



REFLECTIONS

April 10, 2022

**“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”
When he had said this, he breathed his last.”**

Luke 23:46 NKJV

For the Love of Jesus

“But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.” (Luke 23:49)

Among those watching stood Joseph, a man from the Arimathea, a city of the Jews. Although a prominent member of Council, he had not voted to crucify Jesus. Like his good friend, Nicodemus, Joseph had secretly become a disciple of Jesus.

For his love of Jesus, Joseph’s heart ached helplessly when Jesus took his final breath. His wealth and prominent position had always been enough to satisfy his desires, but now? What could he do!

In preparation of his own death, Joseph had hewed a tomb near the crucifixion site. It had never been used; and Joseph could afford another one. Maybe his prominence on the Council could provide access to Governor Pilate, and perhaps a little influence too. So,

“...Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. ...With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. (John 19:38-40)

For the love of Jesus, *“Mary Magdalen, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, stood among the women who had followed [Jesus] from Galilee and from Jerusalem too. They observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.” (See Luke 23:55-56 NKJV)*

Then, for the love of Jesus, *“On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb....” (Luke 24:1...)*

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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REFLECTIONS

April 3, 2022

“The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, ‘Surely this was a righteous man.’”

Luke 23:47

Beneath the Cross

Dark clouds lingered deep below the horizon. Soon they would roll in to symbolize the world’s darkest day. Meanwhile, a small but growing crowd made its way to a rocky hill called Golgotha. A group of soldiers waited there, duty bound, to crucify three criminals struggling to carry their crosses up its rugged slope.

While waiting, the soldiers entertained themselves with stories they had heard about the crimes the three alleged criminals committed, most notably by the man named Jesus. They sneered at his claim to be the Son of God, and how He would rebuild the temple in three days. Someone may have also told *how “the governor’s soldiers... stripped [Jesus] and put a scarlet robe on him, they spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ...Then they led him away to crucify him.”* (Matthew 27:29(a), 30, 31(b))

As the criminals reached the site, an artisan raced to place a sign on the cross above Jesus’ head as Pontius Pilate instructed. The sign read, THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

From the cross, Jesus prayed, “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.*” (Luke 23:34) The crowd heard his compassion, but they saw a man beaten and humiliated, human spit drying on his face. Suffering, mocked, and naked. But beneath the cross a flurry of activity portrayed the divergent emotions of the witnesses. A few came to show their love for him; some came to chastise and demean him; and some were there to help crucify him.

Jesus’ disciples were not to be found at the scene; only John made his way near the cross. Also “*Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, ‘Dear woman, here is your son,’ and to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.*” (John 19:25-27)

About the sixth hour, those dark clouds began to roll in, the sun stopped shining and darkness fell on the whole land. In the temple, the curtain was torn in two. Then Jesus cried in a loud voice, “*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,*” and breathed his last. (See Luke 23:44-46)

From beneath the cross, “*the centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, ‘Surely this was a righteous man.’*”

“*You are the light of the world,*”

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REFLECTIONS

March 27, 2022

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved.”

Ephesians 2:4-5

Unconditional Love

Jesus on the cross. Most of us have seen artists’ depictions of the scene. Spikes driven through his wrists, blood dripping from his forehead, lips parched by the sun, and his cries. Oh! his agonizing cries, *“I thirst.”* (John 19:28 NKJV) Forsaken cries, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* (Matthew 27:46) And His final cry, *“It is finished!”* (John 19:30)

Jesus on the cross, the sins of the world borne for all who placed something worldly ahead of their love for God; who abused God’s holy name; who worked on the Sabbath day, for those with shortened lives for dishonoring their mothers and fathers. And for everyone who murdered someone in form or fact; violated the sacred vows of marriage; who took something that belonged to someone else, intentionally led anyone away from the truth, or who coveted their neighbors’ life. (See Exodus 20:3-17)

In short, Jesus carried to the cross the unfathomable burden of all who did not love the Lord with all their heart, soul, and strength, and who failed to love their neighbor as themselves. And with his final spirit yielding cry, *“It is finished,”* Jesus wiped our reprehensible records clean. (See John 19:30)

Surely God, standing behind his unconditional love for us, must have wept for his Son while He watched the scene unfold.

For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him would have everlasting life.

“You are the light of the world,”

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REFLECTIONS

March 20, 2022

“And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”

Luke 14:27

A Cross to Bear

We all have one—it may feel like more. The world is a tough place to live. And the pursuit of happiness may be an inalienable right, but it isn't a piece of cake to achieve. We have a cross to drag along, a weighty one, that makes every step a challenge to take.

