



REFLECTIONS

February 12, 2023

Jesus wept.

John 11:35

Loss

It's another difficult emotion to confront in the journey through this world. We lose things as we travel through this world. I still remember the most cherished thing I lost as a child.

My uncle Richard Stanton was a P-38 pilot in the army air force who lost his life in the Pacific theater of World War II. The only thing I had to remember him by was a collar pin that designated the wings of a pilot. I took it to school one day to show it off. The pin didn't make it home with me. Lost forever. I cried and cried. Even as I write of that loss, I relive the misery of that day. I was only 8-years old and that pin was only a thing.

More deeply, I remember the loss of Grandpappy, my maternal grandfather. He was the first of my loved ones I remember losing. It really stung. Tears could not be controlled, but neither did they offer relief from my grief. I was barely 13.

Five and a half years later, I lost Pawpaw. I thought I was prepared for that one, after all I was well into my 18th year.

Tears, even in their floods, couldn't relieve my anguish when I saw his lifeless body in the casket; nor did they sooth the depth of my loss as I watched from the car while parades of men emerged from the church. They had come to pay tribute to the man who stood so tall in my life. I bawled uncontrolled when I realized those men were there because my Pawpaw stood tall in their lives too.

Many more of my heroes and friends have passed from my life since then—each one a painful loss. But they all found their place in the joy life has blessed me with. Individually and together, they became a part of who I am. They were instruments of God used to shape me into who He intended me to be.

Grief lingers on until, in good time, it becomes an inspiration. A loss grieved for becomes a purpose lived for. Something about someone who once journeyed with me in life became a cause to carry on. Be it as simple as a caring face in troubling times or a massive movement for a worthy cause, something of them lives on through me.

Isn't it amazing how God shapes our lives that way.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

www.reflectingthesavior.org.