

Hidden Things

*Reflections
by the Pond*

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FROM THE DAY WE SET FOOT ON OUR PROPERTY, putting spade to earth anywhere on it has been akin to excavating the site of an ancient civilization. For lo these many years the soil has given up its treasure on a regular basis—some times through digging, other times the result of simple erosion.

Common sense would dictate that the amount of material is surely finite, but even now, after all this time, it keeps revealing itself. Old pens, shards of glass, tennis and golf balls, odd bits of plastic and clothing scraps, hot dog wrappers and plastic straws—and one is compelled to flights of fancy over the peculiar lifestyle of the previous tenant.

Once again this has come to mind as this week I have begun work on the final drainage project for this season. With the two easier ones now completed, it is time to attack the largest and most labor intensive of the tasks necessary to relieve hydraulic pressure around the foundation of the workshop and sun room. This last includes not just digging a French drain alongside the footing, but moving, by hand, much of a five-foot mound of dirt from beneath our deck. Even for a gentleman of diminutive height, it is cramped quarters shoveling dirt from under that deck. It is dark, and close, and just a bit creepy.

But there the archaeology continues as each cut into the mound of dirt reveals the detritus of those who have come before. With each cut into the soil more is revealed: torn sheets of plastic, strips of metal, electrical wire, spent shotgun shells, milk jug caps. It is as if they never used a trash can, but just tossed their refuse to the wind.

There are many closets and rooms in a life, and many we keep shut for the painful memories they contain. From time to time we are reminded of the moldy detritus stored in those closets, discards from dalliances

and mistakes, creeping vines of old transgressions fighting to wriggle out into the daylight.

Long ago we opened the door to one of our closets and threw inside items we no longer wanted to see the light of day. But we didn't dispose of them properly; we just slammed shut the door and hoped we were rid of them.

But erosion and digging have revealed what we thought had been long ago buried and shut away. There it is again, and again we must deal with it.

Properly this time.

Let us examine and probe our ways,
And let us return to the Lord.

Lamentations 3:40

God does not want us to stash our problems and missteps in the pile of dirt beneath the deck, buried in the dark and forgotten, as if they had never occurred, but to periodically go looking for them. To deal with them. What He commands as our preparation for the Communion table applies, as well, to our daily life.

But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

1 Corinthians 11:28-32

Upon examination we confront that which has been buried and closeted away. We bring it into the light of day, and the clean, fresh air of God's grace.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

