

Mad Dog

If I asked Greg for advice if I told him I was to take 5 minutes at his funeral and talk about him and his life and I was to represent 1000s of friends that loved him I know that he would have some simple advice “ Make it EPIC”. Everything was epic to him. Every person, every trip, every get together, every party, every chat, he would always say “that was epic”. So here goes my attempt at epic. Greg Mad Dog Madsen, he loved the irony of that.... Mad Dog, knowing him it's more like puppy dog, but mad dog stuck, so many know him, as mad dog or simply Dog. His mother Palma could never really get behind the nickname but Dog loved it too much. First time I ever met him, Makena reminded me this week, was when we were playing intramural basketball at BYU and he had gone into the locker room at the end of the game. I followed shortly after and I came upon a passed out Greg Madsen, fainted, Jim Herrmann and I helped him up splashed some water on his face, asked if he was ok and even until this week I would remind him that I saved his life. It's funny, but the truth is he has probably saved mine over and over and over. Mad Dog was a master teacher, master teachers don't teach they present the next idea, the next thought that could provoke a new way to approach a problem. He innately understood the calculus of the interaction of milk before meat and precept upon precept, he loved individualizing seeking more and more probing questions, looking for a unique approach to inspire. He represented the humanity of humanity. His theology was that we were all in it together and that we all could actually matter of factly become like god, that we could change and improve. If he could've talked to everyone in the world he would have. How many times were we waiting for Mad Dog because he had gotten into a conversation with somebody and then in another one and another one, he was the cross fertilizer, he loved to introduce someone to others creating more connections, he loved connections, he loved to connect. He loved the idea of being a little savior on mount zion, what can I do to slightly improve someone's life today. When he was bishop of the LDS ward here in Santa Cruz, he was responsible for the spiritual welfare of hundreds of families. I saw him one day and he had a beard... and I said “What bishop has a beard?” “In Santa Cruz a beard makes people comfortable and invited” He's a bishop that wants to meet people where they are, to inspire them in their own shoes. I wasn't in his congregation but I owe Greg, he spent countless hours, countless hours, philosophizing, talking me through the rigors and challenges of life. Jan will tell you how much she sacrificed so he could help me. He's an Angel in human form who came just for me, which I think probably a thousand other people feel the same way. Now he'll be an Angel in Angel form.

He represented the Gospel of Love. We many times referred to Matthew 22 verse 36-40

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Love was and is first, not obey, not follow, not worship led the way, certainly all important aspects to discipleship. But love was first. Love was to lead.

In 35 years of friendship with Greg I never once saw him mad. There really was no mad in mad dog. I'm sure he felt anger and frustration but he led every emotion whether negative or positive with love. It was his first great commandment. Love led his life, his relationships, his faith. Love led his sacrifice, his service, and his obedience. Love was first then other great qualities could follow on. He was the greatest Lover I knew. Lover of life, of fellow humans, lover of knowledge, lover of peace, lover of God. He was relentless. Even to his last breaths he was concerned with neighbors, friends, fellow Saints in need. I told him earlier this week, you go pave the way, we'll live it out here doing everything we can to make things better and we'll be right behind you. Mad Dog would want us, would want me to try and inspire each other. Could you go home and try faith in God, swish it around, take it in.... he would want that. If we would ever have the power to declare someone as a great man, this is a great man, a hero of mine, I'll miss him for a time, I loved him and love him as I know every one here does as well.

At Stanford Hospital a couple of years ago at his first doctor visit to hear the attack plan for this cancer we had some time to reflect. Jan, Greg, Tracy, and me. At one point Greg said with incredible depth that only someone who has travelled the heroes journey can have he said "it's a good life". It is a good life. Can we honor Greg by leading with love. No matter the emotion, good or bad, can we lead with love. Seems like an epic idea.