Happiness produces smiles. That's the sign of it. Happy homes are painted with cheerfulness; but even a fresh coat dries quickly and flakes onto the ground. Happy people wake with a smile on their face and a sparkle in their eye, hoping for the day to be the first without a prickly pebble in their shoe. But it *is* there, always there, every step a reminder of the burden to bear. Jesus spoke of it:

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)

Think about it. In Jesus' day crucifixion was the most feared and disgraceful form of execution. The cross symbolized the excruciating pain to endure. Yet Jesus willfully placed the weight of the world's sin on his shoulders and dragged them through the streets of Jerusalem to sacrificially face crucifixion on a hill called Golgotha.

Yes. Each of us has a cross to bear too. We were not given them as something to complain about or to blame for our failures. The cross may be a pebble perpetually imbedded in a shoe, or it may be something painful beyond imagination; but our burdens serve as reminders of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, and as inspiration to dedicate our lives to follow him.

Our lives make a difference in the people in the small corners of the world we live in, some of them we may not even know. So, may each of us take up our crosses, however painful they may be, and as Paul encouraged the Colossians:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (3:16-17)

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REFLECTIONS

March 13, 2022

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Hebrews 1:3

That Man, Jesus

Fully God. Fully Man—It's hard to imagine someone that way, isn't it. Our minds don't want to allow both to reside in the body of one person. He's either one or the other, not both.

Even God is hard for us to imagine without giving him a humanlike face with eyes, ears, and a mouth, with hands raised above his greyed head pointing toward something He wants us to do. So that man, Jesus, fathered by God, borne of a woman, entered our world in human form to experience life as *we* envision it to be.

We watched him reject Satan's tempting promises, felt his compassion for the suffering, and shared his tear-stained sorrow over the death of a friend just as other men would. But He performed miracles as no other man. He calmed the sea, healed the sick, he walked on water, and turned water into wine; then to further confirm his deity, Jesus rose from the grave.

"[That man, Jesus] did not come into the world to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42-45)

Apostle Paul saw the qualities of a role model in Jesus' humanity when he said, *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross."* (Philippians 2:5-8)

Yes, that man, Jesus did some things only God could do. But as a man, Jesus modeled the way we should try to live. He *made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant*. And he brought glory to the Father when *he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross*.

"You are the light of the world,"

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REFLECTIONS

March 6, 2022

**Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path.**

Psalms 119:105

Meditation

The late Bryant Nelson, founder of the Bible Broadcasting Network (BBN), presented a daily radio segment called *Take a Minute*. After posing ideas to ponder, he concluded with a word from the Bible, “Selah!” he said. “Meditate on this.”

Today’s *Reflections* is more a note to readers about thoughts I need to meditate on. The word **meditate** suggests pondering about something endeavoring to understand it deeply. Now that thought makes me wonder if we should endeavor to meditate more on the Bible.

The Bible, God’s word, is so deep that no matter how much we dig in our lifetime, we never reach the bottom of it—there’s always more to learn—the widow’s oil that didn’t run out, and the five loaves and two fish that fed 5,000 men with more left over than they started with. The Bible never runs out of lessons to teach.

I wonder now if I’m using God’s word as a lamp to my feet. I need to meditate on this.

And here’s another thought to ponder:

What have I set about to do? Some of us set out to simply live on in the place we grew up, doing the things we grew up doing. And some of us choose to get away from all that to follow a new path to see where it leads. Either way though, somewhere deep down we want to look back one day to find our lives have made a difference. Somewhere and in some way, we want to leave meaningful footprints in the sands of time that endure in the world even after our footprints have washed away.

Is the Bible the source of light for the path I have chosen? I need to meditate on this.

So in Bryant Nelson fashion, let’s conclude with a word from the Bible. “Selah!”
“Meditate on this.”

“You are the light of the world,”

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REFLECTIONS

February 27, 2022

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

God at Work

Sometimes things don't go well. Relationships become strained, or money runs tight, or health issues present troublesome challenges. Whatever it is, life sometimes gets us down, and the only thing that we seem to do very well is feel sorry for ourselves.

When we've reached that state of mind maybe it signals the time to walk out the door of the pity party we are attending, look at the world outside, and wonder what God might be doing in our lives. Haven't we been through troubled times before? Haven't those experiences changed us at least a little from what we were before? Might God be preparing us for something new or better in our lives?

