

The Road Less Traveled – March 6, 2020

Tomorrow is the day of the year that I may just dread the most. Tomorrow night, after what I hope will be a good day, a day spent with Melissa and Emma – and welcoming Connor home for Spring Break -- we'll get ready for bed and settle in for a good night's rest. But during the night, something terrible will happen. We'll lose an hour of sleep.

Ah, Daylight Savings Time. I have dealt with it all of my life; all of us have. Since 1918 the United States has observed the practice of setting the clocks ahead one hour as Spring approaches, and then moving them back to Standard Time in late October or early November. The rationale seems simple enough. Because of the earth's axial tilt and its journey around the sun, sunrise and sunset and the amount of daylight we experience vary with the seasons. But our schedules don't change. We still go to work at the same time, go to school at the same time, come home at the same time, etc. So Daylight Savings Time was created to adjust the daylight hours to fit our constant schedules. We move ahead an hour as the days lengthen and sunrise and sunset move later in the 24-hour cycle. Later in the year, as the days shorten and the movement of the sun moves earlier in the day, we move back an hour.

It works pretty well, I guess. I don't have any problem with the overall effect. Oh, I don't like leaving the house in the dark in the days following the time change, but things adjust quickly enough. No, it's not the rationale that causes me stress. It's the practical side of it.

I don't like losing an hour of sleep. It's really that simple.

The fact is I don't get enough sleep as it is. As a general rule, Melissa and I stay up later than we should. We have friends who talk about getting in bed by 9 or 9:30 p.m. each night, and I honestly don't know how they do it. We seldom get in bed before 11 p.m., and midnight isn't all that unusual. My alarm goes off at 6 a.m. most mornings (4 a.m. on Sunday) so it doesn't take a math degree to see it doesn't add up to the recommended amount of sleep. I don't know why we don't go to bed earlier. We just don't. Never have. We don't watch much in the way of television. We aren't up surfing the web or Social Media to all hours. We just have things to do, I guess, and the evening often gets away from us.

So when tomorrow night comes around, and I consider losing *another* hour of sleep, it doesn't set well with me. I know, I know. I could plan for it. I could go to bed earlier and compensate for the hour lost, but it never happens. And I will tell you most years that it takes me several days to get over it, to adjust to the "new" schedule.

But the truth is it's all in my head. I know it is. It doesn't matter how much sleep I actually get, I still know I "lost" an hour. I go to bed grumbling about it, expecting to wake up feeling like I lost an hour, and inevitably I do. I complain about it all day on Sunday and I feel lousy – mostly because I expect to

That's the power of expectation. It tends to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If we expect to feel a certain way, we probably will. If we expect conflict with a particular person, chances are it will happen. So it sort of begs the question of what we expect from our faith. How do we expect our relationship with Christ to change us? What do we expect to happen when we choose to follow Jesus? What do we expect when we enter into worship?

Each week during worship I try to welcome those who are with us for the first time. I try not to say the same thing each week, but usually it is something along the lines of "I hope you find this not only a warm and welcoming place to worship God, but that you will experience the risen Christ in the midst of our worship." But I wonder, do all of us who call Aledo UMC home, do we come in with that expectation? Do we walk in the door *expecting* Christ to meet us there?

Experience would suggest that expectation will play a huge role in what eventually happens during that hour. So what is your expectation? To sing some familiar songs, see some good friends, maybe hear a good sermon? Or do you expect to encounter Jesus? Do you expect to come face to face with the risen Christ?

Just food for thought before we gather again. See you Sunday.