

†.my Shepherd

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.



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REFLECTIONS

By Stan Manley

...my Shepherd's editor

Death's Journey

This is a story that I have not looked forward to writing. I don't know exactly why, except that it is a story that brings back terrible memories of being burned alive. It is also a story of a beautiful experience of being able to let go of my life and embrace Jesus through death.

I have written of my experience and it is on the Internet at www.ismyshepherd.com entitled "The Day I Died" for those of you who might be interested. Maybe this story of my past is on my mind because of you, something you're going through right now. I don't know, but I write what Jesus tells me to.

The anguish that I am experiencing relates to a personal moment of almost 36 years ago. It was a moment when my life here on earth ended and my journey through the portals of eternity began.

It is an experience that demonstrates the immediacy as well as the finality of that split second when living gives way to dying for the just and unjust as well. The prompting that I have in my heart is to speak to you, the Christian-to the one who has already made that decision to follow Christ.

To the rest of you, the ones who know of Jesus but have ignored making a decision to accept Him, let me tell you that the end came for me in a split second without any time to make things right.

Early on the morning of September the 9th, 1969, our alarm clock went off, awaking me out of a most comfortable sleep. Lying next to me was my beautiful wife, married then for only a couple of years. I quickly shut the alarm off, so as not to wake her, and started the routine of getting ready for work.

As I made my way to the front door, I hesitated for a moment and then stepped outside into the early morning darkness. As I closed the door behind me, I had no idea that it would be over four months before I would walk through the door again.

Before the day would end I would come to that moment in my life when my eternal journey would begin. I would discover for myself that we do indeed discover life though death. Death is not the end of our existence; it is only the end of our presence on earth. Life does not stop just because eternity has started only the location changes.

I, obviously, survived my experience of death and was made to return to life. But for that moment or (Cont.)

His Mysterious Ways

I've always been impressed by the way men and women in the Bible were guided by dreams—from the angels climbing Jacob's ladder to the dream warning Joseph to flee with his family to Egypt. I've always known such things were possible, but it was only in 1978 that I received such a dream myself.

A dear friend had a terminal illness and yearned to see her son again. The young man led a nomadic life. He didn't keep in touch very closely, and when he telephoned he rarely told her where he was.

Then one night I had a strange dream of huge stacks of *Esquire* magazines. I couldn't recall ever having read the magazine. I dismissed the dream as being of no significance, but it persisted. After I dreamed of a house built entirely out of *Esquire* magazines, my husband bought a copy. But I saw nothing helpful in it.

Then one day, a sudden thought hit me—the name of a hotel in Chicago that somehow I connected with the son. Did he live there? When I was visiting my friend, I contrived to sneak a peek at her address book. There, next to her son's name, among years of addresses, I saw the name of the hotel.

I wrote a letter to the son at that address, telling him of his mother's illness.

That was Monday. At 11:00 o'clock on Thursday night, my friend's son called collect from Chicago. He'd only been back at the hotel for a few days and he'd just received my letter. Shortly before his mother's death, he was reunited with her.

Dreams can be very real, and anytime I'm tempted to just brush one off, I remember the name of that hotel.

The *Esquire*, just like the magazine.

Dorothy Nicholas, Asheboro, North Carolina

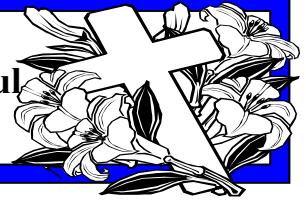
Guideposts-June 1989

Prayer for June

Lord, I shall be verie busie this day. I may forget Thee but do not Thou forget me. Sir Jacob Astley (1579-1652)

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MISSION STATEMENT:
To Encourage the Faithful
To Save the Lost.



For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 NIV

It's your responsibility, do it today



(Cont.) two that preceded death, in that moment when the death process started, that is what I feel led to talk about. Not so much about my death experience, as fantastic as that was, I want to tell you about that moment in time when time became no more.

If you are a Christian and you have doubts or fears, even apprehension about dying, then don't stop reading. If your health is failing and in your quiet times you have tried to imagine with some hesitation about that moment when your illness will shut the door behind you, don't be fearful.

That afternoon of September the 9th, at 2:30 in the afternoon, a 12-inch pipeline blew up and ignited. I was evacuating the residents out of the danger area when I was blown through the air 20 to 25 feet, screaming to the top of my lungs from the 800-degree heat, combined with the incredible blast that catapulted me through the air.

By the time I hit the ground my hair was burned to the scalp, one ear almost burned away, while exposed flesh melted like cheese and was instantly seared. I hit the ground with burns over 50 percent of my body, 30 percent was third degree, internal injuries as well, but pain so incredible that there was no surviving it.

When I opened my eyes to see my fingers digging into the dirt in an effort to pull my body away, but it was no use. I could literally feel my life leaving my body, not an out of body experience but the unmistakable reality that my body was shutting down.

It was in that moment that split second, that life was over for me. I had crossed the line of no return, even if I had wanted to, I couldn't stop the process.

For all intent and purposes the door had closed and locked behind me. There was no turning back; but a long time ago. I had made my decision to follow Jesus, even through death itself.

If you have come to that moment in your imagination and imagine the worse about death, let me be quick to tell you that it is in that moment that you will know Him as you have never known Him before.

You no longer have the capacity for fear or even nervousness. You have only the capacity for this tremendous joy. You have only the capacity for spiritual euphoria of comfort and peace. Don't worry about it, for there is nothing to worry about, I know, I've been there and I am looking forward to the next time.

I suffered tremendously up until it was time to let go. When Jesus came and loosed my grip on this fragile thing called life, I was ushered into His presence. I was filled with His fullness and I have never had a more fantastic experience before or since. You can take my word for it; it's worth dying for.

Awaiting His return,
Stan Manley

I Working Wisely

In a photo on my wall, a rusted rake leans against a post in a vegetable garden overgrown with weeds. I took the picture several months after my father-in-law died and there was no one to care for his usually well tended garden. One afternoon, he had leaned his rake against a post, walked to the house, and never returned.

The photo says two things to me about work: First, I must do it while I can. Second, I must keep it in perspective and not make it more important than it is. Because my days are numbered, I need God's wisdom to spend each one, as I should.

When Jesus healed a man born blind, He told His disciples, "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (John 9:4-5).

As Jesus labored in His Father's "garden" on earth. He demonstrated how to work wisely by having a balance between work and rest. He never valued productivity more than prayer, and He never became so preoccupied with a program that He failed to help people in need.

Lord, give us the wisdom to work faithfully while it is still day.

David McCasland

Our Daily Bread – June 2005

The love of a son for his father can best be realized by being the father of a son.

Stan



**HAPPY
FATHER'S
DAY**

