

A Word from Mack

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The larger we love, the larger we live

The cold slap of reality left its stinging handprint on my life in March when I had my 70th birthday. Now I genuinely promise you that I celebrated just like a kid in a candy store. I reveled in the long distance touch of dear friends and absolutely inhaled the joy of friends and family close enough to hug real hard. The day was filled with life in all of its abundance which always includes loads of laughter in its recipe.

Then, the shadows began to fall. We had some parting kisses and goodbyes. And I found myself fluffing the pillows before climbing into bed—just a minute or two before 8 p.m. I remember a brief rebellion going off somewhere in my mind where a couple of “trendy” molecules tried to inflame the crowd by shouting, “It’s too early to go to bed. We are bit that old.” But those guys were quickly quelled by the majority. “We are that old!”

Well, now here I am reflecting on those two legs walking us through what is really real in this wonder of adventure that we call, “life.” Of course, we must face the obvious. There is the smarting reality of decay. Another birthday, another slap, and a bit more diminishing. Decay is real. It is a fact of life.

As a boy, I could walk on a rail for half a mile without falling off. Now I walk out to get the paper and stumble in my own front yard as if it was a foreign country. As a boy, I could spot a cricket sitting on a leaf strumming its legs from a football field away. And at my 50th high school reunion, I looked in the face of one of my old comrades and muttered, “I didn’t catch the name.” Decay is real.

As a matter of fact, every single thing that we can see and touch in this physical world will go missing. It is the truth of decay. I remember the lady asking a famous astrophysicist after a stirring lecture, “Professor, did you say the universe would end in a trillion years or a trillion trillion years?” “Ma’am,” he answered, “I said it would end in a trillion trillion years.” “Oh, thank God!” She blurted, “You had me worried there for a minute.” But truly, I do thank God that decay is not the sum total of reality. There is another dimension of the real. Love never

diminishes. It never decays. As you invest your life in loving your family, your friends, and your fellow human beings, you are participating in that which is eternal. It is a birthday party forever.

I must share with each of you that the existence of this reality of love is the crucial choice of all of our lives. Over more than 40 years, my calling has taken me to the final bedside of many persons of all ages and walks of life. I have been there when they took their last breaths of consciousness, giving their last words in this world. Not one person has spoken of bank accounts and big deals and summer homes and new cars. No one has ever talked of decorating and redecorating and redecorating the redecoration of their houses. No child ever spoke of their favorite toys.

All, without exception spoke of and to the reality of those that they loved. Those whose lives they touched and who touched and cared for them. And if this is what means the most to us in those final moments of focused reality, then how vitally important it is to stretch that coming focus back to the now of our lives. What really means everything then, must mean everything to us now. We simply must choose each day to live and to invest our lives in the reality of Love and not in the world of decay. So it just makes sense to realize that the larger we love, the larger we live. That is why we must move beyond self to family and beyond family to friends and beyond friends to every single human being breathing air. When all become my family then I am living large in the only lasting reality there is...the reality of love. Jesus set out to "Family-ize" the whole world. That is the Reality of Renewal. Come and join us. We are having a party! And everyone is invited!