

A Spot to Fill

Our church has four sections of pews. Unofficially they are referred to as sections A-D. About five rows from the back, toward the middle aisle, in section C, there is a spot that needs to be filled. For many years, brother Aldrich Jackson sat in that spot. Brother Jackson recently went home to be with the Lord, and we need some to take his place. Anyone can sit in his spot, but it takes a great man of faith to take his place.

Brother Jackson was diagnosed with throat cancer and only given three months to live. He blessed us all by staying with us for nine and half more years. I think brother Jackson had more work to do than he could get done in three months. He had souls to save, people to teach, and whether he knew it or not had to teach at least one man many lessons. Let me share what I have learned from brother Jackson:

Brother Jackson taught me what it means to truly love God and depend on him. I don't think that I have ever met anyone that loved God more than brother Jackson. Every conversation that you would have with brother Jackson, he would tell you how God had blessed him and that God would help us through anything.

Brother Jackson taught me what it means to truly love God's church. One of our younger children saw brother Jackson one Sunday and said, "that man doesn't look like he feels very good, I wonder why he came today?" Despite the fact that it took him over an hour to get ready, and having to deal with great pain and discomfort, brother Jackson came to church as often as he could. If he was missing, it was because he was just too sick to make it there. If you went to visit him, he would tell you, "tell everyone at church that I miss them, I miss the singing and being with God's people."

Brother Jackson taught me what it means to truly have faith in God. I do not think that I have ever met anyone that had more faith than brother Jackson. Brother Jackson believed that God would do what was best for him concerning his cancer but he also believed that God would do what was best for all of us if we would just study his Word and let God direct our lives.

Brother Jackson taught me what it means to be truly grateful for the blessings in our life. If you ever sat and talked to him, he would tell you things like, I appreciate everyone's prayers for me, or I

appreciate the food that the church has helped with, or I appreciate the visits. He was truly grateful for everyone's concern for him.

Brother Jackson taught me what it means to always be truly concerned about others. Right up until the end of his life, his biggest concern was not that he was dying but that some of his loved ones were not saved. Even in the scripture he had requested to be read at his funeral, he still was teaching and challenging us all to seek God.

Five rows from the back, toward the middle isle, in section C, there is a spot that needs to be filled. Anyone can sit in his spot, but it takes a great man of faith to take his place. Here is what is needed;

Truly love God and depend on him.
Truly love God's church.
Truly have faith in God.
Truly grateful for the blessings in our life.
Always be truly concerned about others.

Philemon 1:6 (NIV)

⁶I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Brother Jackson had a full understanding of the good things we have in Christ. Sharing his faith was not just what he did, it was who he was. Brother Jackson taught me a lot about living and he taught me a lot about facing the end of life. The spot is yours, five rows from the back, toward the middle isle, in section C.

Jeff