

The Park Road Pulpit
Sermons from Park Road Baptist Church
Russ and Amy Jacks Dean, Pastors



A Good Word for Marvin Fisher
April 22, 2017

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to God, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from God's glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to God, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. God has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of God's beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1.9-14)

Say the name Marvin Fisher and her children think of two words: Saint and Servant. Wow. That's about all the eulogy anyone ever needed, isn't it. Saint. Servant. Now, eulogies aren't about making up stuff about people, polishing over dirty lives with clean untruths, shining things up with exaggerated anecdotes and careful adjectives that make people wonder what person you're actually talking about. So, let me just say it plain and true today: Marvin Fisher was a saint; Marvin Fisher was a servant.

She was born the fourth daughter, and James Marvin Broadwell was tired of waiting for that son, so he gave his name to her. Marvin's little brother was born a couple years later, but it was too late. She was Marvin, and though her middle name was Elizabeth, she chose to honor her father and use his name all her life. The Bible says, "*A Good Name is to be had more than silver and gold...*" She had a good name, and her father could be proud of the way she carried it.

Marvin was a servant. From Charlotte's Central High School to the Carolina Business School to a more than four-decade career, "People would depend on her," as her son, Phil, told me. She had a sharp mind, and she gave her keen aptitudes to several local corporations, ending her career as a Trust Officer with Union National Bank. What an appropriate title for Marvin Fisher. Combining her sharp intellect and her unwavering convictions she was certainly an officer that any employer and any customer could trust.

Vicki says that at home she never sat down. She would cook and serve the family and then when everyone else had been served she would stand in the kitchen and eat. The last time she cut her own grass she was 85 years old, and she was more than 80 the day she carted the ladder into the back yard, leaned it against the eave of her house, and hauled a few shingles up to patch her roof. She made simple repairs to her washing machine, her television, her toaster oven.

When Amy and I recently visited Marvin in her new place in Rock Hill she excitedly gave us a tour of the whole thing. I mean, that whole, one-room apartment! That tour included Marvin showing us her tool drawer. I don't know what a 90 year-old, living in a full-care assisted living facility needs with a hammer and screwdriver (a lot of folks move to retirement facilities so they can get rid of that stuff)... but Marvin took her tools with her, and knew just where they were! That image captures her so well. What 90 year-old Servant doesn't still have drawer full of tools? Marvin Fisher was a Servant.

And Marvin Fisher was a Saint. She was a saint because she was a Servant, and she was a Saint because she would never have used the word about herself. What Saint thinks she is one? She wasn't wild about that new apartment with the tool drawer in the assisted living facility in Rock Hill. It wasn't home. But, "as she typically did," said Phil, "she made the best of it." Ask Marvin about her life, at any time, and she would say, "I can't find anything to complain about." Can't find anything to complain about, Marvin? Look around! Ask around! Read the paper! Who do you know who, legitimately can't find anything to complain about!?

It wasn't that Marvin was uninformed. She subscribed to *Time* and *Newsweek* and read them, cover to cover, and she absorbed the daily newspaper and always worked the crossword puzzle. Marvin knew what was going on in the world, but Saints have a way of taking the world as it comes, the good and the bad, and weaving it all together in simple lives of goodness and grace, of hard work and faithful living.

She has been at Park Road Baptist Church since almost the beginning. She joined in 1953 and hasn't missed many Sundays since. She was unassuming but always present. She never complained and always

contributed. She was quiet on the outside and buzzing with mechanical and intellectual and spiritual energy on the inside. If each one of us lived in such a quiet, hard-working way, that when we died our children said of each of us... She was s Saint. She was a servant... we would know we had lived well, and I have no doubt when she arrived at the Pearly Gates earlier this week, she heard those good words, "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*"

For Marvin Elizabeth Broadwell Fisher, Saint, Servant. Thanks be to God.