

## Greetings!

After doing something for Mama, she would say, “Thanks till you’re better paid.” What that meant to us was – a “thank you” was all we’d ever see for our good deed. However, to Mama it meant that she had placed value upon our assistance, and that she was most grateful for the help.

Having come from the depression days, the value of how a life was lived and the deeds performed over one’s lifetime were seen differently by those of her generation than by today’s. Helping one another without remuneration was commonplace and a “Thank you till you’re better paid” was considered payment enough.

To her generation, what was written in the obituaries mattered and the minister’s eulogy was always weighed against the life of the deceased for truth or fiction. If someone should say about them, “They lived a life well spent”, it was considered as all that was needed. The number of amens determined if the statement was, in fact, true or mostly fable.

A value placed on our deeds and a life well spent. I have a question for you this week, if your life ended tomorrow would it have been – a life well spent?

There are two people that I just can’t get off my mind today. One lived a long life and the other died young, but they both left me with strong impressions about life, so let me tell you about them.

## A Life Well Spent

The *Wakulla Area Times* (*The Heartbeat of Wakulla County, A Monthly Information Magazine – We Cover the Area Like the Dew*, it says on the cover) arrived in my mail from a family member. They knew I would want to read this edition.

Standing behind the pulpit with his King James Bible open and larger than life hands gripping the sides, his picture embraces the cover like the statesman he was. “Cover Story, Page 1, A Tribute to a Man of God” along with the Bible quote, “. . . How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” could only begin to convey the life of Pastor Emmett Whaley.

You read about him in my *Just a Thought* called *Spiritual Fathers* and know that I had nothing but the highest of respect for the man who ordained me, performed our wedding and served as my pastor for years.

As the publisher, Lady Haskins, allowed him to tell the story of his life beginning with his birth in 1916, I soaked in every word of the man who had touched so many lives. Packing fish in salt and hauling them to Georgia by a mule drawn wagon with his daddy, selling them for 5 cents each, or chasing free ranging “piney woods rooters” to slaughter for food or trade, that was the man I had come to know and love.

Upon the ending of his story in the *Wakulla Times*, the recounting of his life begins by those who knew him. One after another, they share their stories and admiration for a man who became known as *Wakulla County's Pastor*.

Brother Whaley, as he was always affectionately called, was never the pastor of what would be considered a large church by today's standards, but literally thousands of people were ministered to through this "man of God". Weddings, baptisms and funerals, which I believe could not be counted, were all a part of his weekly *routine*. For him, his church had no walls and regardless of the time of day or night, he went whenever called.

When Brother Whaley answered the call of God to preach, he was unable to read. His wife, Celia, would read his text and he would deliver the message with passion and anointing. His first personal place of study began as an old converted wooden tool shed which also served as his prayer closet, and pray he did! When he and God talked, you knew they were on intimate terms. From this humble *study*, with Sister Whaley's help, he taught himself to read from his King James Bible, which was the only version he ever used.

In my younger years, I once preached a funeral with Brother Whaley and the renowned Rev. Carlton Tucker and realize now that I was just the kid standing between two spiritual giants.

Brother Whaley passed away December 8, 2009 and was laid to rest in Crawfordville, Florida. The funeral home's flier listed six ministers who officiated at his funeral. Though I was unable to attend, I'm sure someone said that his life was "well spent".

### **She was only twenty-two.**

The pictures from Haiti's earthquake have reminded each of us how fragile life is and how quickly our circumstances can change. The horror and the carnage would overwhelm us with sadness if it were not for the heroic acts of those who have responded to this tragedy.

As I listened to the story of one twenty-two year old American girl who worked as a volunteer for *Friends of the Orphans*, I was struck first with anger over her death at such a young age, and then with admiration for her short life. I am not God and therefore cannot answer all the questions that surround her tragic death. We know that in this world there is both good and evil at work, but it is not my intention here to delve into this area.

She graduated from the University of Portland in 2009 and was planning on graduate school later, but her heart was for the orphans she had come to know and love. "I spend almost every day with the abandoned babies in the hospital, and it's difficult to comprehend why and who would ever give them up," she wrote.

On her blog, *525,600 Minutes, How do you measure a year?* ([www.mollyinhaiti.blogspot.com](http://www.mollyinhaiti.blogspot.com)) you see the picture of a bright young lady who could have gone in any direction she wished, yet she gave of herself to others.

Her family writes, “Molly is no longer able to add to her blog, her body was recovered from the wreckage of the Fr. Wasson Center in Petion-Ville, Haiti following the January 12th earthquake.

Molly's family is very proud of what she has done in her 22 years on this earth and hope that you will learn from Molly's writings what drove her to leave a life full of family, friends, hot water, clean water, plentiful food and peppermint frappuccinos, to a life of cold showers, bug bites, rice and beans everyday, and hot muggy days. It's very simple, THE CHILDREN. In Haiti she found unconditional love, simple pleasures, smiles all day and a second family. And it made her smile.”

Just as my heart was moved by the life of my Pastor, I am also inspired by the sacrifice of a lovely young lady. It is people like these who give beauty and grace to a world that otherwise would cover our hearts with its darkness. His was a long life while hers short lived, and yet in many ways they both were full.

Tonight I wonder . . .

How do you measure a year? 525,600 minutes?

I also wonder . . . How do you measure a life?

Once again, I am challenged to live a life well spent.

***And that's just a thought . . .***

### ***My Final Word***

I don't have much to say in this week's *My Final Word* except – wouldn't it be wonderful if those giving your eulogy could say, “Theirs was a life was well spent.”? If so, then live your life in a way that makes a difference in this world!

I sincerely hope that you will do something to help the people of Haiti. Now is not the time to allow politics, or our personal beliefs about the history of Haiti to distract us from helping during their hour of greatest need. Pray, and make your contribution today!

Trying to make each day count,

*Chris*



**Wakulla Area Times:** [www.wakullaareatimes.net](http://www.wakullaareatimes.net)

**Molly's family writes,** "If you would like to help continue Molly's dream and journey, please follow the listed link to the Friends of the Orphans web site set up in Molly's name ([www.friendsoftheorphans.org/s/769/inner.aspx?sid=769&gid=1&pgid=893&sparam=molly&scontid=0](http://www.friendsoftheorphans.org/s/769/inner.aspx?sid=769&gid=1&pgid=893&sparam=molly&scontid=0))." You can also learn more about Molly's work at this link.

**Clinton Bush Haiti Fund:** [www.clintonbushhaitifund.org/](http://www.clintonbushhaitifund.org/)

**A List of Organizations helping Haiti:** [www.foxnews.com/helphaiti](http://www.foxnews.com/helphaiti)