

Dear Leominster Church Family Letter #11

Greetings and salutations from, well, you all know where by this time. I'd like to stir up your minds this week regarding the far reaching consequences of the choices we make. Let me begin with what I've said to Pam every year in late May since we've moved here, "***You have to wait for it, but it will come.***" What am I talking about here? Well, as Paul Harvey (sorry again my young friends, Google him) would say, here's the rest of the story. It was in the early 1960's that Pam's older brother, who also grew up in the home we now live in, noticed in late May a neighbor whose lawn, instead of being green was the color of straw. In need of a science project assigned by his eight grade teacher, he ventured into the field of turf management. His research led him to the discovery of a genus of creeping grass called Zoisia or Zoisiagrass. He found an advertisement from a company that offered to mail him one square foot of the stuff, that's right, you guessed it, to 618 Silver Lake St. His \$7.00 investment bought him a dozen or so plugs of grass which he proceeded to plant here and there, over and around ***his*** house, which of course, 58 years later, is now ***our*** house. How would I best sum up his little horticultural experiment? I think this direct quote from the internet best sums it up. "***In warm weather, zoysia grass problems are fewer, the benefits are greater and this grass is worth looking at. But if you are in a cooler climate, planting a zoysia grass lawn is just asking for trouble.***"

Now in all fairness, I must say that it's worked out pretty well for us. As summer comes on, our entire property eventually is covered in this thick dense green growth that's beautiful to look at and easy to maintain. But unfortunately, every year we're left with a lawn that is quite yellow till mid June. And every year I must listen to Pam say as she bewails this unsightly landscaping quandary, "***Is it ever going to get green?***" And every year I say the same thing, "***You have to wait for it, but it will come.***" Who could have ever imagined that in 1962, a junior high school student's science project would have such far reaching effects? I can assure you I think about it every time I mow the lawn as well as every time I'm out in my yard and someone walking by my house inquires, "***Excuse me but is your grass dead?***"

As I've been thinking about the consequences of choices made, my mind goes back to that stirring scene at the end of the movie Schindler's List. Oskar

Schindler, (played by Liam Nieson,) is surrounded by Jewish factory workers he saved from certain extermination. As Schindler and Itzhak Stern, (played by Ben Kingsley) grasp hands, Schindler says in a low voice, *"I could have got more."* Stern, leans in and says, *"Oskar, there are 1100 people who are alive because of you, look at them."* Weeping, Schindler protests, *"If I'd made more money...I threw away so much money.."* to which Stern, in that immortal line replies, *"There will be generations because of what you did."* The truth of that statement can be seen in the closing scene of the movie where those generations, including Stern's widow, are seen placing stones of remembrance on the grave of Oskar Schindler.

For those who are interested..

<https://youtu.be/vOoWpTxKJGA>

<https://youtu.be/BFP4dDheqHY>

Yes, our lives, our choices, whether we like it or not, whether we realize it or not, will leave a tapestry woven in a way we could never imagine. Just ask Kelly Duncan. She was a 22 year old flight attendant on Air Florida 90 which took off from Washington D.C. in January 13<sup>th</sup> 1982. Its wheels had just gone up when the plane did a nose dive in the frozen Potomac River. Of the 80 people on board, only 6 survived the initial crash. One of them was a businessman from Mattoon Illinois named Arland Williams. Arland clung to the wreckage of the plane while the news cameras filmed the whole scene from the shore. Racing against time, a helicopter dropped a rope into the frigid water for survivors to grasp. But every time the rope hit the water, Arland grabbed it and passed it on to one of the other survivors. Many witnesses at the scene were shocked to see Williams, unconcerned with his survival, keep handing his chance to be saved off to someone else. The helicopter pilot Don Usher would later recount how he watched Arland repeat this heroic act until five survivors were on shore. He then made his final trip back to the icy Potomac, but Williams, the last man in the water had disappeared. For five total strangers, including Kelly Duncan, Arland Williams gave his life. Indeed, generations came from Kelly, who accepted Jesus shortly after this ordeal, married, and had three children and two grandchildren. Arland Williams of course had no idea of the consequences of his choices that day. But every day in Washington D.C. generations drive across the Arland D. Williams Jr.

Memorial Bridge, who have no idea who he was or what he did. For sure, heaven knows.

How about us? What about the consequences of our choices? What story will our lives tell someday? I can't answer that question, but I do know this. Each of us has the potential to impact eternity, to set in motion a series of events that will make all heaven ring with joy through the ceaseless ages. Might not generations come from us?

Friends, Jesus is coming. His eternal kingdom is at the door. I don't know when, but I know this....

***“You have to wait for it, but it will come.”***

Grace be to you all, Pastor Mark and Pam