



REFLECTIONS

August 1, 2021, Refreshed from the Archives of January 24, 2016

**That day when evening came, he said to his disciples,
"Let us go over to the other side."**

Mark 4:35

What's Next?

Who can remember the thoughts racing through our heads as we crossed the stage that night. A milestone had been reached and the high school diplomas in our hands proved it. Emotions must have included a sense of pride, a breath of freedom, and a touch of fear. What's next?

The thought may not have surfaced as we returned to our seats since the ceremony had not reached completion; but soon the question would weigh heavily. What's next? Some of us had plans—college, a job, marriage. But all longed to begin the pursuit of the life dreams formed in the course of those developmental years. Yet along the journey the awakening question would always linger. What's next?

The typical answer back then referenced a way to make a living. Certainly a means of financial support is essential for the pursuit of whatever "next" may be; but the desired outcome for life reaches depths beyond the means of support for it. Still the rewards for jobs taken or professions chosen are easily channeled toward one's personal enjoyment instead of the betterment of the world. Only, life's satisfaction is not found in worldly gain or pleasure however enticing they may seem. The true answer rests deep in the soul.

"Today is the first day of the rest of your life," the saying goes. What's next? The answer begins today. Someone will give direction or make a suggestion just as Jesus did. "*Let us go over to the other side,*" he said to his disciples. And just as they always had, they followed faithfully, without knowing of the life-threatening storm brewing just ahead. They had no idea what would be next, but they had faith in Jesus. So, in faith, they stepped into the boat to follow him.

The disciples must have wondered what's next as Jesus ascended into heaven before their very eyes. Each of them found an answer. Only moments before he had asked them to venture into all the world and make disciples. So in faith they did, *each one [used] whatever gift he [had] received to love and serve others, faithfully administering God's various gifts in its various forms.* (1 Peter 4:10) And they never stopped. In their own way each left a mark on this world that made it a better place. And we can too. So what marks will we leave to make the world a better place?

Well, the answer depends largely on our responses to what's next?

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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