



Thoughts on the Journey

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There are many remarkable memories in my life: memories that run the gamut of emotions. A song or a movie, a photo, re-reading old letters, a story, various things, out of the blue, will call them forward at different times. The other night, while I was watching a cute movie about a young summer love, one deeply rooted past memory dislodged itself and floated into my present.. I turned the movie off and sat in the dark as I re-lived the events of one particular summer.

The summer of 1974 was my first season working in the tourist town of Wisconsin Dells. I rented a room at the Broderick House which was situated across from the park on the main strip in town. The house was owned by a prominent family who lived next door and annually they rented to college girls who came to work for the summer. There was a man my age who was the son of my landlord. One warm evening, I walked across to the park to swing on the swings. It wasn't long before he came to the park where I was and introduced himself. He was drop-dead gorgeous with a personality to match and I could feel myself falling for him. We stayed awake in the park talking until dawn. From that point forward, we were inseparable. It didn't end when the summer ended. We continued our long distance relationship throughout the year until I returned the following summer.

The new summer started off beautifully, until the beginning of August. The love, that I thought would last forever, ended. I was devastated by the emptiness and hunger that this loss left with me. I would sit on the porch night after night hoping upon hope that he would drive by and tell me what I wanted to hear, but it wasn't meant to be. The aching and loneliness from that summer stayed with me for a number of years.

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus had gone off in a boat to be alone after hearing of John the Baptist's gruesome death. People from various towns heard of his whereabouts and followed by foot to where Jesus would be.

“When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick”

It was getting late and the disciples urged Jesus to dismiss the people so they could go into town and buy food. Instead, Jesus took the food that was there (five loaves and two fish) and looking to heaven said the blessing, broke the bread, then told the disciples to give it to the crowd of approximately five thousand. There was plenty to feed the people with twelve baskets left over.

In preparation for this reflection on the miracle of the loaves and fishes, I couldn't help but think of my recent memory of that summer all those years ago when I so wanted to feel filled and satisfied with the love I was missing. Like the crowds who waited for Jesus, they were seeking healing, comfort, and compassion from the man with the miracles. And Jesus, in his own state of grief, ministered to them out of compassion.

In all of our lives we have aching, hunger, and a longing to feel filled, especially when we are depleted. Sometimes we sit in a crowd not knowing what or who we need. Sometimes we follow the crowd because they seem to have the same longing and a desire. Sometimes we chase after things that will only increase our hunger. Sometimes we wait on a porch step at night waiting to be delivered...waiting for our souls to be fed...waiting for the miracle. There is only one path to peace and satisfaction. It is by walking the journey with the very savior who loved you enough to suffer and die for you, the Prince of Peace, who still feeds you today.

