

The Road Less Traveled – August 17, 2018

I am on a quest to be healthier. I am trying to lose weight, to exercise more, to eat better. Folks who know me well will tell you this is nothing new. In fact, I've been on this quest for most of my adult life, at least for the past 20 years or so. I've had varying levels of success throughout the years, but it seems like I always manage to make it back to where I am now. Part of it is that I like to eat, and the other part is that I don't particularly enjoy exercise. Oh I enjoy walking and riding my bike, but carving out the time to do those things on a regular and systematic basis, well that's another story.

But things are different now. I am getting old enough now that the incentive is not just to look better or for my clothes to fit better, but rather simply to feel better. And to ensure that my wife and I still have many years together, that we will grow old together, that we will be here to enjoy our grandchildren. And so I have vowed – once again – to be healthier, to take better care of myself, to be a good steward of the body with which God has blessed me.

It's gone OK so far, but I find myself entering into a difficult time. Interestingly that time comes not at the beginning, when you might think. For me the hard part is not the first few days. I have cravings, to be sure, but I am motivated by the dream of good health that set me on the path. Those first few days I start seeing the needle move on the scale, and it is exciting. No way am I going to fail this time! But for me the difficult time is the ordinary time. Things are going fine. But nothing dramatic is happening. From time to time when I step on the scale, it will register a pound less, but not always. My clothes, which felt a little better almost immediately, feel the same today as they did yesterday. I look in the mirror and don't see much of a difference in what I saw at the beginning of the week.

That is when it gets tough. That's when I'm tempted to jump off the program. That's when the cheeseburger or chips and queso really sound the best. That's when it starts getting harder and harder to find the time to exercise. That's when it becomes easy to forget that this is not a sprint, it's a marathon, and marathons require faith.

I think it's much the same with many aspects of our lives. It's easy to stay focused when we are on top of the world. And it's easy to stay focused when the bottom is falling out from under us. But in the everyday humdrum of life, that focus is easily lost. In the midst of going to work, taking the kids to school, football practice, baseball games, and dance recitals, it is easy to forget that our marriages require work and constant attention. In the midst of building a career, of climbing the corporate ladder, it's easy to forget that our children are not capable of raising themselves. And in the midst of the work of getting through each

day, it is easy to forget that our relationship with God needs nurturing, and that without that nurturing, it quickly becomes irrelevant.

And so in these ordinary times, I think it is all important to recommit ourselves. I think it is crucial to constantly take stock of how blessed we are and what is really important to us. And in the end, I believe it is in the ordinary times that we grow and finally discover who we really are.

See you Sunday.