Jesus warned us there would be difficult times. And he told us about God pruning unfruitful branches: *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.* (See John 15:1-3) Maybe now is a good time to pay attention to God at work in our lives instead of laboring over the pain from our troubles.

"Forget the former things; / do not dwell on the past.

See, I am doing a new thing! / Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

(Isaiah 43:18-19)

"You are the light of the world,"

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REFLECTIONS

February 20, 2022

God is love.

1 John 4:16

Rooted in Love

Roots. They are like transport vessels that carry multitudes of life sustaining ingredients into the far reaches of the lives they serve. For us, the ingredients keep breath pumping from our lungs while chemical transformations magically convert them into energy, intellect, and love. Love is where God lives.

And that's where we want to live too, only evil stands in our way. Lucifer stays busy misdirecting the path we wish to travel, splashing waves that dampen our spirits, and dousing out flames that would warm our hearts.

Our trouble began from one ominous fruit tree in the Garden—the one growing forbidden fruit. Why did God even plant it there? I think God knew there would come a time when we would need help with our perspective. How would we ever know what hot is unless we burn our fingers? And how would we ever learn to yearn for heaven without navigating the troubled waters of life here on earth? We need something to help us understand the importance of love.

So, it took but a single bite of the forbidden fruit to unleash Lucifer's evil spores throughout the world. Now it seems evil's tempting hands are there at every turn to charm us awry.

But if we pause to give notice to God, we find his loving smile enveloping all the world. He is the Master Potter who created all things through Christ Jesus. He planted you and me right where we are today, rooted in his love, and pumping his love to the far reaches of our souls.

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. (1 John 4:16-17)

"You are the light of the world,"

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REFLECTIONS

February 13, 2022

**So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;**

Genesis 1:27

Differences

We both chuckled when we saw the looks of a hillbilly watching our car go by from the front porch of the old farmhouse he called home. We found humor from his bib overalls that hid a bulge in his waistline (but not completely) and from the dusty, sweat stained fedora tilted on his head. Though we couldn't tell from the distance, he may have held a toothpick in the corner of his mouth to hold a plug of snuff in his jaw. Then came a sobering thought. "One of God's children," one of us said. Our faces straightened.

We looked upon the man differently then, though nothing about him had changed. He still had the looks of a hillbilly, and the old farmhouse porch had not gained a fresher finish. But the way of life we looked upon felt some way different—one of God's children.

God loves hillbillies too. He made them in his image just as you and me, and he created them with a purpose in mind just as he gave you and me. So, I think we laughed that day because he lived differently from my brother and me.

We were born different—a different place, around different people doing different things. We didn't grow up with farm animals living in our backyard, and chickens pecking for pebbles so their gizzards could grind the seeds their beaks found in the dirt. We grew up differently than that and we paused in our travels for a moment or two to appreciate our hillbilly brother.

God placed him right where we found him. Likely he was born there and taught there to plow the fields, milk the cow, and steal eggs from the chickens' nests every day. His grandmother may have shown him how to churn butter, and to savor the warm buttermilk left over. On Sundays, his mom served fried chicken, and in the summer, he sometimes watched salty sweat drip from his brow while he turned the handle of the ice cream freezer.

My brother and I *do* connect with Sunday fried chicken and the scene with the ice cream handle, but God made us different. God directed the paths our journeys have taken us, shaped us into who we came to be, and in some unexplainable way, what we came to do. And I wonder now, as I relive the scene we found that day, if that man with the hillbilly looks was as amused about our differences as we found humorous about his.

We are God's children too.

"You are the light of the world,"

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REFLECTIONS

February 6, 2022

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7

Peace and Quiet

Can there be one without the other? I wonder. And where does stillness fit in the picture? Quiet is the absence of sound; but what is peace? The absence of war? It seems to me we are in search of something more than that.

When peace like a river attendeth my way... the hymn begins to its longing melody. Usually, we relate to the image. But I have seen angry rivers too rushing fiercely toward destruction. There is nothing peaceful about them while they are doing it either. So, peace isn't always like a river, though peace is oftentimes found there.

Quiet doesn't always carry peace in its genes either. Quiet before the storm feels unsettling, not comforting. Peace is restful. To say goodbye to a loved one, we say, "Rest in peace." Can one rest, truly rest, without the presence of peace?

Funny isn't it, that when we come near peace and quiet, we do our best to disrupt it. It's not comfortable, at least not at first. But something in the discomfort doesn't wait for peace to settle in. And we revert to the duties of the day still longing for our quick glimpse of the prize to return for a longer stay.

