



REFLECTIONS

May 30, 2021

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Matthew 6:20

Next Time

It's curious why I didn't link my own story with his, the one Richard told about spending time with his dying grandmother. "You need to tell people how you feel about them while they're aliiiiive," resonating his deep Mississippi roots. Almost 30 years earlier, I made a decision he intended his warning to discourage.

Back then high school graduation fast approached for the class of '58, and I joined my classmates in anticipation of our jubilant freedom. A dark cloud hovered over me then, only I didn't give it much notice. PaPa's illness seemed likely to pass soon. His doctor's choice to hospitalize him, I assumed, was a choice only for convenience. Even his need for a blood transfusion failed to trigger my alarm about his condition. I was more absorbed in my self-important assignment to drive a local man named A.C. the 70 miles to PaPa's bedside because they shared a blood type. I had no idea such a weighty decision lay ahead.

"I'll see him next time," I said in response to Munna's invitation to see him. I wish I had paid attention to her saddened eyes.

"Next time" didn't come.

How easily it is to take life for granted. PaPa wouldn't see me walk down the aisle at my graduation, complete college, or enter the business world. He never knew that his life modeled the life I set out to live. But worse for me, PaPa departed this world without my expression of love for him I so deeply felt.

Forever unfinished, my bond with my grandfather. I was only 18 back then; but immaturity then offers little relief from the pain of disappointment today. But maturity has taught that every day in this world is God's gift.

The world is beautiful and its variety almost endless. But greater than beauty, God's gift to us comes through people who love us. So it was with PaPa. What a gift. For my life to model his, I pray for God's love to pass through me.

I took life for granted those many years ago. The sting from my decision haunts me still today. "I'll see him next time."

And there wasn't one.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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