

A Good Day

6/27/2021

As I tried to unwind after a long and tiring day on Friday, I was texting with my oldest son, asking him if he received the photos I had sent, to share with his grandparents. They love to see what Cason and Alec are up to whenever possible. If you have spent any time with two little boys for very long, it can be trying, to say the least. The prospect of being in the car with them by myself for seven to nine hours to go to the beach in Florida was not my idea of a good time. As I told my son, "A grandma's gotta do what a grandma's gotta do."

Thursday night I had the boys bathe, brush their teeth, and then I told them they could stay up as long as they wanted to. I even told them to sleep in their clothes that they will be wearing on our drive down to Fort Walton beach. The next morning, I got myself ready, packed up the car, and then made the simple transition of moving the boys from their beds to the car, pillows, and blankets in hand. Yes, they slept for a good part of the journey. Ten points for Grandma!

We stopped for lunch a bit beyond the halfway point, and they did surprisingly well for the remainder of the drive. The last hour started to get a little stressful, as Alec started kicking Cason's seat and Cason would yell at Alec (in an enclosed car). My nerves were feeling a little shredded at that point too. Cason kept saying, "This better be worth it!"

We found our little AirBnB, which turned out to be only about 2 miles from the beach. After we unpacked the car, the boys wanted to see the ocean, so we got right back in the car. Sadly, with the traffic, 2 miles takes about a half hour just to get near the water! We drove for what seemed like hours, just trying to catch a glimpse of the water. The last time I had been to the ocean in Florida, there were still many spots where you could see the water from the road. Not this time... There are so many hotels and condominiums, and private homes, that we couldn't see anything. The few places where there were no buildings, there were sand dunes so high that you still couldn't see the water. As weary travelers, it was becoming depressing, and my two little guys were asking to go home... Back to Tennessee!

I told the boys that we would find a place to eat dinner, and not McDonalds. After that we would drive back toward our home for the weekend and look for a place to stop to walk toward the ocean. I was in no mood to sit and wait for hours at a trendy restaurant, just for the boys to order chicken tenders and fries. We found a kind of neat place off the beaten path, but nice, and ordered barbeque wings and cheese fries. Healthy fare, I know. I was hungry when we went in, but I think my being tired and worried that these two little guys were going to end up disappointed, I just wasn't very hungry anymore. Cason, on the other hand, who said he wasn't hungry, ended up enjoying most of the wings by himself. Alec had his traditional mac and cheese and french fries. Again, I know... Healthy eating!

Packing up our leftover food to go, we got back on the road. I prayed we would find a patch of beach to walk on and see the glorious water. Thankfully, after what felt like two more hours on the road, about five miles later we found a place to park. Thank you, God! The boys marveled at the white sand, joking that it looked like snow. As we walked over the last sand dune, the beautiful water came into view. I wouldn't have missed this moment for the world.

Cason wasted no time in taking off his shoes and socks and walked through the squishy sand until he was standing in the water. As the small waves swept over his legs, he just got more excited. He jumped and splashed, and as he ran farther into the water and the waves, he shouted, "It was worth it! It was worth it!" It was such a beautiful sight and sound for me. I just laughed as I snapped picture after picture.

Little Alec was a little more hesitant. He stood evaluating the water, holding his beloved 'Piggy' and a new cow he got from Chick Fil A. As time passed, he started walking further into the water, but refused to take his shoes and socks off. Eventually he pulled his pant legs up a bit, but still the shoes remained. He was so funny. He was warming up to the idea that the ocean was kind of cool, and when I told him we would be back the next day to actually go swimming, he started getting more excited about the idea.

We took our time as we found beautiful little seashells to take home. The boys loved the sand, and finally understood why I brought a bag full of molds so we could build a sandcastle. We found some little critters swimming about. Some people were fishing, others were just enjoying the wind and the waves. It was a glorious temperature as the sun was beginning to sink lower in the sky. I was so tired, but I couldn't bear to tear them away from this time. Some dark clouds started moving in from the east, so that was my cue to be able to convince them that we needed to head back to our temporary home.

After making them shower still in their clothes to rinse them off, then taking 'real' showers, I got them settled in to watch tv, and relax. Grandma still had to go buy groceries! I set up their phone so they could call me if needed, and I went down the road about a mile to the Publix store to buy food for our stay. After I returned, I put away the groceries, hung up all the wet clothes to dry, then took a much-needed shower myself. Finally, around 11:00 pm, I turned off the light and died. It was a good day.

I was questioning whether attempting to bring these two down here by myself was such a good idea. When I look at the photos and see their faces, oh yes. It was a good idea. It was a great idea. Their parents are missing some of the most wondrous times of their lives. Even tired, I am so thankful to be able to witness these joyful moments, and I hope and pray these two little guys will remember these moments with warm hearts. I know I will...