I think when we long for peace in our lives, we are really searching for the peace of God. It is a peace beyond our understanding here in this world. But one day we'll find it.

I think one day a storm of life may carry us through a dark narrow channel barely large enough for our head and shoulders to pass. Breath will be hard to find but the flicker of a light in the distance will signal hope that will push us on. Then as the light beckons us toward it and the suffocating passage nears its end, the struggle through the narrow canal may grow harder still...

Until we are there, basking in Light as never seen before, received by welcoming hands—loving, tender and safe—

And before us flows *the river of the water of life...*¹

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

¹ Revelation 22:1

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REFLECTIONS

January 30, 2022

**Know that the Lord is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his.**

Psalms 100:3

Family of God

God made you special. “*Fearfully and wonderfully made,*” the psalmist wrote. You are unique, one of a kind, unlike anyone who lived before or anyone who will ever come into this life after you. Created in the image of God, He made you for a purpose. Have you ever wondered what that purpose is? Here’s a familiar story:

God created man in his own image, / in the image of God he created him; / male and female he created them. / God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:27-28a)

“*Be fruitful,*” God said. And Jesus explained, “*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last.*” (John 15:16) Might “*fruit that will last*” refer to abundant and beneficial growth in the hearts of people? Luke’s gospel noted that *Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.* (Luke 2:52) So, might God’s primary purpose for our lives be to help our children grow in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and mankind?

Fruitfulness is the lifelong assignment God gives us. But He also calls us to “*increase in number.*” Families consist of people closely related by blood or marriage identified as descendants of a common ancestry. So, are we not required to grow our families too?

Fruitfulness evolves from the basic desire to bring new life into the world, nurture it, and help it grow. But what might be the most nurturing lesson to teach?

Moses told the Israelites: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength... Impress [it] on your children.*” (Deuteronomy 6:5, 7) Jesus said, “*Love each other.*” (John 15:17) And Paul told the Corinthians, “*Love never fails.*”

Fill the earth with love. Is there a more lasting fruit than the growth of the family of God, the Maker of us all.

We grow it best when others feel his abounding love in us.

“You are the light of the world,”

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REFLECTIONS

January 23, 2022

**If one falls down, / his friend can help him up.
But pity the man who falls / and has no one to
help him up!**

**Also, if two lie down together, they will keep
warm. / But how can one keep warm alone?**

Ecclesiastes 4:10-11

Companions

Two men with sad faces walked together toward a place called Emmaus. *They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.*

He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" (Luke 24:14-17)

Together the two men explained their sadness from the great loss they shared. That's what companions do. That's what companions are. While companions share life experiences together, they are often unaware that they also will come to share a small part of each other's hearts too—a bond only death can break. When one of them passes from this world, a small part of the heart passes away with them. And it hurts—

Joe was a lifelong friend, a companion for much of my life. When he passed from this world, part of my heart went with him. Joe left behind his wife, Cathy, and two sons. Through them some part of Joe continued to live within me. Then Cathy died. With her death a small part of my heart she kept alive died too.

Life is like that isn't it? An important part of life is found in the companions who share our journey. We really don't appreciate them enough—that is, until they are gone.

I am a part of all I that ever met, wrote poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson. And with Joe's passing, and then Cathy, a part of me went with them.

Life is all about love. *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments,* Jesus said. (Matthew 22:37-40) The power and depth of love is never felt more than in times of loss. That's when Jesus wept. But love isn't lost.

Just as Jesus joined the Emmaus travelers, his love lives alongside you and me too. And death can't take it from us. Jesus conquered death.

"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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REFLECTIONS

January 16, 2022, Refreshed from March 15, 2009

**So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped,
till the nation avenged itself on its enemies,**

Joshua 10:13

The Day the Earth Stood Still

"Klaatu, barado, nikto." These were the ominous words of instruction to an alien robot in the science fiction movie of 1950's. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* was about a large flying saucer that landed in Washington D.C. and its occupants, a robot and the manlike alien that controlled it, could be overcome by the vast power unleashed on them by the United States military. The earth stood still in fear. It had happened once before.

Joshua believed in miracles. He had seen them. He was there when God had parted the Red Sea. He had been fed manna from heaven and issued shoes that lasted forty years. He had seen God hold back the waters of the Jordan River; and he had watched the walls of Jericho crumble before his eyes. He even watched while God rained hail on the five armies waiting to attack his. Joshua believed in miracles; and he prayed for one more. *"O sun, stand still over Gibeon..."* (Josh 10:12) And it did.

