

The Road Less Traveled – November 30, 2018

A couple of weeks ago I received an email that reminded me why I am ministry. It came to a general email address at the church, and one of the ladies in the front office passed it along. It was from a man named Roger, and he said at the beginning that I probably didn't remember him. Back in 2012 I conducted a funeral for his wife, Shannon, who had died young of Leukemia.

I remember the service well. Shannon was very involved in Girl Scouts with their two daughters, who were teen-agers at the time. And I remember the chapel at the funeral home being packed with both girls and women alike in their Girl Scout uniforms. I remember the stories that Roger told about having 750 boxes of Girl Scout Cookies in their garage. But looking back, it was just a funeral. Like many funerals, there was sadness, but also a sense of relief that her long fight was over.

But it was just a funeral. The family did not go to my church. I did not know them ahead of time. I simply got a call from the funeral home asking if I would do the service. And in the end, it was not unlike 100 other funerals I have done.

But six years later, Roger tracked me down simply to say thank you. He wrote, "I thought of you and what a great blessing you were at the time. You were so caring and had good humor around us to heal our pain. And when I look back, you were chosen to be there for me and my family."

And at the end of the email, he told me that he had just donated \$3,000 to Aledo United Methodist Church. It was humbling, to say the least. But it was also a good reminder about the power of faith and the ability of God to use us to bring hope and healing. Because I will be honest, it was just a funeral. I did my best to minister to the family, and I remember the service going very well. But Roger remembers something else. He remembers a presence. He remembers beginning a journey of healing. And he remembered it vividly enough that he took the time to track me down six years later.

All that is to say that the work we do matters. Whether it is me conducting a funeral, a team building a wheelchair ramp for a homebound woman on Thanksgiving morning or one of you dropping a card to a fellow church member letting them know you just prayed for them. It matters. In fact, it matters a great deal.

Oftentimes we don't know the impact that our faith has on others. But I believe faith has the power to change lives. Beginning with ours.

See you Sunday.