



REFLECTIONS

June 20, 2010

"Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

Mark 6:31

Front Porch Swing

At Mema's house there was a carnival ride. At least that's what we made it to be. With my cousins I took turns riding the front porch swing while the others pushed it as high as it would go. I don't know how the chains stayed on the hooks or the hooks stayed attached to the ceiling, but we made it into a thrilling ride and we rode on it for hours at a time. But at day's end and nighttime fell, the swing took a new persona.

In the dusk the swing became a place of peace, a receptacle of the sounds of evening, and a vessel of rhythmic motion that rested the mind and calmed the soul. I sometimes envision Mema and Grandpappy swinging tenderly there holding hands on a quiet night. I think of them talking about the events of the day and the plans for tomorrow—both always included family and service to God at the church that was scarcely a block away. The front porch swing was a place for releasing the stresses of the day and a venue for evening conversation. It was a place of rest and renewal.

It's a bit sad that front porch swings have almost disappeared from our lives. Modern conveniences and technology have advanced the quality of life we enjoy, but these advances have come with a price tag. They have hastened the pace of life, and with the faster pace, the intimacies once found on front porch swings have become harder to find. Events of the day are discussed in hurried brevity over fast-food meals, and plans for tomorrow are more likely to be about coping with the pace of life than quality time with family or service to God.

I yearn a bit for the days of the front porch swing but not for the carnival ride we once made it to be. Rather my yearning is for the days of a simpler life where the front porch swing was a place of peace, a receptacle of the sounds of evening, and a vessel of rhythmic motion that rested the mind and calmed the soul. But the clock can't be turned back, and advancements that change our quality of life will only increase.

But there is a quiet place we can always go. The hymn says it's "near to the heart of God." In him is a quiet place He has invited us to be. Even in the midst of the daily rush, He is waiting to hear about the events of the day and the plans for tomorrow. And if we but pause to listen we will hear the quiet. And in the quiet we can hear his voice. And in his voice we find rest for the mind and calm for the soul.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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