

MOST WERE AT THE END OF THEIR LIVES.

Collapsed, broken, rusted hulks.

Once useful, vital components of a working farm, now relegated to the graveyard of weeds and overgrown memories out behind the barn that used to proudly give them shelter.

RESTORED



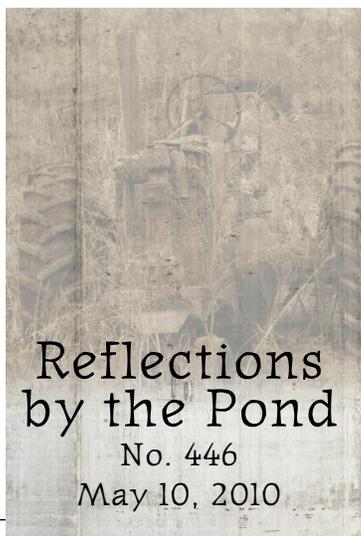
Once they pulled the plow that broke the soil, the cultivator, the planter that sowed the crop. They pulled the manure spreader, the mower, the bailer. Farm kids, sitting beside their dad, learned to drive behind their steering wheels.

Now, as their paint bleaches in the sun, and the rain turns their metal to rusting powder, they serve only as shelter for field mice, and a man-made reef for prairie grass and thistles.

Reflections
by the Pond

No. 446

May 10, 2010



Wednesday last this writer had the privilege of visiting a place where these rusted heaps are brought back to life. The hobby, dare I say passion, of the owner is to rescue these discarded relics of a bygone era and lovingly restore them to their full glory. Upon acquiring the tractor (or pile of parts), that which remains is painstakingly dismantled, cleaned and repaired. Where needed, new parts are machined from scratch. Then a brand new, authentic paint job completes the restoration. And that which had been discarded and forgotten is once more a beautiful, fully restored and operational tractor.

DISCARDED

We all have days when we feel like a pile of rusted junk crumpled into the weeds out behind the barn—days when it feels as if our “go-juice” has run dry. We feel discarded, left by the side of the road. Worse, at times it feels like our essential connection with God—that lifeline running from His Spirit to ours—has been all but severed. We have been left to run on our own, and have collapsed into a withered heap of useless parts.

**I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;**

**It is melted within me.
My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
And You lay me in the dust of death.**

Psalms 22:14-15

Whether we have distanced ourselves from the Lord, are spent and dried up spiritually, or have been purposely set here by the Lord Himself, we cannot go long without crying out to Him for relief.



**How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?
How long will You hide Your face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
Having sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?**

Psalms 13:1-2

And He answers—not with a bromide of platitudes or do-lists, not with impatient anger or even grudging absolution, but with... Himself.

**The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
He restores my soul...**

Psalms 23:1-3a

With unconditional mercy and unfettered grace Jehovah God answers. When we feel dried up and useless, when we feel like our life has been put on the shelf to gather dust and fade into obsolescence, the Lord—personally, intimately—comes in to restore our life to purpose and worth.

The reference is...to the life or spirit as exhausted, wearied, troubled, anxious, worn down with care and toil. The heart, thus exhausted, He re-animates. He brings back its vigor. He encourages it; excites it to new effort; fills it with new joy.

Albert Barnes

When the worries of temporal life have squelched the vitality and joy of our eternal spirit, and we cry out to Him for relief, the Lord graciously comes in to do His work. He collects up all the broken parts, cleans and repairs what is there and supplies brand new

parts for what is missing. He lovingly reconstructs the broken and rusty pieces of our life into a new and improved version of what we once were.

But the Lord God does more than repair and restore our broken and worn out parts. When He is finished with the inside, He completes the restoration with a bright and shining coat of new paint.

**Why are you in despair, O my soul?
And why have you become disturbed
within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my
God.**

Psalms 42:11

Or as Eugene Peterson puts it in his excellent paraphrase,

**Why are you down in the dumps, dear
soul?
Why are you crying the blues?
Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising
again.
He puts a smile on my face.
He's my God.**

Psalms 42:11 The Message

Restored.
By my God.

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