

By Pastor Rich Savage

United Methodist Church, Grant

Last week I talked a little about my love of travel. I was fortunate enough to spend two years of my medical training in Ogden, Utah. (I was a family practice physician before God called me into pastoral ministry.) I had never been to Utah before so while I was there I explored the state as much as I could.

I went to southern Utah and found a countryside that is so varied and sometimes stark in grandeur. There are parts that are barren desert and parts that are beautiful pine forests. There are beautiful streams and marvelous canyons with towering, sheer cliffs. There are erosions of the rock that look like a fantasy land. There are vistas where on a clear day you can see a hundred miles. There are ruins from peoples who lived in the area more than 900 years ago.

I fell in love with the country. It was so beautiful, peaceful, inviting and challenging. I knew I had found something that I wanted to spend more time exploring.

My faith started that way. I grew up in a parsonage and had known about Jesus all my life. I had some understanding of what it meant to have a faith in God. But there came a point one night in a special worship service that I knew that Jesus had died for me!! Yes, for me! I knew that I wasn't worthy, and that I had sinned, but I also knew that Jesus had died for me!

At that moment, I fell in love with Jesus and experienced God's justifying grace. I was made right with God, not by anything I had done, but by what Jesus had done for me on the cross. In that moment, I received forgiveness and was made righteous by Jesus. When God looked at me then, He saw the righteousness of Jesus over me. What a gift I had received!! I have never been the same since.

That was a beautiful moment I will never forget. It started me on the spiritual journey that will continue for the rest of my life.

Every one of us must come to that moment in our lives when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. It is not always dramatic. For some it is. For others it is a gradual coming to an understanding of God's grace and work in their lives until it becomes real.

No matter how we get there, we know that God has done something marvelous for us and in us. This is a turning point in our lives, because we have fallen in love with Jesus. Things look different! And we live life differently.

Part two of our journey—experiencing God's justifying grace.

Where are you on your journey? Have you made that essential connection to Jesus Christ that brings you into the family of God? My prayer is that you have or will soon!

Next week we will continue to talk about our journey to God.

Your fellow traveler on the journey,

Rev. Rich Savage