

Monday, September 21, 2020

Stand at the crossroads, and look

- Pastor Hank French

Thus says the LORD:

*Stand at the crossroads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls (Jeremiah 6:16).*

I like this text from the prophet Jeremiah. It speaks to a reality we all live with. We all walk on one path or another and we all have the responsibility to choose which path we will walk. There are many paths to walk through life—some of them good and some of them not so good. And there are many forces and people and faiths and ideologies that want to persuade us, if not force us, to walk their path. We should not give up the freedom to choose for ourselves.

We “stand at the crossroads” where many paths diverge in different directions and we need to decide for ourselves which way we are going to go.

Robert Frost, in his poem *The Road Less Traveled*, wrote:

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

The choices we make do make a difference—for good or for ill. And it is important to remember that choices can be changed.

The poet and writer Maya Angelou put it nicely: “Each of us has the right and responsibility to assess the roads that lie ahead, and those over which we have traveled, and if the future looms ominous or unpromising, and the roads back uninviting, then we need to gather our resolve and, carrying only the necessary baggage, step off that road into another direction.”

Choices which we all have to make for ourselves. Is the path we are on, is the road we are traveling, one which can be called the “good way” which brings “rest to [our] souls”? That’s a question worth thinking about.

I can only answer that question for myself. It seems to me that no matter what vocational path, or relationship path, or political path we have chosen to follow—and there are many—they all need to be grounded in the “ancient path” of the Hebrew prophets and Jesus, the path of justice and love, the path of compassion and mercy, the path of forgiveness and reconciliation. That’s “where the good way lies;” that’s where we will find “rest for [our] souls.”

Prayer: Lord, lead me on the ancient path that leads to the good way. Amen.