

Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

Shovel Point

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“Your life is a journey you must travel with a deep consciousness of God. It cost God plenty to get you out of that dead-end, empty-headed life you grew up in. He paid with Christ’s sacred blood, you know. He died like an unblemished, sacrificial lamb. And this was no afterthought. Even though it has only lately—at the end of the ages—become public knowledge, God always knew he was going to do this for you. It’s because of this sacrificed Messiah, whom God then raised from the dead and glorified, that you trust God, that you know you have a future in God.” 1 Peter 1:18-21, The Message

My wife and I took a mini-vacation in Northern Minnesota a year ago. We spent much of our time on Highway 61, better known to the locals as the “North Shore Drive.” The entire area is an amazing showcase of God’s artistry. You can almost see His hand at work marrying the splendor of Lake Superior to the Minnesota shoreline. One of the highlights was the lake view from the top of Shovel Point at a state park. It was recommended to us as a “don’t-miss” view. So, we headed out filled with anticipation of what we were going to see.

But the trek was longer than we anticipated (and far more vertical) and we began to wonder if we’d ever get to the scenic outlook and if it would be worth the journey. There were stairs the entire way up and they seemed to take endless turns. At one point I began running up ahead of Ramona to see if we were close to the top, and then would descend to deliver her a disappointing report. As I recall, a fair amount of grumbling accompanied our ascent.

Then we arrived at the scenic overlook. Neither words nor pictures can do it justice. The site truly was breathtaking. I believe God created Shovel Point just so people could stand on it and take in the view. The weather was perfect, and we could see for miles.

I was struck recently by how perfectly our experience at Shovel Point tracks a Christ-follower's faith journey:

- We were engaged and excited at the start of our journey; anticipating what we would find at the end. New Christ-followers often find it difficult to contain their passion and enthusiasm.
- Then the journey began feeling longer and more arduous than we anticipated. Christ-followers often mistakenly believe that accepting Christ means life will always be easy.
- We stopped living in the moment and wanted to "skip to the end." I wanted to peek ahead rather than focus on the steps beneath my feet. We as Christ-followers often try to anticipate what God has in store for us next or try to circumvent it.
- When we arrived at our destination, it lived up to what we had been told. Christ-followers know that when their time on this earth ends, they will be rewarded for their faith in the way Jesus promised.
- I learned recently that the stairs that felt so challenging to us are relatively new. Previously, the only way to Shovel Point was hiking over uneven and rocky terrain. We often take for granted God's blessings that make each day easier.

In the middle of our trek up Shovel Point we became uncertain if the trip was worth it because we were trusting the word of other people. On our journey toward God, sometimes the trail gets rough and steep. But we know we can trust the Word of the One who set us on the journey when He tells what's in store at the end.

And sometimes, to tide us over, He gives us a taste of that reward by treating us to Nature's beauty. The kind you'll find on a sunny June day at Shovel Point.