

GRANDPA'S HANDS

The man, some ninety years plus, sat feebly on the patio bench. He didn't move, just sat with his head down staring at his hands. When his grandson sat down beside him he didn't acknowledge his presence and the longer he sat he wondered if he was okay. Finally, not wanting to disturb him but wanting to check on him at the same time, the grandson asked him if he was okay. He raised his head, looked at him and smiled.

Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking, he said in a clear and strong voice. The grandson spoke, I didn't mean to disturb you, Grandpa, but you were just sitting there staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure that you were okay.

Have you ever looked at your hands, he asked. I mean really looked at your hands? The grandson slowly opened his hands and stared at them. He turned them over palms up

and palms down. No, he had never really looked at his hands as he tried to figure out the point his grandfather was making.

Grandpa smiled and told him this story:

Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years.

These hands though wrinkled, shriveled and weak have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life.

They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor. They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child my mother taught me to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. They dried the tears of my children and caressed the love of my life. They held my rifle and wiped my tears when I went off to war. They have been dirty, scraped and

raw, swollen, and bent.

Decorated with my wedding band they showed the world that I was married and love someone special. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son.

They wrote letters home and shook when I buried my parents and spouse and walked my daughter down the aisle. Yet they were strong and sure when I dug my buddy out of a foxhole and lifted the plow off my best friend's foot. They have held children, consoled neighbors, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand.

They have covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleaned the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw. And to this day when not much of anything else of me works real well

these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer.

These hands are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of my life. But more importantly it will be these hands that God will reach out and take when he leads me home. And with these hands he will lift me to his side and there I will use these hands to touch the face of Christ.

On this Father's day week end let us recall the times our Heavenly Father has assured us of his presence and encouraged us to reach out in an effort to help others. May we be the hands, the face and the heart of God to those who cross our path in this life.