



Links Players

Seedtime and Harvest

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with that judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. (Matthew 7: 1-2).

If I close my eyes and draw from my reservoir, wafting through my mind is the smell of sweat, cheap detergent, and the sight of uncut fingernails and hand-me-down Ban-Lon shirts.

These are but remnants of Daniel and me, two worlds crossing at the time beneath undercurrents not yet understood by me. If fate is choosing between the two roads before you, I was too young to make an informed choice.

Forces and tensions acted outside my awareness and comprehension in those days. I moved forward with an angst formed in the cauldron of those uncertainties. I was learning the world then, learning something was wrong. Daniel was a beginning.

Mother's Ware Shoals wisdom prepared me to run the gauntlet of toil and years and reality. Daniel taught me man's judgments are not God's judgments. Running the gauntlet, learning the world, what it was and is, and how to respond to it validated this lesson. My avoidance and denial delayed it.

Society may be our chief oppressor or, worse, our acquiescence to it. If true, Daniel's spirit should have been broken because he had been judged. Black, poor, and unschooled, but by life, Daniel survived hustling golf bags and tips. He lived a servant life in my world. I never ventured into his. Some live on the right side of society, some do not, a truth the Bible tells.

Only now, years later, does Daniel's life in me give rise to the depth and, weight, and truth from our crossing. Light did not shine on his life, but his light shines in me still. For all my failures, faults, and brokenness, for all I have learned from reality and my ambitions suppressing Daniel's memory, the meaning of our friendship waited.

Daniel's seed was there, but who wants to live another man's ought or ought not? Is it not true we must sow before we reap, seeds must die before the harvest, naivete' must come before knowledge, failure before wisdom, and only by living life can one look back? I can't imagine Heaven but by description, but I now know what it is not.

In the living, my life measured back to me, and looking back, eternity's a little clearer, and I see the world for what it is. I know I'm not in Heaven. Daniel knew it, too.

Sometimes, I wonder why God does not come down from Heaven and right the ship. I wonder how I failed to learn from Daniel at the time. Maybe a truth told is not a truth learned. God's measure must be measured back to us—and time and life are the tools. Maybe life is not a journey forward but a way back.

Every life is either seed or harvest. Daniel's my seed, I his harvest, our crossing measured back to me.

Prayer: Father, thank you for the light that comes from time.

(Note to reader: Daniel Johnson was the caddie master at Orangeburg C.C. in Orangeburg, S.C. I met him when I was about 8 or 9 years old. He is buried in an unmarked grave).

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Deck Cheatham

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