**Ten Years of Preaching at Lilac Road**

There is a book written by a Gospel preacher recounting his experiences of preaching in the south titled “Seventy Years of Preaching in Dixie.” Some of his experiences were funny and some were not. I got to thinking, April 1st marked the end of my preaching here at Lilac Road and the beginning of my 11th year here. My exact relationship has yet to be fully determined but I trust in the Lord and the brethren. Here are some thoughts which comes to mind concerning the past eleven years.

Ten years is both a long time and a blink of an eye. Much has happened and yet it seems like only yesterday. I have more gray hair and less hair at the same time. Some of you look older than when we first came. We have been and continue to be blessed with our fellowship at Lilac Road. The Bible speaks of the value of friendship and companionship in numerous passages. “As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” (Proverbs 27:17) I like to think you have made me a somewhat better Christian and preacher. Likewise, you have been edified by the classes and lessons taught during those years.

I can’t help but think of those no longer with us, either in our families or at Lilac Road. Sister’s Dee Stephens, Betty Jo Crawford, and H.T. Crawford all sat on one pew together. They are all gone now. While I never really got to know Betty Jo, as she was already suffering dementia or Alzheimer’s, from the stories told about her I know I missed out. I liked joking with Dee and visiting with her in the nursing home. H.T. spoke of his experiences in the war and getting back home. He took a one-day vacation after the war and once he got back home before finding a job. I appreciate those who serve protecting our country and families. Add that to those serving in the Lord’s army and it gives them double honor. You won’t find many like him today.

Steve Schultz also comes to mind as he taught all of us a lot of lessons. He lived the life of the prodigal son only to come to back home. Steve contracted ALS due to his exposure to chemicals during the first Gulf War. As his body started to lose its ability he turned to the Lord. He obeyed the Gospel while I was a way in a Gospel meeting but his baptism was unique. He was placed on a stretcher, raised over the front of the baptistry and lowered into the water. He inspired us with his acceptance of his condition and desire to be at all our services. He was often the last to leave as he wanted to know all about everyone. A lot of effort was spend knowing the various families and their history. One time while visiting Steve in the hospital, he asked about people. I realize he was going from one side of the building to the other in asking specifically about everyone. I learned to not complain about my health issues, appreciate every day and worship service. I dare say, Steve taught me a lot more than I taught him.

My mom and brother also passed away during this time period. Mom and our family dealt with Alzheimer’s. We moved to the farm so as to live with her. Fortunately, it was a family effort in taking care of her. Various things stand out about her as she was losing the ability to remember and function. At times she would come to Leitchfield with me, and be here at the building. Most of the time we would have breakfast or lunch, and I would position her in a chair. Then I would turn on a movie I had here in my study. She would watch and then say, “I have never seen that movie before and it is really good.” Of course, she had saw it just a few days ago. One day she just said, “It’s amazing,” I asked what was amazing? She replied, “It’s an amazing world God has given us. I often think of those words while driving on a pretty day. While Mom’s death was expected Mike’s was sudden as it was the result of an accident on the farm. Both hurt but we were comforted by you brethren here. Your support and concern helped us through some hard days.

On the joyous side, we have had our share of blessings. Our young people have grown, graduations, weddings, and births have occurred. Some have become parents, other grandparents, and a few have become great-grandparents. I am glad to see our young people in their service to God. Young men have stepped up to teach classes, give invitations, officiate the Lord’s Supper, and do whatever needs doing.

I would be lacking one more person to thank if I did not mention Regena. We have been on this life’s journey together for a good while. I don’t know what I would do without her and I hope to never find out. Being a preacher’s wife is not easy as some people hold her to a different standard than the “regular” members. She has endured some of the places we have attended. Regena and I enjoy being here at Lilac Road.

I will end by saying thank you for the past ten years and hopefully the good Lord will bless us with more time together. This has become our home. --Dennis Tucker