

We were taking a walk down memory lane – my friend and I. It was a pleasant journey for the most part. We traveled by houses with beautiful gardens, along a ridge with an awesome overlook, and by fields with wild deer grazing. I explained some of these sites to my friend, how they related to some of the best times of my life. There were such wonderful memories of playing with my curly-headed boy, camping trips with friends, and moments of faith and inspiration.

But there was a point in the tour where the scenery looked more like a ghetto or a war zone. My friend was shocked, and asked what had happened there to cause such destruction. It was not something that I really wanted to talk about. My friend could not understand what had happened to a place that I had once so loved to visit.

This area had once been as beautiful to walk in as all of the rest. It was a region associated with a person to whom I had given my trust, but who had turned on me. Because of this betrayal, the fine buildings crumbled, the animals died, and the flowers withered as though the wicked witch of the west had walked by. It was painful to even look at this destruction, much less walk around in it.

And then I told my friend of the further damage that was being caused even as we talked. I told him of the frustration I felt when someone tells me that the one who betrayed me invaded other parts of my territory, telling others of the great times that we had, as though they still had the right to tell these stories. But I know now that they were in the process of betraying me even at that time.

I cannot tell of the same events unless I find a way to leave the betrayer out. They have ruined that part of the landscape to the point where it is too much trouble to find a good path, and so I usually just leave it alone. There are thus gaps in my homeland that are like impassable swamps.

The offender finds other ways to invade as well, insinuating themselves into areas which are special to me, causing me to deal with the further damage that they cause. Unfortunately dealing with it is not as easy as cutting people out of the pictures in our family album. The very damage is a reminder of the betrayal.

God had to deal with a similar thing. He made a perfect universe, for we know that He looked out upon it and said that it was Good. He set mankind up in a special relationship, and walked with Him through the beautiful Garden of Eden. Man enjoyed this for a while, but eventually turned his back on God, sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, and hid from God. God, in His righteous anger, cursed the earth so that man would have to work hard to survive (Genesis 3:17, Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.)

So the earth that God had made with such loving hands was now in ruin. Man was full of sin and left destruction in his path wherever he went. But God, through the loving sacrifice of His son, is able to offer again the position of favor that man once enjoyed. He tell us in Romans 8:18-22:

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

We know that this offer is extended to those who truly repent and live to renew that glorious relationship. God will set His creation free from the spiritual destruction that had occurred and will restore things to their former glory.

As I grow to be more like God, I will also be able to liberate the damaged areas of my 'memory lane' and make the entire area pleasant to walk in again. It will be difficult, perhaps impossible with regard to those who are not repentant, but it is nonetheless something I must strive for with all of my heart.

© Copyright 2000, Heard Lowry