

A Megaphone of Faith
Memorial Service of Ruth Smith (Name Change)
By Henry Reyenga

Ruth Smith was born on March 27, 1949 to George and Dorothy Allen. She adored her mother and father, and brothers, Ted and Leon. Her father was not just any ordinary man, George would roam the streets with a megaphone, encouraging and cheering people into a walk with Christ. When someone seemed interested, George Allen would personally witness to him or her. Many times a struggling man or woman began a walk with Jesus right then and there. Ruth admired her dad's passion. His talk and walk were tightly connected.

In high school, Ruth became a cheerleader. And like her father, she was no ordinary cheerleader. She would encourage and cheer for the team like the other cheerleaders, but if she saw someone who was new, alone or struggling, she would actually put her pom-poms down, and while the rest kept cheering for the game, she would cheer up the hurting person.

This beautiful, bold and vivacious Greek girl, caught the eye of a talented, but quiet young Dutch man. They married in their early twenties and together had six boys. We're going to hear from two of their sons shortly.

When her marriage and family was young, Ruth became a megaphone of encouragement, and faith to everyone she connected to: As Ruth's dependence on Christ deepened, so did her desire to encourage others in their faith!

2 Cor. 4:13-15 It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

Ruth believed in Christ and she, like this passage highlights, spoke with that same spirit of faith. Ruth had a living walk and relationship with Jesus. She also sought to share her walk with as many people as possible! Ruth not only spoke with that same spirit of faith, she also encouraged in that spirit of faith, prayed in that spirit of faith, remembered in that spirit of faith, embraced, loved, and cherished in that same spirit of faith.

Oh, how she cherished and respected you, Marty. Then Ruth led as many women as possible to cherish and respect their husbands. She cherished and encouraged her six sons and led others to cherish and encourage their own families. And Ruth loved the wives of her boys. You were "her girls". Her grandchildren delighted her. And even on her last day, Ruth was able to enjoy some of her young grandchildren by her side.

Like her father before her, Ruth's megaphone was not only her words of faith, but also her faith expressed in deeds of faith and love. Whether you were in her family or not, if you knew Ruth Smith, you were blessed!

Our Pain is God's Megaphone

Ruth Smith's earthly absence brings to all of us a painful sadness. But we grieve in hope! 1 Thessalonians 4:13 says, "We do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope." Her hope was and our hope is in Christ. We celebrate her life today, while also grieving her death. I believe that Ruth would ask us to bring all that painful grief to God. C.S. Lewis said, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone!" (The Problem of Pain, 1940).

The pain of our dear Ruth's departure is tempered by her conviction, echoing the Apostle Paul urgency, in Philippians 1:21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Ruth is Still A Cheerleader

In the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, those who have died in the Lord are depicted as fans in the stands, cheering on the faithful in the great race of faith. Hebrews 12:1 says, "therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...Let us throw off everything that hinders us." I am trying to listen carefully for her voice of her cheering in that great cloud of witnesses. I want to hear her. What would she be urging us this morning? What would her cheer be?

I think I know. It was Ruth Smith herself who designed the sign that is nicely situated on the front of this auditorium. What would she be cheering us to do this morning? Can you hear her cheer? I hear it in my heart and I see it on the wall. I read it in Philippians 4:4a, what would she be cheering us to do this morning? Rejoice, Rejoice, Rejoice..."Rejoice in the

Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” Philippians 4:4-5. Oh I think I hear one more encouragement. “Hey everyone, get out your megaphones of faith out and cheer the world to come to Christ.”