



The pictures you see above are of one of John and my favorite places in the world. It is not a foreign land. In fact, it is only a day's drive away. It has been like a second home to John. He spent many hours there visiting his grandparents and exploring every inch of the land. Looking for lizards, turtles, and salamanders. He might have even caught some of the frogs that his grandma cooked up in the skillet. A tradition I had no desire to continue. This is the same land on which his mother and her brother caught a 33lb catfish when they were little bitty and together, they drug it up the bank to the farmhouse for dinner. Picture number one shows the very rocked bluff on which I caught a six lb. catfish with a cane pole. And the second picture shows the view from which I have spent many hours watching John fish. Just recently his new method is with a fly-fishing rod.

But over the years there have been changes. The river has changed its course slightly as the trees on the banks grow or fall. The amount of rain affects the depth of the river and how much of the lower bluff is covered. I have noticed that the moss on the rocks is spreading. And the undergrowth on the hill is thicker. And while the slope of the hill that leads down to this treasured place seems to be steeper and more hazardous, I know it is really my age and inability to do the things that I used to do that makes it seem unfamiliar and difficult to manage.

Yet when I look at these pictures, I have precious memories that come to mind. Walking the Wandersee Road (the third picture) with my Mother-in-law; looking for arrowheads shortly after John and I were married; and racing down Wandersee Road to a vet's office to get help removing a hook from two-year-old Jennifer's ear when her sister lost control of the line casting off. (No hospital or ER is nearby). I remember serving communion to a group of youth on the bluff during one of our mission trips. (It was a hotdog bun and a can of Welch's grape juice); and there was the rock they found with a cross shape on it - so we placed it in the brush just above the bluff to mark the place we had encountered God. There is a cave nearby that we have taken each of our grandkids to see. And the last picture is of Cadie's last solo trip with John.

I guess what I remember most is the love I have experienced there, the love of family and friends, the love of nature and the One who created it, the love of the journey of faith and the Christ whom I follow. And those changes, well I don't really mind them, they remind me that while all things change there is one constant that holds everything together. *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever."* Hebrew 13:8. I pray that you not only join me as we continue to embrace the changes along life's journey of faith but also as we continue to celebrate and praise our God Who was, and is, and will forever be unchanging. Amen and Amen