**AN INTERVIEW WITH THE LOST**

***WRITTEN BY: TOMMY ROMANS SEPT 2018***

 I would like to start this Newsletter by saying that none of us know the day of our death. We don’t know what lies around the next curve in life’s road. Some people live to a great old age while others die young. It is certain that death will come to each of us. **Heb. 9:27** – As it is Appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement. The Bible teaches us to be ready. Should the Lord tarry His coming, each of us will pass through the door of death and leave everything behind. We all will one day stand before God at the Judgement to face our record how we lived our life on earth.

**A TRIP BACK IN TIME**

 I’ll never forget, years ago my Dad wanted me to take my camera and take him back up in the country where he was born and raised and video him showing me places and telling stories of things that happened that he remembered – stories good and bad about people back then that left a mark on him. Dad was up in years then. He also wanted me to take him to several cemeteries in the area to visit the graves of those he knew and was raised up with. So, I drove him way up in the hills of West Virginia, up and over ridges, down in valleys and finally up a holler following a creek to the place he grew up. The house was long gone but the old barn still stood that was built back about 1929. It stood at the end of a field jutted up against the hill. It still stood strong because of the rough solid oak beams and wood.

I had my video camera with me and videoed Dad as he began to reminisce, going back to when he was 4 years old when his dad built the old barn. He pointed to an old creek bed about 30 yards away that passed by his house and went up a holler. “Right there is where I met your Mother son. She was a young girl when her dad brought her down that old dried-up creek bed on a wagon pulled by a horse!” Mom’s parents lived up that holler and it was the only way out to the main dirt road that passed Dad’s house. Dad’s eyes filled with tears as the memories flooded back. “When I saw your Mom, she was the prettiest thing with her long black hair!”

I had a 4-wheel drive truck. I drove as Dad took me up and down the roads and hollers and showed me the old home places of neighbors and

different ones he knew and told me story after story – pointing to the places where homes once stood, where families were raised and kids once played. He showed me old swinging bridges that crossed creeks, suspended by cables that he once walked across. The steel cables were still there but the wooden flooring was gone – all rotted away. He showed me where corn fields once stood that were plowed by horses but now all grown up in thickets, briars and trees. Their transportation back then was horse and wagon. Dad told me about each place – “This is where so and so lived. Right there is where we played marbles” He would tell me the names of the children he played with.

**A VISIT TO THE CEMETERY**

Dad then took me up steep hills with narrow, rocky and jutted out roads leading to several cemeteries. Dear reader, Here’s where I want to get in this Newsletter. As we entered the gates of each cemetery, I turned the camera on and followed Dad to each Grave Stone. He told me story after story of these people who once lived. I looked at the day of their birth and followed the dash to the month, day and year of their death. Some were babies, some youth, middle aged and some very old. There lied the bodies of Mothers, Fathers, Children, Grand Parents, Brothers and Sisters, Uncles, Aunts, Nieces and Nephews, In-laws, Relatives, friends and even Strangers. The Souls of these people are long gone from here. They have passed into eternity.

As I stood at each Grave, I realized – these people cannot ever come back and live their life over. There’s not a thing they can change or do different. Dad would point to a name – “This man was murdered, shot with a 22 Caliber rifle as he walked down the road. He had an enemy that shot him from their front porch.” Several Graves later, “this person was a young teenager shot in the back with a 410 gauge shotgun as he played in the front yard with some other kids and died in a puddle of blood.” As we stood before another, Dad pointed to the name – “This is so and so, he died drunk from moonshine on his way home. They found his body in the ditch line by the side of the road. He never made it back!” To another “This one bled to death from being drunk and trying to break into a neighbor’s house. He cut an artery when he broke the glass out of the window and tried to climb through. They followed the trail of blood through the snow and found his cold lifeless body half-way up a hill laying beside a log. He passed into eternity Lost without God.”

O the many stories Dad told me that day that I remember! “This one died of Cancer or some sickness: This person died with a heart attack, this one died in an accident, this one ended up in prison and on and on.” The stories went. At some Graves Dad would linger for a while in deep thought and then choke up with tears as he would tell me about a dear precious Soul he loved. “This is sister so and so, a dear old mother – she was such a good neighbor, good to us kids. She was an old fashion Christian. She loved everybody. She treated me so good and I will never forget her.” To another Dad would point – this man was an honest man, a good neighbor and would help anybody in need. Dad was glad to show me the gravestones of preachers he knew that preached the Gospel in his day, now they’re dead and gone. As I listened to Dad through the 3 Cemeteries we visited, I couldn’t help but think that all these people will stand before God at the Judgment to give an account of how they lived here on earth. My Dad had such a good memory to recall the things he knew about each one, the things they did and how they lived but to think that God is keeping a much more detailed and clear record of every deed, word and act that will one day be read back to us.

