

## The Road Less Traveled – August 31, 2018

I had a little accident the other night. I was making tea, something I do just about every day. We drink a lot of iced tea in my family. Anyway, I had put a pot of water on the stove to boil while we were eating dinner. The water started boiling so I got up to pour it in the pitcher and drop in a tea bag. Unfortunately, I had not yet emptied the pitcher from what I had made the night before, so I grabbed another container before the water started to cool.

What I didn't do was stop and think about the container into which I was pouring. I didn't stop to consider whether that container was designed to withstand extreme heat.

It wasn't.

As I held the container in my left hand, I poured the boiling water from the pot with my right. As I did, the container collapsed on itself, and boiling water gushed out of the top and all over my left hand.

It hurt. A lot. And it kept hurting all night. As long as I was running cold water on my hand it felt OK. But as soon as I stopped it felt like the boiling water was hitting it all over again. By the time I tried to go to bed, my hand had started to blister, and by the next morning it looked pretty gross. But at least it wasn't hurting as bad.

It's a minor injury and one that I suspect I will forget all about in a few days. But I hope the lesson stays with me a little longer.

The lesson is, *slow down*. Let's face it, we move too fast. Our lives move too fast. We are over-scheduled, over-extended and over-committed. So we have to move faster and faster to fit it all in. We eat faster, drive faster, even try to sleep faster. And the faster we go, the more careless we tend to become. It's inevitable.

Sometimes that carelessness manifests itself as mistakes, like mine the other night. Other times it manifests itself in neglected relationships and misplaced priorities. In families that no longer eat meals together and spouses that have no connection beyond their shared calendars.

Part of the importance of practicing a regular faith life is that it forces us to slow down. To take the time to allow the silence of God to engulf you; to take the time to pray; to take the time to lose yourself in Scripture – all of it invites us to take a break. And in that break, we allow ourselves time to reflect. To settle ourselves. And to listen for God.

Sabbath – in all of its forms – is not first and foremost a commandment from God, it is a gift from God. And sometimes the first step toward receiving that gift is simply to slow down.

See you Sunday.