Trading Eternity

They had the very best of every world. A new heaven and a new earth created for them to inhabit. A garden having been birthed just for their enjoyment, their cultivation, their existence, flourishing in richness and sustenance. Life throbbed through the beat of all things living and thriving. Their inheritance spread before them. Their lungs were filled to capacity with the very breath of Almighty God, and what's more, He longed for them. He yearned after them; He *trusted* them. All they knew was freedom as fear hadn't yet been born. They frolicked through each encounter as it became new, and as their hearts pulsed in time with their Creator, the experience of living truly was a gift they opened every day. There was only one rule, and with each perfect breath they took, there wasn't a reason to even come close to questioning its validity.

But on *that* day, it was as if they said, *'Father, we don't wish to wait any longer. Give us what is rightfully ours so we can go and experience everything we haven't yet seen or tried or known.'* And it was the answer of a loving Father Who responded in grace, *"Who told you? Who told you, you were naked? Who told you there is more to see and do and know?"* He walked them to the edge of the garden He'd built for them and let them go. With the long winding dusty road and the awaiting world stretching before them, He bid them good-bye, and the immersive depth of sadness inside was enough to drown Him. But ultimately, He promised, *"I'll keep the light on for you. Should you ever get tired of the world and wish to come back home, I'll keep the light on and I'll be waiting. Just in case."* As they ran for cover after realizing each other's naked vulnerability, Adam and Eve wondered at once, what had they just forfeited?

Years upon years and many generations later, another young man demanded his inheritance and took to the world, frolicking in the reckless living it offered. And once all his fortune was spent, once everyone he'd bought with his birthright had gone away because he had nothing left to keep them with, once he found himself in a miry pit, he realized suddenly the eternity he might have traded.

For years, I wandered. I swapped a life I was offered in exchange for prodigal living. So much was out there to see and do, to know and experience. But not everything that glimmers is worthy for a daughter of a King. And when I finally came to my senses, I said to myself, *'Why am I out here living like this, selling my soul for whatever fix I can get myself wrapped around, when I am the dream-child of the God of the Universe, when He spared nothing to purchase me, to redeem my life from the pigpen I reside in?'* And as I began trudging down that dirt road toward home, I could see my Father in the distance running toward me, arms outstretched, and a look of pure love and joy scrawled across His face. *"Welcome home, child,"* I heard Him call; His voice carrying over the breeze. *"You're just in time for dinner,"* He hollered. *"I've been waiting for you. Hurry! I have missed you!"*

Jeremiah 29:12-14 "'When you call on Me, when you come and pray to Me, I'll listen. When you come looking for Me, you'll find Me. Yes, when you get serious about finding Me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you aren't disappointed. I'll turn things around for you. I'll bring you back from all the countries into which I drove you. I'll bring you home to the place from which I sent you off into exile. You can count on it. You can count on Me.'" (MSG)