

Traveling the Road

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In woodsy Northern Wisconsin, where I grew up, there is a stretch of narrow road heading out of the small town where I was raised. That road has been paved and patched for a long time. Before I was born and before there were homesteaders on their 160 acres for the settling, this road forged its way from Lake Superior to the saw mill town of my early life. I know this road well because it is the way to my Aunt and Uncle's farm. When I was ten, there was an "army worm" infestation such that made the road look like it was moving. The worms were thick on the pavement as I rode my bike over those critters not looking down at this undulating moving motion but straight ahead toward my Aunt's farm.

I walked this road many times. Every little hill, dip, and property along the way has been known from a tot. Now when I visit the area, the memories from the road come flooding back...this is where I found tire flattened frogs, this is where I thought that this white block home was a hospital, there is where my Dad got my skates sharpened, in that woods is where my Uncle found the ailing horse, and so on.

In the early spring a couple of years back, I remember traveling this road on a very foggy morning. As I pushed on through the fog in my car, it was clear to me that I was driving from memory rather than from actual physical clues I could see. My mind makes a connection as I contemplate knowing a road so well.

We need rehearsal to arrive at where we desire to go; especially when we are in a fog of despair, neediness, or loss. The habit of prayer, talking to God honestly, confession of sin, receiving restoration, reading scripture, worship, going to church is a well traveled road that allows us to find our way when the fog comes. And the fog will come from time to time. When we are in the soup of these murky, misty, moments, we instinctively know the road is there because we have been walking out this journey on the road many times. The road is there. We can keep going. We can poke our way along to God even if we share the despair of Jesus who could not "see" on the cross for a time: "Father, why have you forsaken me...?" He went on to the destination though confused momentarily by pain and a loss of connection to His Beloved. The road was there. He stuck it out.

We too can picture our individual journey along our road and the destination because of familiarity with the way even if we cannot see it. We pray in a solitary place and keep going. We keep choosing the right path because we know it is best for us through experience. Just as Jesus did at Gethsemane, we may have friends, yet feel alone, may know a destiny, but it does not flow the way we think it might, we may have a vague sense of getting lost as we are going, yet we have a path under us. It is there. He is there. His plans are good. There is a plan for each, keep moving. There is a road under us that we know by the traveling, even if we have a hard time seeing it.

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