



No Standing Still

My home in Olathe, Kansas was snuggled on a cozy corner of my neighborhood, just around a slight curve and at the top of a mild grade. That of course is of no real consequence except for the day the grandfather of all ice storms laid an inch thick layer of free ice rink on every street in town.

My wife tried to drive home from work that day and almost succeeded. She had to abandon the car at the curve and try to walk to the house that, if you remember, was at the top of the mild grade. There were no cell phones yet, but I had been watching for her. As she made a valiant effort to skate uphill, I felt totally helpless. She would take a step (sort of), try to stop and steady herself (most of the time unsuccessfully), and then slide backwards beyond where she had just been. I would have tried to help her, but it would have turned into something akin to a bowling ball taking out the 10 pin for a spare. She literally crawled up that grade in the icy grass by grabbing bushes, a fire hydrant and a child's tricycle frozen solid to the ground. For some time when we remembered the absurdity of that scene, we couldn't help but burst out laughing.

In an odd sort of way that all reminded me that there is no such thing as standing still on our spiritual journeys. We are traveling on a path that is vibrant and full of liveliness (and may even have some times of spiritual ice to interfere with our progress). This is a path of *life*, a road that is dynamic rather than inert or static. The landscape is always changing.

How often do we reach some point in our lives when we try to hit the pause button and freeze the frame? We may have encountered an unwelcome curve in the road, or life has taken on a chronic sense of pain or loss or disappointment; and we freeze for fear the path ahead may be worse. Or we may have found a bit of comfort and contentedness to which we make try our best to cling, keeping the comforter of ease tucked up around our shoulders.

The only problem is that there is no such thing as standing still in our spiritual journey. If we are not pressing on, we are sliding back, sometimes so imperceptively we fail to realize it.

Paul urges us to push forward, forgetting everything else: "Brethren, . . . one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead" (Philippians 3:13). Whatever we have experienced, pleasing or painful, it is in the past.

Perhaps pleasantness and comfort lures us most often to circle the camp and stand still. Throughout Israel's history, they reminded themselves that God had delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh's army. But through Isaiah, God instructed them not to look only to the past: "forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I am going to do. For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?" (Isaiah 43:18-19, NLT).

Take Your Next Step

What new thing does God want you to experience by the hand of His grace?

Thank Him for the moments of grace He has placed in your life, but resist the temptation to stand on mountain tops and build monuments in order to freeze-frame moments of awe or joy like the disciples at the transfiguration (Matthew 17).

Grace in our histories is a reminder of His grace-enabling awaits us on the path ahead.