

June 17, 1990

Once upon a time, this was a world where every stream that flowed, was pure and fresh and clean. A child dancing through the woods and meadows could lift a handful of that water and drink and be refreshed. Once, I suppose, you and I could have dove into the waters of Lake Erie and known no fear of disease or chemicals coming into us through those waters.

Once upon a time no aroma of paint drying, nor car exhaust would have greeted our noses in this place. Once upon a time there would have been no concern that toxic chemicals may have escaped a plant, noxious gasses from a smokestack that now may harm us.

Once upon a time ~~wh~~ there would have been no concern about walking bare-foot through the grass, just plucking an apple or peach off of any tree that we pass. Picking a blackberry that grows on the edge of the wood, without first checking who has sprayed what when.

Once upon a time.

.Actually once upon a time was just a moment ago. A brief second in the day this earth has been. An instant.

But how things have changed in that instant, and are changing. Concrete covers fertile fields, rainforests are destroyed, tons of waste, tons of chemicals deserts creeping to claim more and more of the earth. And they tell us that we in America are causing the ~~greatest~~ changes of all. We consume.

The day is a little warm and I ~~throug~~ throw the switch and cool air fills the house. I want a cup of coffee, stop at a fast food place and use a cup I will throw into the trash after ten minutes of use. I buy an entree in the frozen food section of the grocery that is in a box ~~that~~ contains a wrapper that covers the pan in which the entree is. More garbage. I see a dandelion in my ~~yard~~ <sup>yard</sup> and I spray a chemical that will remain at large in the air and in the water and in the soil for who knows how long. I want a candy bar so I jump in the car and burn gasoline that will produce noxious gasses that my neighbors will breathe. And because I have enough green folding papers in

my bank account or billfold to pay for these excesses, I think that it is perfectly all right to do them.

What I can pay for, I can do, it is my right to do, no one can tell me differently. No one should say no to me.

~~Max might have argued that Max had the great rap.~~

In 1 Timothy we read: There is great gain <sup>in</sup> ~~with~~ godliness with contentment for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world; but if we have food and clothing with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through ~~this~~ this craving that some have wandered <sup>away</sup> from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs.

Contentment, being content. Through these words from 1 Timothy God is calling us away from a life that says more and more is better. Why is there never enough money? Is it because <sup>we are</sup> ~~we are~~ not paid enough? Or is it because every raise in pay is greeted by greater consumption, more cups of coffee at McDonalds. More trips, more computers, more gas grills, more and more and more. We consume and the air ~~is~~ carries acid rain to the east. We ~~en~~ consume and it costs more and more to haul away the trash. We consume and have less and less time for those best things in life that are free.

Could we choose to consume less? Less wrapping, less paper, less throw away? Here, in this church, could we choose to bring a mug from home with which to drink our coffee? That would be just a little thing, it would not affect the world's production of styrofoam cups. It would not be convenient. Possibly would not be as sanitary. But hanging up a rack around here somewhere upon which each of us could hang our mugs would be a ~~big~~ reminder to each of us that we can choose to limit ourselves. Why the day might even come when we would all take our mugs wherever we go, to McDonalds, to ~~the~~ meetings at places other than the church. We could choose to do that.

