

## THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Tuesday, November 18

Reading: Proverbs 4:10-27

**Proverbs 4:11** *I instruct you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths...* **14** *Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers.*

Robert Frost's poem 'The Road Not Taken' was originally published in 1915. It ponders what life would be like if different choices were made. The poem concludes, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less traveled by And that has made all the difference." Like Frost's poem, Proverbs 4 describes two paths and we must make a choice which path to follow.

**THE STRAIGHT PATH (4:10-13, 18)** – The word "straight" also means upright. God's wisdom leads to right paths. "Hampered" means to be in distress or fear. Walking in wisdom will keep one from stumbling when tempted and they need not fear the judgment of the Lord the wicked will receive. We must always be on guard so as not to stray from God's path. Walking in wisdom yields an abundant and blessed life. Verse 18 gives a wonderful picture of this journey.

"The picture is one of the steady increase in the brightness and intensity of the daylight, from the first flickers of dawn to the brilliant radiance of the noonday sun which bathes the whole landscape in its light. With the light of wisdom to guide him and to light up the road ahead, the pilgrim can see where he is going, and knows where, and where not, to place his feet." <sup>1</sup>

**THE CROOKED PATH (4:14-19)** – Solomon warns us not to even "set foot on the path of the wicked." Sin is often enticing and pleasurable at first and it is easy to get sucked into it. But it always ends in disaster either in this life or the next. Better to "turn from it and go on your way" and avoid judgment. Those who take this path eat and sleep wickedness (16-17). Unlike the righteous who walk in the light, they live in "deep darkness."

"Therefore their way shall be to them like slippery paths in the darkness, into which they shall be driven and fall..."  
(Jeremiah 23:12)

Solomon ends by describing the total commitment it takes to walk in the path of wisdom. Our ears must always be ready to listen to wisdom's call. Our eyes must stay focused on wisdom's path. And our heart must memorize and meditate on wisdom's words (4:20-21). We must keep our mouth from speaking perverse and evil things and no deceitful words should pass over our lips (4:24). We must keep our eyes on the path ahead and not wander onto worthless or sinful things (4:25). We must be careful to keep our feet away from anything that will lead us down the wrong path. We must stay on course and not turn aside from following wisdom's path (4:26-27). In a word, our entire body, soul, and spirit must be dedicated to learning and obeying the wisdom of God, for it is our life (4:22). The key verse in this passage is "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (4:23).

If you have trusted Jesus as Savior, you are on the path leading to eternal glory with Christ. But we still make decisions along the way that can lead us to abundant life or spiritual dryness. What choices have you made recently? How have they affected your spiritual life and relationship with the Lord? Our choices can make all the difference.

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth T. Aitkens. Proverbs (The Daily Study Bible series), p. 57