

Spreading the Cement

JUST AN OBSERVATION. THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL ASKED AMERICANS TO VOTE FOR WHO THEY THOUGHT WAS THE "GREATEST AMERICAN" OF ALL TIME. RONALD REAGON WAS VOTED NUMBER ONE BUT, THERE WERE 3 MASONS IN THE TOP TEN. GEORGE WASHINGTON, BENJAMIN FRANKLIN & FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

I WAS REMINDED OF A STORY ABOUT TIME AND THE DAY TO DAY "RAT RACE." TIME IS PRECIOUS, AND SO THIS PIECE SPEAKS WELL OF TAKING TIME TO "SPREAD THE CEMENT" OF OURSELVES TO OTHERS, ESPECIALLY OUR OLDER BROTHERS AND MASONIC WIDOWS.

IT HAD BEEN SOME TIME SINCE JACK HAD SEEN THE OLD MAN. COLLEGE, GIRLS, CAREER AND LIFE ITSELF GOT IN THE WAY. IN FACT JACK MOVED CLEAR ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN PURSUIT OF HIS DREAMS. THERE, IN THE RUSH OF HIS BUSY LIFE, JACK HAD LITTLE TIME TO THINK ABOUT THE PAST AND OFTEN NO TIME TO SPEND WITH HIS WIFE AND SON. HE WAS WORKING ON HIS FUTURE, AND NOTHING COULD STOP HIM.

OVER THE PHONE HIS MOTHER TOLD HIM. "MR. BELSER DIED LAST NIGHT. THE FUNERAL IS WEDNESDAY" MEMORIES FLASHED THROUGH HIS MIND LIKE AN OLD NEWSREEL AS HE SAT QUIETLY REMEMBERING HIS CHILDHOOD DAYS.

HIS MOTHER ASKED "JACK, DID YOU HEAR ME?" "YOU KNOW AFTER YOUR FATHER DIED, MR. BELSER STEPPED IN TO MAKE SURE YOU HAD A MAN'S INFLUENCE IN YOUR LIFE." JACK TOLD HIS MOTHER HE THOUGHT MR. BELSER HAD PASSED AWAY YEARS AGO.

HIS MOTHER REPLIED "WELL, HE DIDN'T FORGET YOU. EVERY TIME I SAW HIM HE'D ASK HOW YOU WERE DOING. HE'D REMINISCE ABOUT THE MANY DAYS YOU SPENT OVER ON "HIS SIDE OF THE FENCE" AS HE PUT IT.

JACK SAID, "I LOVED THAT OLD HOUSE HE LIVED IN. HE'S THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME CARPENTRY. I WOULDN'T BE IN THIS BUSINESS IF IT WEREN'T FOR HIM. HE SPENT ALOT OF TIME TEACHING ME THINGS HE THOUGHT WERE IMPORTANT....MOM, I WILL BE THERE FOR THE FUNERAL."

MR. BELSER'S FUNERAL WAS SMALL AND UNEVENTFUL. HE HAD NO CHILDREN OF HIS OWN, AND MOST OF HIS RELATIVE HAD PASSED AWAY.

THE NIGHT BEFORE JACK HAD TO RETURN HOME, HE AND HIS MOM STOPPED BY TO SEE THE OLD HOUSE NEXT DOOR ONE MORE TIME. STANDING IN THE DOORWAY, JACK PAUSED FOR A MOMENT. IT WAS LIKE CROSSING OVER INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION, A LEAP THROUGH SPACE AND TIME.

THE HOUSE WAS EXACTLY AS HE REMEMBERED. EVERY STEP HELD MEMORIES. EVERY PICTURE EVERY PIECE OF FURNITURE.....JACK SUDDENLY STOPPED.

HIS MOTHER SAID. "WHAT'S WRONG JACK?" "THE BOX IS GONE" HE SAID. "WHAT BOX?" HIS MOTHER ASKED. JACK BEGAN.."THERE WAS A SMALL GOLD BOX THAT HE KEPT LOCKED ON TOP OF HIS DESK. I MUST HAVE ASKED HIM A 1000 TIMES WHAT WAS INSIDE. ALL HE'D EVER TELL ME WAS IT WAS THE THING HE VALUED MOST. NOW I WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT WAS SO VALUABLE TO HIM."

IT HAD BEEN ABOUT 2 WEEKS SINCE MR. BELSER DIED. RETURNING HOME FROM WORK ONE DAY JACK DISCOVERED A NOTE IN HIS MAILBOX. IT READ ..SIGNATURE REQUIRED ON PACKAGE. EARLY THE NEXT DAY JACK RETRIEVED THE PACKAGE.

THE SMALL BOX WAS OLD AND LOOKED LIKE IT HAD BEEN MAILED A 100 YEARS AGO. THE HANDWRITING WAS DIFFICULT TO READ, BUT THE RETURN ADDRESS CAUGHT HIS ATTENTION. "MR HAROLD BELSER" IT READ

JACK TOOK THE BOX OUT TO HIS CAR AND RIPPED OPEN THE PACKAGE. THERE INSIDE WAS THE GOLD BOX AND AN ENVELOPE. JACK'S HANDS SHOOK AS HE READ THE NOTE INSIDE. "UPON MY DEATH, PLEASE FORWARD THIS BOX AND IT'S CONTENTS TO JACK BENNETT. IT'S THE THING I VALUED MOST IN MY LIFE. A SMALL KEY WAS TAPED TO THE LETTER.

JACK'S HEART WAS RACING, AS TEARS FILLED HIS EYES. HE CAREFULLY UNLOCKED THE BOX. THERE INSIDE HE FOUND A BEAUTIFUL GOLD POCKET WATCH WITH A SQUARE, COMPASS AND THE LETTER "G" ENGRAVED IN THE FACE. RUNNING HIS FINGERS SLOWLY OVER THE FINELY ETCHED CASING, HE UNLATCHED THE COVER.

**INSIDE HE FOUND THESE WORDS ENGRAVED: "JACK, THANKS FOR YOUR TIME! HAROLD BELSER"
"THE THING HE VALUED MOST.....WAS..... JACK THOUGHT MY TIME."**

BREATREN, WE DO INDEED GET CAUGHT UP IN THE RACE OF LIFE. BUT FOR ALL OF OUR EFFORTS TO GET AHEAD IN THIS WORLD, IT IS THE SMALLEST OF GESTURES THAT CAN SPEAK THE LOUDEST. WE TIRELESSLY PRACTICE MASONIC CHARITY AND EVERY WORTHY CAUSE, WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT. BUT, WE TRULY NEED TO OFFER OUR TIME TO AN OLDER BROTHER, TO A WIDOW, TO A SICK BROTHER, AS FREELY AS WE DO TO OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CRAFT.

"LIFE IS NOT MEASURED BY THE NUMBER OF BREATHS WE TAKE BUT BY THE MOMENTS THAT TAKE OUR BREATH AWAY"

CALL A MR. BELSERS IN YOUR LIFE. AND SPREAD THE CEMENT OF BROTHERLY LOVE AND AFFECTION.

ALL FOR ONE, AND ONE FOR ALL.