



REFLECTIONS

April 13, 2014

"...and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

John 11:26

Saying Goodbye

We passed each other that day. He was on his way out and I on my way in to grab a quick lunch. We exchanged pleasantries and caught up with each other a bit. It never occurred to me that it would be the last conversation we would have in this world.

Chuck was a friend of more than 40 years. He was a big man, younger than me by several years, and I wouldn't pretend to have been counted among his closest friends. But there was respect and a bond. The bond was golf. We played together occasionally though not in recent years. Our fellowship was mostly on the driving range where he liked to talk about the finer points of the golf swing. He was a great student of the game with a willingness to share what he knew about it. It was his way to tell his friends how much he cared. He wanted the best for them and I am blessed to have been included.

With his defining smile beaming across his face and his quick wit pouring out encouraging words, we parted that day without saying goodbye. Then one night in the depth of sleep and with no apparent warning, God called Chuck home. It was unexpected, so it seemed that he left this world without saying goodbye. But it was not so. He sent his goodbyes another way.

Chuck's goodbye was spoken through the voice of his longtime friend—one who knew him well. Jim told of their times together, escapades they might rather have forgotten and good times they wished could be lived again. And he told of the life walk they shared. Along the way Chuck found the meaning he had been searching for. It became a part of his final goodbye.

Golf was an important part of Chuck's life. He was good at it. So it was fitting that golf would bring him together with some godly men who would share with him the love of Jesus Christ. He had generously helped so many of them with their golf games, and it became their turn to help him. Oh, Chuck knew about Jesus. But from them he learned who Jesus was! He was moved by all he heard, and with the same passion and eagerness he lived, Chuck accepted the love of Jesus Christ into his life.

Through his friends Chuck Leske's story is told. Through them, we see that God made him a big man because it took a big man to hold his heart. And through them we hear that his final words would not have been goodbye. He would go one better.

Chuck would extend a special invitation to all his friends—an invitation we might also extend to those around us. It would go something like this:

"Y'all come."

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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