

Silent City of The Dead

During a Gospel meeting in a small town in West Texas, the local preacher took me out in the country to an old cemetery near the ruins of a once-booming community. He explained that when the railroad moved elsewhere a century ago, the promising village faded, and even a new college decided to close its doors and find another location. The shell of a once magnificent college auditorium stood as a stark reminder of misplaced goals and shattered ideas. Indeed, the best plans of mortal minds are often frustrated. Splendor can turn into dust in such a short period of time, but in the meantime, we face reality. "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again" (2 Sam. 14:14).

The visit to that cemetery, and the college, reminded me that the foundations of grand schemes decay, and buildings are never finished in the shifting sands of earthly lore. That college was to be a leading conservatory of music. Twenty grand pianos had been brought there by wagon train from St. Louis. But today, only the hull of the campus building echoes the futility of human minds and grandiose dreams. At the gate of the nearby cemetery is a Texas State Historical marker with this poem on the marble slab:

*As fades the leaf and morning flower so fade our lives each passing hour,
As dews melt before the sun so pass our lives one by one.*

It was evident from the tombstone that both rich and poor were buried there. Some elaborate memorials were as fancy and expensive as anyone could see among the elite. Others were simple reminders of poverty and loneliness. Death plays no favorites, and the upper crust of society is often interred beside the very people they scorned in life. As Edgar Guest wrote, so it truly is:

One day we will all stand with empty hands, and wonder what we are worth.

Balaam desired to die as a righteous man (Num. 23:10), but he died as he lived. So shall we. A professional preacher may "preach us into heaven," but he will not oversee our destiny. Only those who live in Christ are eternally blessed by God (Eph. 1:3). Only those who live in Christ can die in Christ and walk the golden street of glory (John 8:21; Rev. 14:13). Whether rich or poor, black, or white, educated or not—the Word of the Lord will reveal our future (John 12:48).

As I left that journey into the past and observed the decaying remains of an old college and the solemnity of that rural graveyard, I recalled the vivid truth that our life is just a vapor that swiftly fades into nothingness (Jam. 4:14). Why, then, do we put so much emphasis upon houses, clothes, cars, jewelry, social pressure, and other vain matters? Why can we not learn?

Did not Solomon, in his pomp and glory, admit such lifestyle was "vanity and a striving after wind" (Ecc. 2:11)? Remember the rich man in Luke 16, who fared sumptuously in life and was in despair and torment thereafter? The rich fool of Luke 12 never got to enjoy the productivity of brilliant plans for materialistic pleasure! In Nehemiah 2:20 and 13:31, we have two contrasting epitaphs.

Which one will adequately describe our status on Judgment Day? What phrase would best describe our marker?

"You have nothing precious to remember." Or "Remember me, O my God, for good!"

The way we live now will determine where we will spend eternity.

- Johnny Ramsey (deceased), via *Beacon*, Bellview Church of Christ, Pensacola, FL -

"...Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ..." - Matt. 6:20

News & Notes

COVERED DISH DINNER: TODAY, about Noon at the Fellowship Building, followed by our **early afternoon worship service at 2:00 p.m.** at the church building.



Tomorrow through Saturday (July 8-13)
Tomlinson Run State Park
Wednesday Bible Study (Camp) 7:00 p.m.
OR St. Clair Ave. Church of Christ 6:30 p.m.

RECOGNITION DAY: Saturday, July 13th, 2-4 p.m. at the Southern Hills Church of Christ Tributes to **Bro. Buck Groves** and in memory of **Bro. Sam Burdine**. Speakers: Will Montgomery and Rico Brown. Additional details on the bulletin board.

CONVERT'S CLASS: Resumes Thursday, July 18th at 11:00 a.m.

PANTRY: Laundry soap.

ADDRESS: Brenda Harris, 102 Cardinal Dr., Rockwell, NC 28138. Brenda is a sister to our Gerald Clutter, Debbie Waite, and Paula Clutter. Brenda is undergoing treatments for cancer.

REMEMBER THESE SICK & SHUT-IN: At Home: Lois Hissom, Docie Moore, Linda Parkes, Becky McKittrick, Zachary Guidy (Tim Martin's grandson), Dean Spencer, Peggy Linger, Claudette Miller, Nancy Cox, Barbara DeLong, Cheryl Renfro Walker, Lori Stocks (Karen Strum's niece). **Fox - Chester:** Audrey Geer (Linda Hall's mother), Janice Hutchins, Mary Johnson. **Elsewhere: Herman McHan, 7401 Elmwood Dr., Lisbon, OH 44432.**

THUGS LONG GONE

"God brings down rulers and turns them into nothing. They are like flowers freshly sprung up and starting to grow. But when God blows on them, they wilt and are carried off like straw in a storm" (Isaiah 40:23, 24).

Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin — thugs long gone. World rulers have terrifying power, but it's temporary. Politicians don't decide the ultimate destiny of nations. It is God who "determines the course of world events; he removes kings and sets others on the throne" (Daniel 2:21).

- Joe Barnett, via *Bulletin Digest* -

COULD IT BE?

... that people reject the Bible - not because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them?

... that some brethren do not attend various worship periods and Bible study classes because Christ is not really their "first love?"

... we utterly abhor the violence going on in the world, yet do not think twice about what our families entertain themselves with on television and at the movies.

... that some brethren honestly see no connection between commitment, attendance, and involvement?

- Author Unknown