

The Road Less Traveled – November 25, 2016

Last Saturday I stopped by the church to scan and email a document that required my signature. I opened my office door intent on a quick five-minute errand, but it turned out to be much more than that. The sight that greeted me was quite unexpected. My first thought was that we had experienced a minor earthquake that I had somehow missed. Several items were knocked off my bookshelf, and other things that remained were skewed out of place. A chalice given to me by a former church lay in pieces on the floor, as was a plaque that had been a gift from a family following a funeral I performed. Several things that had been on my desk were on the floor, and a coffee mug had fallen from my credenza.

A quick check of the other offices revealed that the damage was limited to my office. Apparently there had been no earthquake. My next thought was even more disturbing. Had I been the victim of vandalism? It was unthinkable, plus I had locked my door when I left on Thursday evening, and it was still locked when I arrived. I was stumped. That's when I saw the hole in the wall, near the floor adjacent to the exterior door. It was about four inches long and an inch high. And there were pieces of drywall scattered on the floor under the hole. It was apparent that something had chewed its way through from inside the wall and perused the shelves, credenza and my desk.

Our best guess is that a squirrel got into the attic, made its way down the inside of the wall, then chewed its way into my office. So Joshua Babin, our facilities manager, will set out traps and go hunting, so to speak. In the meantime, it didn't take long to pick up the broken pieces and put everything back where it belonged. In short order, my office looked as if nothing had happened.

But as I sat in my office on Sunday, getting ready to celebrate Communion at our 8:30 Covenant service, I started thinking about the words Jesus said as he passed the cup around the table to His disciples. *“Drink from this all of you. For this is my blood of a new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.”* And as I sat in my office on Sunday, I found the whole experience an apt metaphor for sin. It tends to creep in when our attention is focused elsewhere, much like that squirrel did. It doesn't destroy the room, it just bumps into things, knocking them askew. Some things get broken, most are merely knocked out of place. But before long, all you can see is how messed up everything is. All of the stuff is still there, but nothing seems as it should be.

This is my blood, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

We hear those words all the time, but they really do say it all. Because as we sip from the Cup of Salvation, Jesus is on his hands and knees picking up the pieces of our broken lives, putting things back together, putting everything back in its place. So that before long, it's hard to tell anything was ever amiss in the first place.

That's what forgiveness looks like.

See you Sunday.