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As I mentioned last week, my travels took me to southern Utah and I fell in love with the country. Since then I have returned as many times as possible. My love for the country has grown.

There are many side roads I have taken. I have been in all but a couple of the National Parks and several of the State Parks. My appreciation of the many aspects of the countryside has only grown with each trip.

There were times when it was challenging. There were times when it was not easy traveling. Some of the side roads I have taken have been less than easy.

One of my favorites goes down a stretch of the ridge between two deep valleys where the road is the top of the ridge and both sides drop off precipitously.

But the beauty and grandeur one finds in the country is beyond describing. Even the desert has a beauty and fascination that is remarkable. To be on top of a cliff and see beautiful colored rock for miles of desert one way and then to look behind you and see beautiful ponderosa pine trees towering above the top of the cliff is breath taking.

As we journey toward God after coming to know Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, God provides us with many, many opportunities for growing in our faith. Often this is a slow process that leads us gradually into new understanding of what it means to be a Christian. But then at some unexpected moment God reveals something deep and profound and we get a deeper glimpse of Him.

Other times that revelation hits like a bolt of lightning out of nowhere. Either way, we are bowled off our feet as we stand in awe of Him, and we grow in our love for Him and our understanding of who He is.

God never leaves us the same as we were when we first came to know Jesus, if we are truly open to Him. The Holy Spirit works in us, drawing us deeper, transforming us from our sinful self into being more Christ-like all through our journey. This process involves God's sanctifying grace.

Sanctification is the process of God's working in us to change us from our fallen self to be more and more like Jesus. This is the journey we are to be on the rest of our lives after we accept Jesus as our Savior.

We first respond to God's Prevenient Grace, then experience His justifying grace, and then live in and respond to His sanctifying grace. It is a fantastic journey, but it is impossible by ourselves. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that change occurs as we surrender our lives more and more completely to God.

This exciting journey sometimes leads us into places that we never thought we would go before our relationship with Jesus started growing. (After all, I am a minister now! That still amazes me!!)

How are you growing in your life with Jesus? Are you spending time with Him regularly? Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to remold you into the person that God wants you to become?

Part three of our journey! Next week I will have a few more thoughts about our journey toward

God.
Your fellow traveler on the journey,
Rev. Rich Savage