



REFLECTIONS

August 16, 2009

**"See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen
and fatted cattle are killed, and all things
are ready."**

Matthew 22:4

Finishing Today

"Where are you going?" she inquired with a wry little grin on her face. It was nice to see her so alert and playful like she had always been with me. We knew she was living in her final days and we were all blessed that for a few hours she had rallied above her illness to give her daughter, son and me some quality time to say goodbye.

Thanet Hokanson was my mother-in-law and her playful inquiry that day was so typical of the fun way we had with each other. It is fitting though that her question began the brief but final words we shared together. The question she asked was not a new one.

The essence of the question was the same as the one she and my father-in-law asked years ago when I requested permission to marry their daughter. Back then the question was more about the future I wanted for Janice, and later on, the question was more about how we would rear their grandchildren. This time though the question seemed to beg an explanation for leaving her side. But maybe there was more.

Thanet was a role model for us and she probably never knew what a great role model she was. She was a wonderful wife and mother. She had a job as a secretary at an elementary school, but her real job was caring for her husband and their children. She set a standard for making a home and loving her family. She was a stickler for having things just right—a tidy house, meals on time, clothes always clean, and no day was complete until all things were ready for the next one. That is where Thanet excelled. Finishing today was as important to her as starting it.

So now I pause to wonder. Thanet's final question to me seemed to be about where I was going, but I wonder if she was asking if I had finished where I was. What a great question to ask. Jesus posed it this way, "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself." (Matt 6:31-34)

The kingdom of heaven does not lie in what we might do tomorrow. The kingdom of heaven is found in finishing today. That is a lesson I will carry from Thanet's life.

And those few rallied hours to say goodbye is the way she finished hers.

"You are the light of the world."

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