

June 10<sup>th</sup>

## LESSONS FROM GOD WHILE ON VACATION

*“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”* **EPHESIANS 2:8-10**

The Irish Hills of Michigan. A beautiful place to call home. I spent my first nineteen years there, in a small village town known as Brooklyn. Brooklyn is home to a NASCAR track, which used to bring in over 80,000 race fans in one weekend. In its heyday, Michigan International Speedway hosted two NASCAR races a summer and one IndyCar race. Of course, growing up a fundamentalist Baptist wouldn't allow me to attend Sunday races, but I saw plenty of Saturday races. I grew up in an older home next to Vineyard Lake, one of the many lakes that are found in the Irish Hills area. I'm just like my mother, which makes me a very nostalgic person. I've been taking my family back to my hometown to Vineyard Lake for the last eight years. We enjoy the pontoon and ski boat as I take my children around the same lake where I learned to ski and kneeboard. It's been close to thirty years since my mother sold the house. This past trip caused me to reflect on God's lessons along the way. Here's just a few.

### **1. If we look around, we can see God's mercy and grace everywhere.**

Going back to your beginnings causes a person to think. You see the same roads where you learned to ride a bike and drive a car. You can see where you learned to swim. You can see where you spent time with friends. As I spent time driving around Brooklyn, I couldn't help but give God thanks for His mercy and grace over me. How could a good God save me? There wasn't anything that I brought to the table that would cause God to look at me, except in judging me for my sin. But God. God chose me before the foundation of the world to set His great love on me and rescue me from my sinful self. God called me to full-time Christian service when I was in middle school. Why would God set me apart to preach and teach His Word? It's only because of His grace, the same grace that Paul describes as God's gift. Men, our origin stories may seem different, but God marks all of us with His mercy and grace. Our callings may be different, but we all serve one purpose to make our King famous in our sinful world. The question for any of us is: will we look around to see God's mercy and grace in our lives? Will we praise Him for His great work? We can be bombarded with discouragements and distractions that make our feet slow to move, and our brains slow to trust. But God still meets us even in those moments and gives His grace to continue to trust Him in all situations.

### **2. God doesn't need us to move His work forward, but He chooses to use us anyway because of His grace.**

Time doesn't stand still. It's easy for me to see changes in Brooklyn since it's been almost thirty years since I moved away. Restaurants we frequently visited are now replaced by others. The grocery store where I held my first job has now changed to a rural Hobby Lobby. The church where I grew up still stands, but my pastor growing up has since passed away and my youth pastor for all those years just retired this past December. But God. God reminded me that His work continues, even when we aren't around anymore. God doesn't need me to continue His work among believers in the Irish Hills. God never needed me. But in His grace, He used moments with family and friends to use me for His glory. And it's no different with you, men. God doesn't need any of us. Our God spoke the world into existence, and if I recall, none of us was there to witness the act or offer Him advice in how to create. But God does shape us all to be His masterpiece. He doesn't waste

anything. And every moment has been carefully crafted by our King to walk faithfully to do His work. Praise the Lord for His amazing grace!

***Spend some time thanking God for His mercy and grace in your life.***

**For Further Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-40**