After a few frightening days, the alien took his robot and flew away; and the earth resumed life as if nothing had ever happened. But movie goers were left wondering if aliens from outer space existed and what might happen if they found their way to earth. We too may wonder if God caused the sun to stand still over Gibeon, or was that science fiction too?

Joshua believed in miracles. So do I. We haven't seen the sun stand still in the sky like Joshua did; and most likely none of us have seen the waters of a great sea part, or even a small river part to allow a parade of people pass through. My shoes don't last forty years, and the only walls that crumble before me are those I need to stand strong. But miracles happen. I believe they happen every day.

God created the heavens and the earth. He made the birds of the air, the fish in the sea, the forests that grow, and the snow-topped mountains that stand majestically in the distance. He made the sun, the moon, and the stars above. And He created the systems that make everything work orderly together as if the system predated time. I believe in miracles because we have an omnipotent God. He can make the sun stand still or change the world at will. He has. God sent his Son into the world so we may have everlasting life.

And that miracle is enough for me.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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REFLECTIONS

January 9, 2022

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher.

Ecclesiastes 12:8

A Time to Wonder

A new year. For many it is a time for resolution—to take charge of life as if one can control destiny without bother from the wake of unforeseen obstacles that will rear their ugly head. Even fortuitous happenings change the course of life as it's expected it to be. But a new year is also a time of wonder. What will tomorrow bring?

A new year is such a good time for reflection—where am I; and where am I wanting to go. For most of a person's life, New Year resolutions focus on where do we go from here? It's only logical since we can never go back nor even stand still for long. But there does come a day when it's time to consider the legacy we leave more than accomplishments to achieve.

In his book, *The Letter*, one of Richard Paul Evans characters observes, “*From our first babblings to our last word, we make but one statement, and that is our life.*” So, I wonder, what statement *my* is life making? And will that statement convey the message God sent me into the world to leave?

Life is not meaningless unless we choose to direct our lives toward meaningless objectives. In *The Divine Conspiracy*, Dallas Willard, writes, “*Meaning is not a luxury for us. It is a kind of spiritual oxygen, we might say, that enables our souls to live. It is a ‘going beyond,’ a transcendence of whatever state we are in toward that which completes it. The meaning of present events in human life is largely a matter of what comes later. Thus, anything that ‘has no future’ is meaningless in the human order.*”²

I might describe it this way: By definition, meaning is what one intends to convey; the end, purpose, or significance of something. Meaning is an important driver in a person's life. True meaning endures beyond the long term. Only God endures forever; so meaning must point to God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—the First and the Last.

So I wonder what statement will my life make? We won't know until it's over, or really know until Jesus comes again.

But I pray the statement my life makes conveys the meaning God intended for it.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org.

² Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. Copyright 1997, HarperCollins, San Francisco, page 386.

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REFLECTIONS

December 30, 2021, Refreshed from the Archives of December 30, 2012

...and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

Matthew 2:9-10

In Search of Life

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh filled their coffers, intellect packed their minds, and stars directed their destiny. But something was missing. It was life they were in search of, and they looked to the sky for astrological direction to it. One particular star captured their attention, so they set about to see where it led.

Most of us begin a new year with hopeful expectations, with renewed commitments, and with a spirit of wonder for what is yet to come. We attempt to wipe the slate clean and set out with fresh resolutions to lose weight, eat healthier foods, exercise more, be a better friend, husband and father, or wife and mother. But along with those resolutions we also have desires to pursue, and goals to attain in fulfillment of something that is missing. It is in search of life that we choose the paths we take.

The Magi were in search of life too when they chose to follow the star shining before them. Surely they had a picture of the desires they sought for themselves, their families, and others around them. They must have had other choices for the use of their time, other destinations they might seek, other parties to receive their gifts. But the Magi chose to let go of their own desires and follow the hope they found in the star that God had placed before them. They found the strength and endurance to follow its path no matter how long and arduous the journey. It led them to the fullness they had been in search of all along. It led them to the Christ.

As a new year begins, may we too let go of our own desires and follow the hope found in the star that God places before us. May we find the strength and endurance to follow the path no matter how long and arduous the journey. For just as it led the Magi, the path God places before us will lead us to the fullness we have been in search of all along. It will lead to the Christ.

And in Him we find the way, and the truth, and the life.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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