

The Destination Devotional

I was born and grew up in Royal Oak, Michigan. I know several ways to get there. I can take any Road to Rochester Road and then South to Royal Oak. This takes me past the home I knew as a young child and where I went to kindergarten and where my memories mostly began. This takes me to Royal Oak from the north and past the cemetery where my family is buried, two brothers, my parents, and my paternal grandparents. I have many memories from this route and sometimes as I pass that cemetery and see those headstones I am saddened by loss. Some days that route is painful. Royal Oak holds many of my earliest memories from going to Kresge's and the lunch counter to Montgomery Wards and Kinsel's and Cunningham's to the Royal Oak Theater where I had my first job, to the Washington Theater where I saw Betty Grable musicals. Royal Oak has changed over the years and is now a more "hip" town than when I was a child. Royal Oak was where we had to go grocery shopping. The main theater, recently torn down, was where we went on Saturday if there was money available for a matinee. Our parents would give us ticket money and bus fare which we would spend on candy and walk home. Those theaters were where we saw the news of World War II and pictures of President Roosevelt. Where we watched serials with cowboys in them. When we moved to what would become Madison Heights, we took a different route west on Eleven Mile. This took us past a radio station where Hank Williams emanated daily and where I learned that writing country music was possible if you had a broken heart, a dog, and a pickup truck. I still love country music, but I also like classical. There are many ways I can get to Royal Oak. We are fortunate to have two forms of worship in our church. I have attended and have friends in both. I have gained in my faith from both. People generally prefer one over the other. Some are very set in which they prefer and that is okay, even to be admired. Some like the organ and some like a band. Neither are wrong, the word and the message are the same. What matters is that the service you prefer speaks to you. I can get to Royal Oak in many different ways, on new roads with a different view and on old roads steeped in memories but all will get me to my destination. The route I take is irrelevant. So, it is with church. What matters is not only what we get but also what we do with it. Does it impact our daily lives, does it bring us closer to our living Lord, are we learning, doing, serving, and enjoying our walk with God? John Wesley was in a prayer meeting at Aldersgate when he was listening to Luther's preface to the epistle to the Romans. Wesley said, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." He found his salvation, not in a cathedral but in a prayer meeting at Aldersgate. He went on to live out the commandment from Christ in "Matthew 28:19 Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." John Wesley did this in meeting houses, street corners, fields, homes, and churches. He knew the where didn't matter but the salvation and souls were what mattered.

Lord, we thank you for this day. We thank you for all you have provided for us, for our food and shelter. We thank you for our church and that we can worship together. Lord, help us as we seek to bring others to you, may we be your servants and may all we do be in your name. Lord be with the sick and those who grieve. Be with those people suffering the ravages of war in Ukraine. Be with those suffering from the hardships of disasters. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and watch over his family. Be with our staff and leaders, guide them and bless them. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson