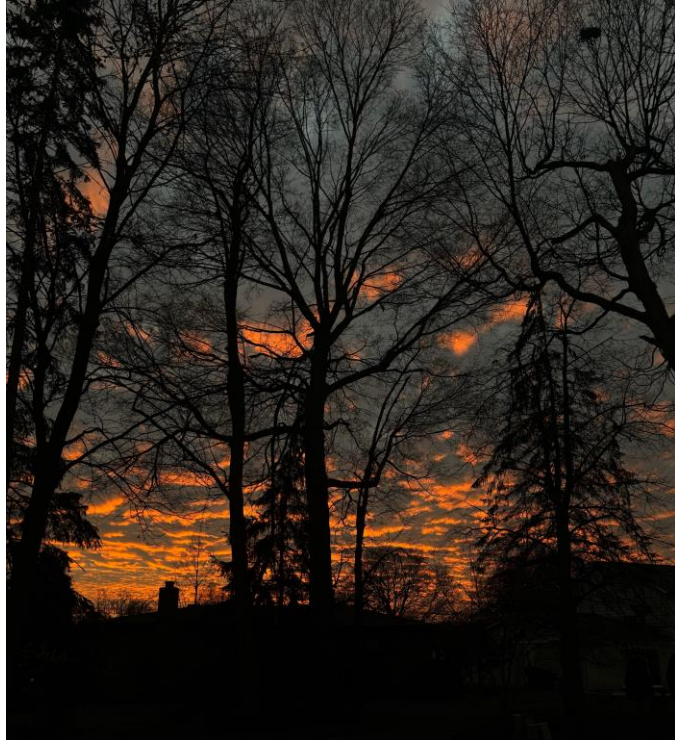


“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” **Matthew 5:14-16**

“And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.” **Revelation 21:23**

Last evening our dear sister Julie Vanker sent word of Steve’s death. Along with the sad news she included this beautiful picture from yesterday in which myriads of clouds can be seen being beautifully illuminated by the setting sun.



As a subject of the Kingdom of God through faith in Christ, Steve knew an eternal blessedness. By God’s grace, he, like all believers, recognized his need for God, was convicted of sin, humbled, and had a desire for righteousness. Steve was merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker and was persecuted.

In keeping with this blessedness, he received comfort, inherited the earth, was satisfied, saw God, and was called a son of God. He obtained the kingdom of heaven and a sure reward was put up for him in heaven where he now experiences kingdom light in fullness as he awaits the glorious resurrection.

Like the light of the setting sun upon the clouds, Steve’s kingdom light shone upon many people, even and maybe especially in his last months on this earth. He was intentional about bending his light out to others in obedience to the command of Christ, and as a result, the Father was glorified.

In his poem *Nothing Gold Can Stay*, Robert Frost captures the cycle of life and death present since the fall:

*Nature’s first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf’s a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,*

*So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.*

In the movie *The Outsiders*, the character Johnny is introduced to Frost's poem by his more intellectually minded best friend and fellow "greaser" Ponyboy when they are hiding out in an old abandoned church in the countryside. Later, upon his deathbed a severely burned and battered Johnny, having thought much about the poem, movingly whispers "*stay gold*" to Ponyboy as a sort of dying wish.

There is a sense in which we can't stay gold in a fallen world. But, in another sense we who are Christians remain gold even in death, we will shine ever brighter with the passage of time, and those we leave behind will continue to bask in the golden kingdom rays we let shine during this life by the power of the Spirit.

So, stay gold Bereans, stay gold Julie and stay gold Steve in the presence of our God who dwells in unapproachable light and in the presence of the Son who is the radiance of the glory of God and the everlasting light!

In Christ,
Pastor Rich