

The politician made a choice

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By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—Once upon a time there a politician who was tragically hit by a truck while walking down the street. As the story goes, the politician died, went to heaven and was met by St. Peter at the entrance.

They began a conversation. Here is what they said.

St. Peter: “Welcome to heaven. Before you settle in, it seems there is a problem. We seldom see a high official around these parts. You see, we’re not sure what to do with you.”

Politician: “No problem. Just let me in.”

St. Peter: “Well, I’d like to, but I have orders from higher up. What we’ll do is have you spend one day in hell and one in heaven. Then you can choose where to spend eternity.”

Politician: “Really, I’ve made up my mind. I want to be in heaven.”

St. Peter: “I’m sorry, but we have our rules.”

And, with that, St. Peter escorted him to the elevator and sent him down, down, down to hell. The doors opened and the politician found himself in the middle of a green golf course. In the distance was a clubhouse, and standing in front of it were many friends and other politicians who had worked with him.

Everyone was very happy and in evening dress. They ran to greet him, shook his hand and reminisced about the good times they had while getting rich at the expense of the people. They played a friendly game of golf. Then they dined on lobster, caviar and champagne before enjoying a good time on the dance floor.

They were having such a good time that, before he realized it, it was time to go. Everyone gave him a hearty farewell and waved while the elevator rose. The elevator went up, up, up, and the door reopened in heaven, where St. Peter was waiting for him.

“Now it’s time to visit heaven,” he said.

So the politician joined a group of contented people moving from cloud to cloud, playing the harp and singing. They had a good time, and, before he realized it, the 24 hours had elapsed and St. Peter returned.

St. Peter said to him: "Well, then, you've spent a day in hell and another in heaven. Now it is time to choose your eternity."

After reflecting for few seconds, the politician replied: "Heaven has been delightful. And I would never have said it before but I think I would be better off in hell."

So St. Peter escorted him to the elevator and sent the politician down, down, down to hell. When the doors of the elevator opened, he was in the middle of a barren land covered with waste and garbage.

He saw his friends, dressed in rags, picking up the trash and putting it in black bags as more trash fell from above.

The devil came over to him and put his arm around his shoulder.

The politician looked at the devil and said: "I don't understand. Yesterday I was here and there was a golf course and a clubhouse. We ate lobster and caviar. We drank champagne and danced. We had a great time. Now there's just a wasteland full of garbage. My friends look miserable. What happened?"

The devil began to enlighten the politician by saying, "Yesterday we were campaigning." After a short pause, the devil said, "Today you voted."