

Am I Almost There?

By Betty Gill



I grew up in Ansted, West Virginia. It is a small town nestled in the beautiful Appalachian Mountains. The Great Depression did not hit us there with the same vengeance that it did much of the nation - because we did not have much in possessions or money to lose. However, whatever we lacked in material goods was more than made up for by the love between mom, dad and all of us kids.

In 1937 my mother was taken to the hospital for emergency surgery; the closest hospital was over three hours away in Charleston. While my mother was recovering from surgery, my father drove me to Charleston to visit her in the hospital. For anyone familiar with the drive from Ansted to Charleston, my calculations regarding the time it took to get there may seem inaccurate or perhaps exaggerated by my childhood memories. However, in those days there were no interstates and our car was in poor condition - hardly fit for high-speed travel. So we were left to traverse narrow two lane highways, cautiously maneuvering the sharp bends and curves of the mountains.

In my eight years of life, I had never been further than thirty miles from my small town. The opportunity to see my mother generated great excitement, but I was also eager to go on the adventure of seeing a big city for the first time. The journey going to Charleston held many delights, and I was mesmerized by the mountains and rivers. In particular I recall the place where New River, Gauley River, and Kanawha River met in the town of Gauley Bridge.



As we approached the City of Montgomery I thought we would soon be in Charleston, and asked my daddy, "are we almost there?" He patiently replied, "No, it will be awhile." So I settled back and tried to imagine what the city would be like. As we drove further, I rose up from the backseat again and asked, "Daddy, are we almost there?"

"It won't be long," he told me.

After the third or fourth request, my dad began describing what I would see when we arrived in Charleston. He told me about the lights, tall buildings and pretty homes. He described the breathtaking yards full of flowers, trees, and blooming bushes. He went on to explain that the buildings along Kanawha Boulevard reflect in the Kanawha River and that the dome of the state capitol building was overlaid with gold leaf.

I could barely contain my excitement. I continued to peer through the car window; imagining the big city and thinking of my mom.

So many years later, I awoke on this past October 19th, 2009 and reflected back on that long journey to Charleston. I began to pray, "Heavenly Father today is my eightieth birthday. My love and faith has grown deeper with each passing year. Will I see that beautiful place that you have promised to your people? Is it really as wonderful as your Son and the prophets described? Am I almost there?"

As I thought about this, I began to envision a place where everything is peaceful and my Lord Jesus reigns with joy over those he has redeemed. I also began to ponder about my life's journey; the twists and turns have not always been easy and there have been many mountains to climb. I have failed more times than I can count.

I began to pray softly, "Father, am I qualified to enter your holy kingdom and have I done what you require of me to be a citizen of that kingdom? I am nearing the end of my life and I don't want to stand before you not fully clothed."

I thought of Nicodemus asking Jesus "*what must I do to be saved,*" and Jesus replying "*you must be born again.*" Born Again? Have I done that?

"*Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God (John 3:5).*" Have I been born of the water and of the spirit described in this passage of scripture?

I also considered the command that Peter gave to the people on the day of Pentecost, "*repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the holy spirit (Acts 2:38).*"

As I thought on these things I remembered the day I was buried in baptism with my Lord Jesus and raised to a new life in him. At that moment, my failures and shortcomings were washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ.

As a young girl, I remember hearing my devout mother pray and how she was filled with the holy spirit. I loved it so much that I spent a lot of my time asking for this comfort from my Lord Jesus. He answered my prayers when I was twelve years old.

As my journey seems to be coming to its end, my hope for eternal life rests on this; I firmly believe that Jesus Christ is the true human Son of God and that he purchased my salvation by dying for me. God has given me assurance that He will someday raise me from the dead, in that He raised Jesus Christ from the dead. The grave did not have victory over Jesus and our heavenly Father has promised that it will not have victory over those who are the people of His Son.

I wait for a dwelling place that is far more glorious than Charleston, West Virginia, and with the same childlike anticipation I continue to ask, "Father, am I almost there?"