

Introduction

We are all remembered for the things we loved the most during our time on earth. It's the things that are the object of our passion; the things that consumed our attention that we will be remembered for. I suppose it's best said this way, "The love of our life becomes the legacy of our life."

God's Word speaks of this many times. Jesus said, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Luke 12:34 NIV

For some people their heart is committed to their business activity, career or sports. The world offers a wide variety of things that we can plunge ourselves into. One thing remains; where ever our heart is, where ever our love and passion lies, this is where we will invest our time, energy and resources.

So what was the object of passion and love for Frances Bishop? Where did Frances Bishop invest her heart, her treasures and talents? It doesn't take much pondering of these questions to find clear answers.

1. Frances Bishop Loved the People of her Community

Perhaps it was the influence of her difficult childhood and the hard times she experienced that inspired Mrs. Bishop to do for others. Maybe driving a school bus for 23 years gave her a clear view of the needs of other people.

Whatever the inspiration, Frances Bishop genuinely loved other people and enjoyed doing things for others. When Frances called me to say she had a coconut pie for me, that meant it was hot and I needed to come get it right then. If I was not able to drop what I was doing, she would say in that rambunctious voice, "Well, where are you at?" She was going to make absolutely sure I enjoyed that coconut pie while it was still warm.

This past Sunday I preached a sermon with three points about what Christians should do. We should: 1) lift others up, 2) get rid of anger and bitterness and 3) have compassion and forgiveness for others. Frances Bishop exhibited all three. She was always doing for others and showing compassion for others.

Mrs. Bishop loved doing things for people in her community.

2. Frances Bishop Loved her Family

Her family members have heavy hearts today for your loss is great. Please remember, you also have many reasons to celebrate. You have much for which to be proud and thankful. Your gain from her life has been enormous.

Frances loved her children, grand and great grandchildren. On more than one occasion I had to look at her latest pictures and listen to her outright bragging about her family. She dearly loved her children. I suppose when all 4 of your children live in your backyard, you had better love them.

Successful parenting must be done with purpose, intentional, effective and in accordance with God's instruction. Frances Bishop was a determined and committed mother.

Her children spoke of Frances taking them to Sunday School and church when they were small. She did not do this out of duty or obligation. She did so because of her deep love for you. She wanted you to know Christ personally and learn to depend upon God when you faced the challenges life is certain to bring.

I suspect that along the way Mrs. Bishop would have enjoyed a few of the luxuries of life. However, she was much more willing to sacrifice for her children. Her family was her treasure. Whatever it took she had her family at heart.

3. Frances Bishop Loved her Husband

The love of her life was Gerald Bishop. In a day when people make commitments and promises that do not last much longer than a cheap light bulb, Frances and Gerald stand as a testimony to all of us of what God intends marriage to be.

For 61 years, they've been discovering how God can make the love between a man and woman grow stronger and richer with each passing year.

Together side by side, they worked. They labored hard; and faced the struggles of life by encouraging one another and relying on God to see them through.

Together they plowed the land and grew their crops. More importantly, together they plowed a life long relationship of love honor and respect.

Frances and Gerald understood the importance of perseverance. When Gerald became ill and unable to get around, Frances just did

what came natural. She rose to the occasion and did whatever it took; for Gerald was her husband, her mate for life, her treasure.

4. Frances Bishop Loved our Lord

While Frances loved others, her family and her husband, there was still another love with even deeper roots. Long ago, Frances Bishop discovered the greatest love of all. She discovered God's love and God's grace.

Through the years, Frances learned to depend on the presence of God to get her through the struggles of life. God's Word says, *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."* Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

Frances Bishop understood and lived by this principal.

So today, we sit in this place with a mixture of emotions. On the one hand, we mourn the loss of this loved one. On the other, we celebrate a life that has been rich in all the ways that truly matter. We rejoice for Frances, for we know she is in heaven with our Lord. There is no more pain or struggle.

I suspect by now a fiery little lady is serving up pies to angels.

Gerald told me that from time to time Frances would say to him, "I'm ready for the Lord when the Lord is ready for me." I am reminded of the song written by Horatio Spafford:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Conclusion

And now the work of the "hard working lady" is done.

To her children I say, "The legacy is yours to carry on." When you rise up from your pain and step back into reality, will you walk with faith in Christ or will you trust in your own ways?

God's Word says, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* Romans 6:23

"¹³Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."
Romans 10:13

What is the love of your life? Where is your treasure? Join Frances Bishop and place your heart in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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