



REFLECTIONS

May 20, 2018

**if only I may finish the race and complete
the task the Lord Jesus has given me**

Acts 20:24

Train Ride

God gives us only one day at a time, and even today is not guaranteed to be completed. Life can end in a moment today or any other day yet to be lived. But today we find ourselves in a seat on the train traveling through this world together just as God planned us to do. New people will board the train today, more tomorrow and the day after; and some will also get off at each daily stop. The train keeps rolling on though. God is the Engineer and Jesus the Conductor.

Life's greatest blessing is life itself, of course. To be created at all, to contemplate what life is, or to imagine not being at all adds focus to the breath that brought life to you and me and sustains it a time. Life didn't have to be. I wonder how God thought it up. Did he dream up doll-like characters in a dollhouse environment before his breath set their hearts into rhythm and their minds into reason? And then among all the other dolls, I am there, and you are, and those we love and don't. I didn't have to be. The world could be without me. Only God didn't think so.

He gave me life in this world, and a place where people love me, and people to love, and things to do, and places to go, and bad things to witness, and beauty to discover. He gave me problems to solve and answers to find. And he gave me that one night when despair might have reigned had his peace not enveloped the space in my life. I think He gave me a glimpse of peace in the life beyond this one to spark the question.

So, what's the question? There are many throughout the day, some simple and routine like what's for lunch? But the deeper ones the Bible asks. *What does man gain from all his labor at which he toils under the sun?* (Eccl 1:3) and *What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?* (Matt 16:26) But mine is personal. Why did God issue me a ticket for this train ride?

Jesus knew he came to save sinners before he stepped onto the train. Apostle Paul discovered his reason in a dramatic turnaround along the Damascus road that *he was appointed a herald and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles.* (1 Tim 2:7) But why did God put *me* on the train? When or if this question comes to mind, the train has usually carried us miles down the track leaving some clues along the way. Frederick Buechner says the answer is, "the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep need meet."

God gives us only one day at a time. But even if I can't grasp God's reason for my train ride through this world, I pray that *I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me*—that my life is a testimony to the gospel of God's grace.

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Richard +

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