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Advent Devotional "Prepare the Way"

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Advent Devotional
Wednesday, December 4, 1996
PREPARE THE WAY
Isaiah 40:3-5

I've come to hate the signs and the sight. Ronnie reminds me that I'm too "Type A," but that's only part of the problem. I learned to despise standing in line while in the army and vowed that if there was a way not to, I'd find it. The sign tells me I've no choice: "Road Work Ahead." Stretching ahead on the interstate, as far as the eye can see, cars, trucks, and buses stand idly, then inch ahead, then wait some more. The other sign is right; I can "Expect Delays."

It's 550 miles to either set of parents' house and a thousand to our older son's. We seem always to wind up farther from loved ones and to travel more. Last Thanksgiving, our worst trip ever, found us driving to North Carolina to see Stephen and Misty's new home. Not only did we pick the most-heavily traveled holiday, but we followed a route that seemed always under construction. Eight stretches in that thousand miles had traffic backed up, and I chaffed at every moment's delay and sweated through the frenzied driving that always comes when the bottleneck has passed. We swore never to do that again.

And yet, the trip wasn't so bad. Traffic slowdowns were balanced by delightfully whimsical experiences: the sight and sound of a myriad of big trucks pulled off together, gently snuffling in the dark like sleeping elephants, their shapes discernible in the nightlight glow of running lights; the various stages of a "wall of doom" being born in the western North Carolina mountains, all

concrete and steel and promise of safe division between competing flows of traffic.

The trip came back with full force as I read Isaiah's admonition. Previous trips to Nashville had revealed why part of it was under construction. Some of the way that had been carved out of the mountains was no longer smooth; some of the track along the plain needed resurfacing. In western North Carolina, we found beauty in the mountains revealed around every curve; only a tunnel blocked the grandeur on occasion. All that beauty would have remained unseen had it not been for the construction through which we had to suffer.

That, of course, is Isaiah's point. Construction is always necessary in our lives. We often have to stop and wait until we can see God's glory, His acts in our lives and in those of others. Me, I'd rather be speeding along with my eyes on the road and surrounding traffic. I've got places to go and things to do and people to see. I don't have time for construction delays; I'll see God's glory some other trip. As Isaiah trumpets, when the construction is complete, its purpose will be unveiled: we will all see God's glory revealed by the construction in all our lives.

Prayer: Lord, help us to recognize that the delays we encounter along life's road are for our benefit, part of preparing our way for the ultimate encounter—where we all see your glory revealed.

Ray Granada