



and that's...
The Gospel Truth!!
with Pat Corn

a brief message of encouragement to make your day just a little bit brighter

2006 is flying by! I can't believe we are already into May and Mother's Day has now past. Mother's Day always holds a special feeling for me. My Mom made it very plain that her birthday, Christmas, and any other holiday ranked secondary to Mother's Day. That was the one holiday that meant a great deal to her.

My Mom, Thelma Mae Corn, known to most folks in our mountain town as "Aunt Sal", was a real live Minnie Pearl. She could remember more jokes than anyone I ever knew. She loved practical jokes too. She could liven up a four hour funeral! She taught me that humor is a tremendous asset in hard times. The one rule of humor she taught me was that you should never try to benefit from humor at someone else's expense. Never make fun of someone else or make them the brunt of your joke. If you joke about yourself you'll never offend anyone or lose a friend.

The one exempted area was politics. She was a Democrat and my Dad was a Republican, so election years were pretty lively around our house. I'll never forget the joke she pulled on my Uncle Frazier when John Kennedy was running for President. He had one of the first telephone banks that would play a recording of his voice and his election promises. She called the number and called my uncle to the phone a said and said that John Kennedy was calling him. Now, you gotta understand, my Uncle Frazier was not the sharpest knife in the drawer and bit on the call hook, line, and sinker. After the recorded phone call was over, we were all in the living room when Uncle Frazier came in scratching his head. My Mom asked, "Well Frazier, what did John Kennedy have to say?" He said, "Sal, I wouldn't vote that damn Yankee if he's the only one a runnin' for President! When I tried to talk to him, he interrupted me every time and then hung up on me!!

She was a lot more fun than any of my friends. Her best friend was a lady named (Aunt) Ruth who was a beautiful woman who was one of the few "divorcee's" that I had ever known at my age of eight years old. It's funny how that marital classification so hush-hush in those days. I always thought she was a movie star. She was fun, feisty and drove a Jeep wagon with wood on the side. She was the coolest.

Well, one hot summer night she and my Mom put me in the back seat and we all went "riding around" . They laughed and joked and were having a great time when all of a sudden Ruth pulled off on the side of the road right in front of old man Redden's watermelon patch. Out of the door shot my Mom as fast as a cat and snatched a watermelon right out his patch and was back in the Jeep in a matter of seconds. Ruth tore out down Willow Road and took a quick right toward Osceola Lake where we stopped down by the dam. Ruth took that watermelon down to the side of the lake and put it where the cold mountain water fed the lake. Well, I thought to my self, "That's pretty silly to steal a watermelon and then put in the lake". That made no sense to me at all. Then, off we went for more joy riding around the area just to return to the same lake spot about two hours later. Ruth scampered down the bank and retrieved that watermelon from the icy mountain water. There was a picnic table nearby where we took it and broke it open. Do you even have a clue how good an ice-cold, stolen watermelon tastes on a hot summer night? Nothing compares!! No, that experience didn't lead me a life of stolen watermelons!! I'm relatively sure that experience only added to my story bank of "The Adventures Of Aunt Sal".

My Mom made sure I grew up and acted like a man. I remember when there were two bullies that picked on me every day after school. These were “trashy boys” named Randy and Jack. They were always in trouble at school. Every day at some point they would gang up on me. I was a year younger but they were in my same grade. Yeah, they had failed a year and took full advantage of the age difference.

After one rough day I came home whining about them to my Mom in the back yard. When I started to go into the house she stopped me and said, “Woah Buster! You are not going into that house until you go back and whip both of those boys.” I was floored!! I was sick!! I was terrified! “And if you don’t whip them, I’m gonna whip you!” Now I knew what that felt like and I wanted no part of it. I hated cutting my own hickory switches!! So I set out to walk that mile and a half back to Valley Hill to search them out. I found Jack on a dirt road leading to the lake and lit into him in front of his neighbors and sent him screaming and crying home. Then fueled by the adrenaline rush, I found Randy by the lake and lit in to him and sent him on the run too. By the time I got home I had settled down and had cried all the tears out by the time I got there. I was not going to let anyone see me crying. My Mom stopped me in the back yard and asked me if I had whipped them and I said, “Yes ma’am and I whipped ‘em good”. She smiled and put her arm around me. That was the most comforting feeling I ever had.

As I grew older, I knew how much my Mom meant to me. She sacrificed for many of things I needed. I’ll never forget her going to work at the elementary school lunch room just to earn enough money for me to take guitar lessons. Then a year or so later, sewing the gold satin vests for our band uniforms in our high school R&B/Soul band, The Casuals as we played successfully all over the Southeast.

Most of all, she kept me in church where I must have absorbed some of the things I heard because during my darkest hours of life, my faith was somehow resurrected and I’ve always moved toward Jesus in some feeble way. After days of whining and crying, I hear her voice as she told me once before, “You can lay around and squall, or you can get off your butt and go to work”. I always choose the latter.

Aunt Sal went to be with Jesus in November of 1982 after three bouts with cancer. I envision her there with her buddies (all of my “aunts”) celebrating the joy that is found there in heaven. I’m sure she’ll have all the watermelon she wants! I miss her. I hope my life has honored her. She was, and forever will be, my best friend.

I still love an ice cold watermelon (preferably not stolen), I won’t back down from a confrontation, and I love Jesus with all my heart

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