

REFLECTIONS

November 4, 2007

Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2

Birthdays, Seasons and Aging

The birthday came much like any other day. It was special to us and to our family and to others that shared the birth date, but otherwise the day was rather ordinary. Even if a special milestone had been reached there would have been no real sense of growing older or wiser or taller or wider. Birthdays can feel just like any other date on the calendar. Morning brings a touch of daylight, noontime produces the usual appetite, evening shade marks the end the workday, and falling darkness begins preparation for tomorrow and bedtime.

Seasons are like that too. They are marked on the calendar four times each year, but the designated day is usually no different than the one before or the one after. The date for winter does not usually produce the first cold front, trees do not burst forth with fresh leaves on the first day of spring, hot days often precede the timetable that introduces summer, and the colors of autumn ignore the first day attributed to their brilliance. Yet seasons come even if the days that mark the birth of them sneak by unnoticed.

Physical changes to our bodies go unnoticed too—unnoticed that is until the mirror reflects a new wrinkle or the scales disclose a growing waistline, or a hair emerges with the flicker of grey. Like the seasons, these passages come so regularly that we scarcely give notice to them at all.

With every birthday celebration, passing season, or emerging flicker of grey, the day of the Lord moves ever closer. The prophetic signs of His coming are manifest in the lives of suffering people, in natural disasters that ravage the earth, and in wars waged over spiritual differences. But even days of peril come with such regularity that we give them little more note than the brisk air on a winter morning.

Birthdays, seasons, and aging are as ordinary as night overcoming day. They are as common as the movement of a gentle breeze. But we know that someday we will awaken to a seemingly ordinary day that will not turn out ordinary at all.

It will be the day of the Lord. And nothing about it will sneak by unnoticed.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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