

FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

Devotion | Week 4 Day 5

Travelers

In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. – Proverbs 3:6

You don't have to be a fan of poetry to be familiar with Robert Frost's classic poem, "The Road Not Taken." Written in 1920, Frost speaks of going on a walk where he comes upon divergent paths in the woods. He describes the struggle of choosing which of the two paths he should take. Both look interesting, neither seem threatening, and the destinations are the same. The only discernible difference is that one of the paths appears to have been chosen more often than the other. Those of us who are "quick-fixers," might suggest that he should just pick one path today and then walk down the other one when he returns. Frost actually considers this in the poem but then dismisses it. Life has a way of constantly moving us forward so the likelihood of him returning to this spot to walk the second path is minimal at best. Finally, he reveals his decision in the famous final words of the poem declaring:

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I – I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

I admittedly lack the lofty academic credentials necessary to analyze the deep meanings of the poem, but it seems that Frost is encouraging us to choose routes in our lives that are overlooked or undesired by the masses. Mankind's desire to take the easy route, the convenient path, and the popular choice often leaves us with a sterile and less exciting experience. Uncharted territory brings adventure and suspense, and in a world filled with people striving to be unique just like everyone else, Frost's advice is well taken.

For most people, anyway...

Consider for a moment those people whom God has truly created to be unique through a disability. The daily challenges they face place them firmly on "the road less traveled," whether they want to be there or not. Students with learning challenges recognize these differences and want nothing more than to be more like their friends and classmates; to not stand out from the crowd. If given the choice they'd gladly join the rest of the group on the mainstreamed path: reading at grade level, completing math assignments without extra time or accommodations, and reading aloud from the textbooks without fear.

As Christian educators we strive to help all of our students to learn and grow, reaching their full potential no matter which path they are following. God has placed our students onto their paths for reasons beyond our understanding. Instead of questioning His will we follow our call to stand alongside them, sharpening their skills and abilities so that they will have the tools needed to travel their road. We can offer guidance, build confidence, and lift them up in prayer, but ultimately they must travel that path on their own.

But understand that they won't be alone.

Scripture reminds us that no matter what path we walk God is walking with us. Deuteronomy 31:6 implores us to "be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread...for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." After all, we are his most precious creation; dearly loved and redeemed by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Something so valued would never be forgotten or abandoned. By faith, we have the confidence of knowing that while the road will be challenging, we will reach our destination by God's grace and love. This is a valuable lesson for our students, but also for us as educators who have been called to walk our own obstacle-filled roads. So with apologies to Frost, the ending of this poem for us as believers should more appropriately read...

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one God selected for me, Because He has made all the difference.