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Places to Go

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Growing up as a preachers kid there was a joke going around. Back then we were poor like church mice. Anyway the joke went like this. There were three kids bragging about their fathers. One kid said "I can be sick for nothing because my dads a doctor." His friend said "That's nothing. I can bad for nothing cause my dads a lawyer."

His last friend laughed and said I got you both beat "I get to be good for nothing cause my pops a preacher..."

Growing up it wasn't a joke far from my lips. I struggled to be good and it was like fighting against a war. Being good for nothing meant you were poor and poor meant you didn't have money to spend like most of those around you. You relied on what the Lord provided and sometimes the wages were difficult to come by.

Still we grew up and still I found myself traveling to places around the world on next to nothing. It wasn't difficult to travel back then so cheaply. Mom got a job working the travel agent business and she did a wonderful job pointing out to us the best deals on the market. And there were many and God blessed.

But at 47 years of age I find myself feeling old. Some would say you still have half your life left. You could live to 90 or longer. Its possible. I could. And as scripture says we could die tomorrow. I still live on 'good for nothing' wages but I say it with sad humor because I don't wish to be cruel to the government which subsidizes my income. I live on poverty wages called AISH and it is difficult to get by each year even with my parents help on less then 11 grand a year. I live in a City called Calgary and its a rich city where the average house price can be 400,000. And each year those prices rise up.

I still dream though of traveling and seeing the world. I long to return to Upper Michigan and spend a summer exploring the roots of the towns, lakes, rivers and streams. I think of Smelt in early spring and morel mushrooms. I long to see towns I used to live such as Shingleton, Munising, Gwinn and Menominee. I sometimes shed a few tears when I think of putting a worm on a bobber and setting it amidst some Lilly pads waiting for a bluegill

or a perch to nibble.

There are times I dream of walks through dense forest and land we used to own. I dream of days spent studying clover searching for the four leafed one underneath the old apple tree. I know there are things I did. Swimming in Rock River, canoeing with a friend down unknown streams, lightning bugs that glittered like emerald fires and campfires with roasting hot dogs and burgers at the park. There were times I dream of Gods plenty. Blueberries and raspberries and Sugar Plums on Sugar Plum mountain. It was a land for me of magic and I cannot help but wonder how many of us have stories like this. A time when the land was sweet with honey and gentleness.

Yet here I am in a far country now. Those places I loved at a weeks drive away. Those people I loved are moved or passed on to glory. There are a few left perhaps scattered here and there. People I sometimes wish I could pull back from the bring of death just so that I could share with them again the times we had when it wasn't about failure or money or sickness or sorrow. But just about being yourself again in the heart of a kid. And of those days I think will they ever come again? Will there ever be a time when I can say that I know we had struggles even then but I still found ways to enjoy them? Perhaps its just a matter of letting go of preconceptions and fears for I cannot find an answer in my present circumstances. For this body is weak and doesn't work right. It needs healing. So maybe those of you who read this will say a prayer with me that God will restore things to their beauty once again. And we can be as children in His kingdom and find joy that He sends from His heart to all those who like me long for a return to the good ole days