

The Road Less Traveled – July 28, 2017

I was coming back to church the other day after running home for lunch. I was just passing the Bearcat when I saw him up on the right. It was our friendly Parker County Sheriff's Deputy running radar just north of the Library. Reflexively I eased off the accelerator and looked down at my speedometer. 40 mph, right on the button. So I tossed the officer a friendly wave as I drove past and never even checked the rearview mirror once I did because there was no reason to fear the blue lights behind me. I was a model driver.

The truth is that I am not really a model driver. I think I am a good driver; I suppose we all think that. I do try very hard to obey the traffic laws. I try to remember to stop completely at every stop sign, even when there is no one coming the other way. I try to yield the right of way when I am called to do so. I try not to cut corners on safety, even when I am in a hurry.

I am a good driver. But I am not perfect. The truth is I have a heavy foot. Out on the interstate I constantly catch myself driving 10-15 mph over the speed limit, and I tend to stretch the "legal" limit as far as I think I can get away with.

But not here in Aledo. Here in town, I toe the line. Here in town I will set my cruise control at 40 as I head to church or toward home at the end of the day. I wish I could say that it is because I have so much respect for the laws of my community. But that's not really it. The truth is I see our friendly Sheriff's Deputy often enough that I just assume he is going to be around somewhere. I assume the radar is running. And because I assume he is there, I act like a model driver. In fact, what I have discovered is that, in Aledo, I *am* a model driver.

That's the reason he is around so much, I am aware. And it works. I act different when I know someone is watching.

I think the same is true for most of us in a larger faith context. We act a certain way when we are at church, when those among our faith family are watching. Maybe the argument we had with our spouse on the way in that morning gets pushed to the back burner, and we hold hands despite the fact that we are upset with each other. Maybe we try to act like the happy family, even though we just had it out with our teenager the night before. Or maybe we simply put our best face forward because others are watching.

It's natural, I suppose. But I wonder what would happen if we lived each day assuming that someone was watching, assuming that somewhere the radar was running? What if we assumed, even in our most private moments, that eyes were on us? Would it change the way you act, the decisions you make, the things you say or the way you say them?

I suspect it would, for me at least. I also suspect that, over time, that assumption would make a huge difference in our faith lives. Namely the difference between acting like a follower of Jesus Christ, and actually *being* one.

See you Sunday.