

# ***REFLECTIONS***

July 23, 2006

**Grace be with you .**

*1 Timothy 6:21*

## **Parting Words**

It was not likely that we would ever see each other again. Robbie Dripps was already eighty years old and Ireland is a long way for us to travel. But time dictated that we leave though it was not easy to go. So, with promises to stay in touch, I said goodbye; but my distant relative did not want us to use that word. “Let’s say cheerio instead,” he suggested. So with a big “*Cheerio*” we parted.

Cheerio may be the customary expression of his culture, but I felt that Robbie preferred it because it seemed less final. The choice was okay with me even though I expected never to see him again. It was sufficient to give me closure. However, there have been some other important times when that was not the case.

It was spring of 1958 that I drove A.C. Hageman to the hospital where my grandfather was gravely ill. A.C. shared my grandfather’s blood type and PaPa was in need of blood. After the transfusion had been completed, Munna came out to thank A.C. She then turned to me and suggested that it would be all right for me to see PaPa. “I’ll see him next time,” I said. There would not be one.

For 48 years now I have lived with the weight of incompleteness. How I wish to relive that moment with a chance to make a different choice. But life is a journey down a road that travels but one way. Once we leave a point in life, there is no going back to it. All we take with us are the memories—pictures and souvenirs together with feelings and lessons learned. But our journeys do not make rest stops. It requires that we move on.

That is why goodbyes are so important. They meet a basic need. They place bows on packages that otherwise will be left unfilled and moving on more difficult. Goodbyes are the beginning steps down the road that lies ahead.

And we say goodbye not only to people. We must also say goodbye to places, events and phases of life. Time marches on and we are compelled to march with it. That is why we must live every day fully—live each moment to the fullest for we have but one chance before it passes, never to return.

It has been five years since I wished Robbie a warm cheerio. Cheerio was a good choice of words. It expressed the warmth that I felt at the moment, and the hope that I cling to today. But whether the parting words are cheerio, goodbye, or grace be with you, by saying them we are freed to move on in our journey toward what will be. As blessed as it was or how fondly we remember it, God did not make us for yesterday.

He made us for today. Live it fully.

*“You are the light of the world.”*

*Richard* +