

The Road Less Traveled – January 5, 2018

Not long ago I saw an old episode of “Leave it to Beaver.” I had not seen the show in too many years to count. It was amazing to me how slow the plot moved in the old show, how little action there was. I suspect such a show would never hold the attention of my children. But I noticed something else as well. The scene was in the evening as Ward Cleaver was coming home from work. His wife, June, met him at the door. She quickly fixed him a drink, invited him to change into slippers and relax with the evening paper. For me, living in such a fast-paced world where the kids always have to be somewhere and free evenings are a rare treat, the whole scene struck me as comically nostalgic. But there was a wisdom there that I could not deny.

Times have changed, of course, and most women aren’t waiting at the door with a drink and slippers for their work-weary husbands. Chances are good that mom has been at work, too. And if such a woman is a stay-at-home mom – like June Cleaver – the truth is that she’s been working as hard if not harder than her husband. But the whole scene gave me pause and perhaps reminded me of something that too often is missing from our lives. Ward Cleaver enters the house, laden with the stress and demands of life. But as he is cared for by his wife, his burden begins to lift, his weariness begins to subside and that which is truly important eases to the forefront.

In short, he is home.

God promises us the same luxury, though too many of us fail to take advantage of it. We live in the world that isn’t always of our creation or choosing. We have to work. We have to meet the financial and cultural demands of our lives. We have to cope with the multitude of demands that are placed on our time. But through prayer, Bible study, meditation and service, God beckons us to take a break from the hustle and bustle that is our fast-paced world. To feel our burdens begin to lift, our weariness begin to subside and for that which is truly important to ease to the forefront.

Far too often we ignore the invitation. But on the occasions when we don’t, we can relish in the tranquil truth that comes with being in communion with God.

That’s why I say the same thing in welcoming new members to the church. Whenever someone affirms the vows of membership, and we begin a new journey together, I think it is important to put it into perspective. And there is really only one thing to say. Frankly it’s the same thing we ought to say to each other each week as we shake hands at the beginning of our worship services.

Welcome home.