This brings me to a poem I want to share written by: Linda Ellis. It is titled –

**HOW ARE YOU LIVING YOUR DASH?**

I read of a man who stood to speak at the

Funeral of a friend.

He referred to the dates on her tombstone

From the beginning to the end.

He noted – first came the date of her birth

And spoke of the following date with tears.

But what mattered most of all

Was the dash between those years.

For the Dash represents all the time

She spent alive on the earth

And now only those who loved her

Know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own,

The cars….the house….the cash.

What matters is how we live and love

And how we spend our Dash!

So, think about this long and hard,

Are there things you’d like to change?

For you never know how much time is left

That can still be rearranged.

If we would only slow down enough

To consider what’s true and real

And always try to understand

The way other people feel!

And be less quick to anger,

And show appreciation more

And love the people in our lives

Like we’ve never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect

And more often wear a smile

Remembering that this special Dash

Might only last for a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read

With your life’s actions to rehash –

Would you be proud of the things they say

And about how you spent your Dash?

**A FEW IN THE BIBLE WHO LOST OUT**

**THE RICH MAN**

 If we could talk to the Rich man in Luke 16 that Jesus spoke about, I wonder what he would say? This man fared sumptuously every day. He had it made – all the nice things of life, everything his heart could wish. His tables were full. His house was a mansion by today’s standards with servants and maids with all the delicacies of life. If you could interview him right now, he would tell you – “I’m here in Hell because of my selfish greed and love for riches. I wasn’t willing to share, but wanted more and more. If I had it all to do over, I’d feed poor Lazarus. I would surely take him in and help him, not only him but all the others who were in need. O how wrong I was! I only thought of myself. If I could live my life over, I would give all my riches but now it’s too late! I can’t show mercy now and there’s no mercy for me! Please don’t do as I did! This world and nothing it has to offer is worth losing your soul over. Don’t set your affections on things of this earth! God Blessed me but I never served Him and gave back.”

**JUDAS**

 Judas, can you tell us what happened to you? Why did you do what you did? He’ll tell you: “I was Called, I was among the chosen that Jesus called and sent out to preach. I walked with Jesus. I too along with the others experienced the Anointing – I know what it felt like. I saw the miracles, experienced healings. I watched the Lord calm storms, feed the hungry and raise the dead. When Jesus sent us 12 out to preach, the devils were subject to us in His name and we rejoiced. I am a witness of His mighty power and cannot deny it. But, something happened in my heart. Little by little a seed of covetousness began to spring up and I started loving money. It got a hold on me and got stronger and stronger. I was Jesus’ treasurer. I loved the shiny Silver and loved to hear it jingle in the bag. More and more it began to entice me to think what I could do with it. This thing, this feeling in me drove me to sell Jesus out for 30 pieces of Silver!” How could you be so blind Judas? Was it worth it? Did you not realize that you couldn’t get by? Did it make you happy? “No! No! I betrayed the innocent blood of God’s Son! It’s too late for me. I should have caught it when that covetous spirit first started but it went too far!” Look at him dear reader as he walks up to Jesus and kisses the very door to Heaven with a betrayal kiss that forever sealed his doom. He knew he went too far. Look at him now, look into the eyes of this dejected God forsaken soul as he climbs a rugged hill with a rope in his hand. He hates himself. In his tormented mind he says: “Why did I let Satan enter my heart?”

Watch him now as he grits his teeth in self hatred and throws a rope over a tree limb that’s hanging out over the jagged rocks below. You can see the hopeless look in his face as he climbs up to put his head in the noose to jump. Judas, you are some poor mother’s lost son that has forfeited your very soul over the love for money. It didn’t have to end this way. When he jumps, he doesn’t realize the real horror that awaits him forever. Jesus said of him – “it would have been better for this man had he not been born!” Think, it all started with a few little coins that he desired more than God. The rope broke as he hung himself and his body fell on the jagged rocks below and his bowels gushed out. But, the saddest part of all, his eternal soul plunged on downward into Hell where the Rich man is now.

**DEMAS**

 Demas lost out! Apostle Paul said in his letter to Timothy – “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.” Paul said – he used to be with me, he worked with me, he one time loved the Gospel, he had the Spirit, but something happened. He got his eyes off Jesus and the world got a hold of him. He lost his love for God. He grew cold and indifferent and the world drew him out. There was something in the world that enticed him. It tempted him and he went after it. One preacher said it this way: “You got what you wanted but you lost what you had.” We don’t know what it was in this world that got Demas’ attention but it was strong enough that it pulled him out of Church and he left the Lord. We never read where Demas got back to the Lord or ever reunited back to the Apostle Paul. He may have become so entangled in the world that he never could break free and died lost without God. Don’t ever under estimate the power of this world. It has taken many out and down. Good Preachers and Singers and anointed workers have fallen because of the lust of this world.

