My Stocked Up Grandma

My grandma always figured a pandemic would happen. I can just see her now, putting down her needle work next to Martha, Ruth and Eunice in the great sewing circle of Heaven and shouting down to me, “I told you that you needed to keep 5000 potatoes in the crawl space under your house!” I always wondered as a kid why she did things like that. I wonder no longer. She always stocked up for the apocalypse. That country lady knew how to survive, and she would have done just fine in 2020. A quarantine wouldn’t bother her in the least.

She and my grandfather were never people of means. They never went out to eat. Why do that? No one knew how to cook cornbread, fried okra, field peas and collard greens like she did. She was Whole Foods™ before the franchise existed. And of course, if the cupboard was empty there were always plenty of potatoes under the house. She survived with no wifi, Grubhub™ or Bluetooth. It’s amazing how well she got around without all the creature comforts we have today.

We’ve been getting a taste of primitive living. In March of 2020, we almost resorted to using newspapers and catalogs for toilet paper like she did. Social distancing would be easy for my grandparents. The coronavirus would have a tough time trying to make contact with them. They lived down a winding gravel road in the middle of a North Louisiana forest. You’d have to go over ten cattle gaps to make it to their door. Yes, cattle gaps. It’s was a thing. Google it. My time with her was always a feast for the senses: Squirrel gumbo, wood stoves, real butter, canned figs and something called mercurochrome (which is banned by the FDA now). I’m amazed that she lived to 90. I guess fresh veggies cancels out mercury poisoning. I never feared bullying, pandemics, or cyberattacks. Those things didn’t exist in Dry Prong, Louisiana. But I definitely had concerns about Big Foot.

Times were a whole lot simpler there. But who knows? We might return to them soon. We don’t know what the future holds. I might need to purchase a milk cow for the back yard in the coming months if the homeowners’ association allows it. But when life slows down like it did last spring, there’s always some beauty that rises to the surface. My grandparents were dirt-poor, but they were surrounded by wonder. And that’s a pretty good trade-off. It’s amazing how rich life becomes when you’re thankful for simple things like God’s grace, running water, a good meal and lots of time with the people you love most.