

Stories Quietly Spoken

I attended a graveside service today for a wonderful Christian lady I have known for many years. After the service was over, I spent a few minutes walking around the old country cemetery looking at the tombstones. If you open your mind, walking around in a cemetery is quite sobering!

Each stone tells a story -- but a very incomplete one. Most just list a person's name, the date of birth, and the date of death. Occasionally a phrase is included that further describes the person, like "Blessed Son" or "Loving Mother" -- but the life details are usually missing.

The really sobering thing is that each of these people was once alive! They laughed, loved, spent time on this earth, and then made their exit. They were part of families, they had friends, and some were skilled at their trades. They had favorite foods, favorite colors, and pets. Some were scoundrels; some were saints. Some were mild-mannered, and some had tempers. Some lived only moments; others lived over a century. Some lived so long ago that their name and dates are all that is now remembered.

Stories... stories... so many stories; now all quietly spoken.

I paused at the grave of a young boy who died when he was only 8 years old -- many years ago. His stone included his picture in a small oval frame. What happened? What was his story? How his family must have grieved -- and the community! I didn't know them, or their story, and even though it happened long ago, I couldn't help but hurt for them all.

It was soon time to leave -- time to return to my family, job, friends, church, and community. But maybe, even though their stories are now quietly spoken, I will take the time to hear their message... and learn something about life -- and about living.

(Originally written: September 15, 2016)