**ESAU**

 Esau lightly esteemed the things of God. Spiritual things were not his priority. He being the oldest son was entitled to the birthright when his father died and would inherit his father’s estate. But God saw deep into his heart and knew he would not cherish and keep it. This man Esau was a hunter of the field. He comes in from the field faint and he saw his younger brother Jacob fixing a pot of soup. Esau says to Jacob – “I am faint and at the point of death, what good is this birthright to me. Jacob, if you’ll give me a bowl of that soup of lentiles, I’ll sell you my birthright.” Jacob said – “swear to me this day Esau giving me your birthright and the soup is yours.” The man swore away his God given right to his father’s possessions. The scripture says in **Gen. 25:34** – Thus Esau despised his Birthright. **Heb. 12:16** – says – Esau for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. **17** – For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. This lets us know – beware lest we throw away the best thing we have. Handle with care and cherish what God shows and gives us!

**CAIN**

 What can we learn from Cain? Look back at this man in the very beginning. He was Adam and Eve’s firstborn son. Eve bore another son after him and called his name Abel. Both of these boys were taught from their youth how to worship and sacrifice and call on God. They both were taught by their father the importance of the Blood of the Lamb to atone for their sins. “It will only be the Blood boys that will keep you sanctified in the eyes of God. Only that Blood from your heartfelt sacrifices will please your maker and bring His favor and blessings to you! That Blood will keep and preserve you – without it you will die under a curse.”

 Can you tell me what happened to Cain? Abel was righteous – he loved God and took Him serious.

Abel chose the Blood bought way and remained faithful. But his older brother Cain did not see the importance of the redeeming blood, saw no need to offer God a heartfelt sacrifice to please Him. This man, since he was a tiller of the ground, (a gardener) took a shortcut and offered God the fruit of the cursed ground for a sacrifice. God rejected it and rejected him. Cain no doubt saw the blessing of God upon his righteous brother Abel and grew jealous. He caught Abel in the field one day and killed him. The Lord placed a curse upon Cain for the rest of his life and drove him away. He became a vagabond and a fugitive in the earth with no certain dwelling place, just wandering here and there. Can you tell us Cain – was it worth it what you did? “No, No! My punishment is greater than I can bear.” Cain’s words to God was – “Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth and from thy face shall I be hid!” If Cain could talk to you right now, he would say – “It’s all my fault! It wasn’t my dad and it wasn’t my brother, it was me. I was raised right and I knew better. I wanted an easy religion that cost me nothing. Now I’m paying for my disobedience.”

**THE RICH MAN WITH THE BARNS**

 What about the Rich Man with the barns in **Luke 12**? His fields brought forth so much fruit that he had no room in his barns to store them, so he thought within himself – “I’ll just pull down these barns of mine and I will build greater ones to bestow all my fruits. I’ll then say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease – eat, drink and be merry.” But God said – “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is everyone that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” In this true story, Jesus warned us to be on guard against covetousness. Though Jesus did not mention this man’s name, He warned us not to be like him and covet this worlds goods and lose our soul.

**TAKE HEED**

 A final warning as I come to the close of this Newsletter: God is sending out a clarion call to draw us nearer to Him. It’s no time to draw back and get cold and indifferent in our hearts now. Stay close to the Lord. We must get our Hearts right with God and stay dedicated to Him. Jesus is saying – the end is upon us and it’s time to get ready! Everything that can be shaken is being shaken to see who’s going to stand. The sieve is being shaken and the righteous is being tried. Jesus warned Simon Peter – “Satan desires to have you Simon that he may sift you as wheat but I have prayed for you that your Faith fail not. The Church (God’s people) are being tempted and tested in this final hour. Only those with a made up mind will stand and be ready when Jesus returns. Listen, we’ve never lived in a darker time. The world is calling, it’s pulling and enticing but God is saying – Hold on to me! Don’t look to the left or the right, the hour is late. You don’t have time to get tangled up in the cares of life and worrying about a future. Lust and ungodliness is at an all-time high, Keep your eyes on the Lord. Satan is deceiving many, even the very elect if he can. They are giving heed to seducing spirits. People, even good people are falling out of the ranks and getting out of the will of God.

**THE ART STUDENT**

 In closing, the Lord ought to mean more to you than anything in this world. Keep your heart and mind on Him to always please Him. An art student one time was sent by his art teacher to paint a beautiful Sunset. Paint me a beautiful Sunset said the teacher. Within the scene stood an old barn. The artist spent the whole afternoon focusing on the barn to get it just right. As the day was ending, the teacher came to see how he was doing! In his amazement, he cried – “I sent you to paint a beautiful Sunset and you have spent the whole day working on painting a barn!”

 It’s amazing how we so easily get side-tracked and spend our time on worthless and needless things that don’t profit. As I come to a close, there will come a time that all the graves of the dead that my Dad and I visited including the people mentioned in this Newsletter will awake and come forth from the dust, some to everlasting life and some to everlasting contempt. How will it end with you? May God Bless my readers!