

Without a Compass

It was an overcast snowy Northern Minnesota afternoon and the hunt was ending. I stepped down from the old rickety deer stand located in the heart of a brush infested swamp. Finding my buddy's footprints I began to track him in order to get to the boat and cruise home before the stormy darkness overtook us.

Much to my chagrin I came upon another set of tracks in this dense isolated forest. And for some odd reason my buddy was nowhere to be found; worry turned to fear as I realized the tracks I was following were my own. I had been walking in circles; I was lost without a compass. You see, we Northern Minnesotans are tough; compasses were for the city folk. We could always find our way... so I thought.

This story took place back in 1978 during my junior year in high school. The sad part, the next five years of my life were like that afternoon in the woods; a life without a compass, a life of wandering. The wandering turned to recklessness, rebellion, and doubt. But much to my surprise it all changed the fall of 1983.

My boss opened his Bible and shared the glorious news of Jesus Christ. It was John 3:16 that drew me, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."* I trusted Jesus Christ; through His blood I was completely forgiven. I now had the *true* compass, for Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."* He showed me the way; both now and forever! My recklessness turned to carefulness, my rebellion to submission, and my doubt to faith. I was no longer without a compass.

I don't recollect how I found my buddy, but we did find our way back to the boat. Recalling that hunt, I chuckle at my foolishness but thank God for His faithfulness. Yet that day would not be the last of my wilderness experiences and stories; for besides growing up in the Northwood's of Minnesota, I would spend the next twenty years working in them. But folks, those stories are for another time.

Pastor Mark Fisher