



November 2010

This letter comes to you with sadness and gladness. If you don't already know, John Ray died June 16, 2010.

Where do I begin? Maybe from where I came into his life:

After guiding some of you through knee deep snow in sub-zero temperatures in the early months of 2008, John returned to Lubbock frozen. And where better to thaw out than in the Caribbean? He booked a cruise to the Bahamas with Dr. Charles Stanley as the cruise host. On the cruise he met me! I had been widowed for 14 years and had been invited to go on my first cruise with a friend. It turned out that she couldn't go, so I went solo. It was "love at first sight."

The next several months were a flurry of phone calls, my visits to Lubbock, and John's visits to my home, family and friends in Millsboro, Delaware. John loved the beautiful Atlantic Ocean, Chesapeake Bay, hard crabs, and easy living there. On August 31, 2008 we were married at my home church. John relocated, I continued to work and he commuted to manage his business in Lubbock and provide those remarkable hunts at Thousand Hills Bison Ranch that season and the next. We participated in 5 mission trips in '08 & '09 going to China, Honduras, and Guatemala.

In November of last year he had "the most exciting, adventurous, challenging, and dangerous" hunt of his life--a long-planned Marco Polo hunt in Kyrgyzstan. On the last day of his 10 day hunt on horseback at more than 12,000 feet in severe winter weather, he took the ram. a single shot! From his diary, "I had survived an avalanche, sliding down a shale face mountain and made the shot at 660 yds. I looked behind me and saw a cross in the snow and almost began to cry - filled with emotion. 8 days of constant mountain riding, diarrhea & stomach cramps, I had finally achieved the greatest hunting adventure of my life... I prayed and thanked God for His goodness." He brought the prized Marco Polo home along with a Siberian Ibex that today are on pedestal mounts in our trophy / living room.

In early February John began experiencing sight problems and a couple of severe headaches. His Doctor ordered a CT scan, and within a few short hours our world was turned upside down and our faith tested. John had a brain tumor. Surgery a week later, and the subsequent pathology brought the grim report: stage four melanoma. The next three months were a blur of treatments, tests, two more surgeries, and seemingly endless doctor visits. Five tumors had been surgically removed, but in early June there were now tumors in John's lungs, spleen, and sternum.

As bad as all this was, I want you to know that John faced death with courage and incredible faith. If you hunted with him, I'm sure you know by the way he talked and lived his life that he trusted God. During his battle with cancer, John gave testimony every day to his hope! His hope was in Jesus Christ. He trusted Christ when he first asked Him into his life and he trusted Him to the end. He was the first to confess that he didn't live a perfect life, that's why he put his trust in Jesus. Jesus, through His sacrificial death on the cross, bridged the chasm of sin that gave John a right relationship with God. John lived out his relationship with God and entered eternity the same way he lived - with joy, anticipation, excitement, and purpose. If the barrier of sin, that keeps us from a relationship with God, has never been bridged in your life through Jesus, you can ask him to do that for you today. John will greet you when you enter eternity.

May you never forget your time with John and your unforgettable buffalo hunt. If you would like the DVD "Celebrating the Life and Spirit of John Morningsky Ray" please contact me, it is my gift to you in memory of John. I would also be pleased to send a Gideon Testament for you to keep and read for yourself or to pass on as a legacy to John Ray.

Blessings.....

Dona Ray

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