

Mark's Remarks

Well, 2004 has begun. I know many of you consider me young but I realized the other day I have been out of high school nearly twenty-one years. If you are 21 this year, you were shaking a rattle and wearing booties while I was carry a diploma and wearing a cap and gown. As I was looking through my mother's scrapbooks New Years Day, it became apparent fashion was not a priority in the late 70's, at least not for me. Long striped tube socks and tight shorts that were cut much too short were evidently placed in my dresser drawer, which I would unsuspectedly adorn in public. Oh the shame.

However, I did find pictures of Buster, my best friend for many years. As a Black Lab that was abandoned in the country, Buster made his way to our back door one evening and the rest is history. Playing, exploring the creek, and relaxing in a grove of trees were events we did together for years. Buster would 'help' with chores. Evidently watching out for thieves and escaped bank robbers since all he did was scan the horizon while I carried bales, pails, and pitchforks. Although he did 'help' with harvest. Back then, we would chop corn silage for weeks and Buster would run along all day. He particularly liked the early morning when the dew would offer a cool reminder for him as the heat of the day approached. My mom even packed egg sandwiches for him. It was not uncommon to see Buster riding toward home on the tractor at the end of the day. Chasing rabbits, scaring up birds, playing in the creeks, and 'harvesting acres of corn' can wear a dog out.

I recall a Saturday as we were preparing to leave for a field about 8 miles away; my dad was searching for Buster in order to put him in the barn. A field that distance away was not one that Buster should run through. After searching for some time...dad found him. Buster was sitting in a rear unload silage wagon, apparently having jumped in the back when the door had been opened. He was not going to be denied that trip. A faithful friend and companion was Buster. I often thought that the person who tossed that pup out never knew the potential or the heart of that dog.

A time of reflection is upon us. Some memories are joyous, others are painful. Some are exaggerated, some become foggy. Some are humorous, others depressing. But memories they all are and like it or not, they are a part of us. As part of the fabric of our lives, memories shape and often direct future actions. A memory of pain can cause us to change a present direction with the intention of preventing further pain. A memory of joy and contentment can lead us down a similar path with the hope of reliving an occasion our mind desires to experience again.

This year may we join together and create lasting memories. May our unity be more unified, our joy be more joyous, our hope more hopeful, our prayer more prayerful, and our love more loving. As Buster reminds us yet today, life is worth living to the full. Striving and aiming for dedication and devotion is a wise choice. Being a friend is to be remembered. Finally, pack light. It is hard to run with a heavy load. Besides, there will be an egg sandwich waiting for you by the pickup at lunch time.

I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds. Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God? (Psalm 77:11-13).

Going forth together,

Pastor Mark