



REFLECTIONS

May 31, 2020

"Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

Luke 24:5

He Lives

"Why do you look for the living among the dead," the angel asked. Startled of course, Mary Magdalen expected no one at the grave site. But not only was someone else there, they suggested that the one she was seeking walked among the living, not the dead.

The scene draws me to a cemetery visit of my own many years ago. Cemetery visits usually find me feeling unfulfilled and empty when I leave. I find final resting places marked by stones engraved with the time people walked through this world. But like the ones I came to visit, the people are not there. This visit was different.

That day my eyes focused on the marker of my grandfather's grave and the large headstone engraved with our family name when a voice from an adjacent plot said, "I loved that man." Turning toward the sound I found an elderly man's loving eyes looking straight into mine. Almost speechless as Mary Magdalen must have been, I answered, "I did too."

"Why do you look for the living among the dead," the angel asked Mary Magdalen. Now, I wonder if an angel wasn't asking me the same question that day. I went in search of the dead only to find he was not there. He lived! In the heart and mind of his old friend named Sam Bourland, my grandfather lived.

Today Paw-Paw lives when I remember private moments with him. He is alive through stories I heard about him. He is alive when I read what someone wrote about him that made a difference to them. And when I find myself doing or saying something he once did or said, he lives through me.

Mary Magdalen found an empty tomb. Jesus wasn't there. He was alive! Peter and John raced to the tomb to discover her story was true. He is alive today when we tell our own stories of what he has meant to our lives. And Jesus is alive when others see him through our lives, yours and mine. And when our own lives depart from this world, yet shall we live. We live on in the hearts and minds of those we leave behind.

That day I went to visit my grandfather's gravesite, but I found him alive. Through the love of Jesus Christ, he still lived through the heart and mind of his old friend Sam Bourland. And I found Paw-Paw alive that day too when his old friend said to me, "I loved that man."

And for Jesus in my life? Well, the hymn tells the story:

*He lives. He lives. Christ Jesus lives today. /
He walks with me and talks with me, / along life's narrow way /
He lives, He lives, Salvation to impart / You ask me how I know He lives
He lives within my heart.¹*

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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¹ "He Lives" is a Christian hymn, otherwise known by its first line, "I Serve a Risen Savior", composed in 1933 by Alfred Henry Ackley. Permission is hereby granted for reproduction and redistribution of this edition of *Reflections* provided all applicable copyright laws are properly observed.

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