Electric and Plumbing. He said he took the name because so many of his customers told him that they didn't think that they could do the electrical or plumbing repairs themselves. Don would tell them: "Yes, you can!" I believe also that he was speaking to himself and defining his personal philosophy of life. He worked hard and well and paid off Stan's loan within one year.

So Duck season started for the Zelens in Eugene. The home of University of Oregon Ducks would be the Zelen's home for eleven years; the longest that the family's stayed in one place. Debbie had grown up and departed from the nest while they were living in Napavine. But this season was when her girls would arrive on alternating years with Jeanne's boys. For Don it was: "This year I'm a father, next year a grandfather, this year a father, next year a grandfather". It was an amazing time. Also during the early Eugene years, Susan and Nancy would finish school, marry, and leave the nest. Don John would play high school football and then attend and play football at the University of Oregon: studying in the Fine Arts.

During these years the Zelens became mainstays at Willamette Christian Center and Nathan and Ben would attend the Christian school just down the hill from their big house. Don was there for most of Don John's football games and Nate and Ben's soccer games and school events. During various times in this season, Debbie and her family, Chris and his family, Jim Walker and his family, would become neighbors to the Zelens in Eugene. Susan and Nancy started producing grandkids for them and the extended family expanded continuously. In many ways, it was the best of times.

But you know what follows. In some ways it was the worst of times. Especially, 1977. That was when Don's role model and mentor, John Foreman, got cancer and died within six months. It was very tough on Don and Jeanne and the whole family. Then too the economy turned into this very bizarre, deep recession. The stagflation years hit Eugene hard. Inflation and interest rates rose through the roof and killed the building industry. UCan limped along through the recession, but expired in 1983. A dead economy and the arrival of the Big Box stores, like Home Depot, were the nails in its coffin. Don and some partners opened a liquidation discount store that struggled on for an additional three more years. But then it closed too in 1986.

Don managed to land a sales position at Grace Aircraft in Beaverton. It was time to say good-bye to stagnating Eugene. By 1988, Don was excited to leave Eugene, but sad to say good-bye the big house. Don and Jeanne with just Nathan and Ben still in tow moved up to west Portland and into a triplex.

Then Grace Aircraft folded only a couple years later. But that job introduced Don to a new innovation; fiber optic lights. This in turn led to perhaps the most satisfying and fulfilling years of Don's business career.

Fibertech was his baby. For 12 years from 1988 to 2000 he was founder, owner, and manager. It was cutting edge. It included the artistic skills of all three of his sons. Don, Nathan, and Ben all threw in to make the business a success. And I think that it also succeeded in fulfilling some of his latent 007 yearnings. It had the cache and exotic locales and high profile customers that fit Don's style. There were sheiks in Saudi Arabia, casinos in Las Vegas, hotels in Hawaii, and then there was Paris. The love of the whole family for Disney was fulfilled in those fiber optic signs that father and sons partnered together to create in Disneyland and Euro Disney.

After just two years, the triplex was left behind and a large house in Beaverton blessed Nathan and Ben and their friends throughout their high school years. Nathan and Ben both went on to college, married, and founded their families. Nathan completed his degree in Journalism at the University of Oregon. After Ben graduated from Portland State University he moved to Jacksonville to get his law degree at Costal Florida School of Law.

So there was an empty nest when Don turned 65 and was forced to close the doors on Fibertech. New technologies were coming in and yet another recession laid it to rest in 2000. Forty years before Don studied hard and received his certificate from the University of Chicago. Its subtitle was "How America's Economic System Operates". Well, how the American economic system operates is much more of an art than a science. Businesses, factories, managers, entrepreneurs, entire regions and cities rise and fall; prosper and perish. The economic cycles mingle with new technologies and changes in delivery systems, cultural tastes, and fashions to determine winners and losers. Hard work and talent are invaluable. But the primary variables determining success and failure most often hinge on being in the right place, at the right time, and knowing the right people. Was Don Zelen a successful businessman? I certainly think so. When given opportunities, he always made the best of them. When given challenges, he creatively addressed them. In the most difficult and impossible of times, he searched out the best options and somehow landed on his feet. He took risks that his father would never have considered. And by the grace of God and with Jeanne at his side, they not only enjoyed the best of times, but survived and were blessed throughout even the worst of times.

But was being a successful businessman what defined Don Zelen? It was important to him. Much of his ego was wrapped up in it. He was driven to succeed. But I believe that being a successful husband and father were more far more important in his heart. He smiled on the job, but smiled much more at home. Especially when he was surrounded by his children, grandchildren, and greatgrandchildren. The flow of the long fertile Zelen river slowed in the latter years into a sweet gentle current as it poured itself out into the everlasting sea.

In the last two years, I've witnessed no greater love lavished on a declining spouse than I saw between Jeanne and Don. It is my opinion that in the final years as the mind begins to fail, the true character of the person is laid bare. When you look at the pictures of Don as a child, his smile is always

there and very genuine. In this last year, whenever the gears of his mind connected and the light of recognition came into his eyes, that same genuine smile would light up his face with the joy of a child. He was always at base a happy man. When the move into the home was still fresh and his mind clearer, he told Jeanne: "Thank you for going through all this with me". Near the end, he told her: "Jeanne, I feel good all over when I see you come in." That spark of love that was kindled 65 years before was still blazing brightly. His last conversation with Jeanne was: "Where's Ma?" Jeanne answered that "She's not here, but I am." He smiled and was content. That afternoon he passed. So Jeanne said; now he's with her and I'm not. But I am confident that he's also with His Lord and with many others that he knew and loved. I'm equally confident that when Jeanne's pilgrimage flows into those ever-lasting arms, she'll find her Don waiting for her. Amen.

### **1Corinthians 15:50-53**

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;  
neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,  
In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:  
for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,  
and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption,  
and this mortal shall have put on immortality,  
then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,  
*Death is swallowed up in victory.*  
*O death, where is thy sting?*  
*O grave, where is thy victory?*

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable,  
always abounding in the work of the Lord,  
forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.