



REFLECTIONS

August 25, 2013 Refreshed from June 23, 2006

Grace be with you.

1 Tim 6:21

Parting Words

It was not likely that we would ever see each other again. Robbie Dripps was already eighty years old then 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 it seemed Robbie preferred it because it felt less final. The choice was okay with me even though I had not expectation I would see him again. But it was sufficient to give me closure with him. There have been other important times when that was not the case.

It was one spring long ago 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.

Years have passed now and I have lived with the weight of incompleteness. How I wish to for a chance to make a different choice. But life is a journey down a road that travels only 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 unfilled and moving on more difficult. Goodbyes are 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 each moment to the fullest for we have but one chance before it passes, never to return.

It has been several years since I wished Robbie a warm cheerio. It was a good choice of words. Cheerio expressed the warmth that we both felt at the moment, and offered a hope to cling to. But whether the parting words are cheerio, goodbye, or grace be with you, saying them frees us 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 +

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