**THE ROAD NOT TAKEN**

***Still ‘Tis God’s Hand That Leadeth Me***

While I am by no stretch of the imagination an expert of poetry, most of us have at least heard of Robert Frost. He lived from 1874 to 1963, becoming the most loved American poet in American history. In high school English Lit class we had to read, and memorize, some of his better known poems. Perhaps his most famous is also his most quoted. It is titled *The Road Not Taken*. There have been spin-offs by the dozens, including M. Scott Peck’s motivational best-seller *The Road Less Traveled*. Allow me to draw you into the world of poetry, with the intention of making a Biblical application. Take your time. Read Mr. Frost’s poem to see if you know what he was saying:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both;  
And be one traveler, long I stood, And looked down one as far as I could;  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair, And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear; Though as for that the passing there,  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay, In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

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.

My interpretation: A man stands at the crossroads of life. He looks down the two roads, knowing he must make a decision. He first thinks, “Well, if I choose this road and it turns out wrong I can always come back and start over.” But then he realizes, once chosen, “I doubt I shall ever come back.” In his old age he will look back on this decision and “sigh.” While both roads were equally traveled (“had worn them about the same”), he will tell others who ask him why he chose the one he did, “I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.” In other words, it was a coin flip (both roads were equally traveled) and he comforts himself, perhaps with a lie, that he chose wisely. For who knows what his life would have become if he had chosen *The Road Not Taken*? He didn’t know. The poem’s basic meaning is (at least to me), “Life is a roll of the dice.” Or, as Yogi Berra said with his comical twist, “when you come to a fork in the road, take it.”

Robert Frost’s poem, while easy to memorize with its cadence and rhyme, makes our life’s journey nothing more than a luck of the draw, a coin flip. Heads, I win. Tails, I lose. Since I can’t foresee all of life’s twists and turns I can’t possibly make an accurate decision as to which road I should take. I’ll just choose one and hope for the best. At the end of life I’ll look back and with a sigh hope I made the right choice.

I beg to differ. Strongly! Mr. Frost was a very confused man religiously. He lived, and died, wondering about God (his father was a religious skeptic, his mother a believer in spiritual mysticism – God speaks through wind in the trees). The Christian can come to the two diverging roads and *KNOW*, with full inspired revelation in his hands, which road to take. Truth is not relative, but absolute. “*Thy Word is truth*!” (Jn. 17:17).

It is the curse of our age, due to our educational and religious systems, that secular humanism has reduced the Bible to “the ten suggestions” – not the ten commandments. We are daily confronted with the propaganda that morals are not set in stone. “Truth” is only what you think it is, not some *one-time-for-all-time* code of ethics spoken from an omniscient God in heaven.

Dear friend, hear this: “*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free*” (John 8:32 ESV). While Mr. Frost could not see beyond the distant roads to know how his life would turn out, the Christian has a clear road map that clearly reveals how his / her life will end. No, I don’t know all the twists and turns regarding the thousands of choices that lie ahead, but I do know how my story closes when I take my last breath. It will not be with a “*sigh*” – wondering what might have been, but with a smile – for “*I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day*” (2 Tim. 1:12). I can’t see even as far as to tomorrow (Jam. 4:13-14), but my Father can, and He has given me “*a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*” (Psa. 119:105).

Joseph Gilmore, like Robert Frost, was also a poet. But he was also a preacher. In 1862, during the darkest days of the Civil War when the world seemed to be exploding apart, he penned a poem based on Psalm 23. His wife, unknown to him, sent it to a local newspaper to be published. William Bradbury, the hymn writer, saw it and put it to music. It became an instant classic. It remains among the most popular hymns in Christianity due to its uplifting faith in God’s guiding hand. The title? ***He Leadeth Me***

He leadeth me, O blessed thought! O words with heavenly comfort fraught!  
What-e’re I do, where-e’re I be, Still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me.

Sometimes ‘mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden’s bowers bloom,  
By water’s still, o’er troubled sea, Still ‘tis God’s hand that leadeth me.

Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine, Nor ever murmur nor repine;  
Content, whatever lot I see, Since ‘tis my God that leadeth me.

And when my task on earth is done, When by Thy grace the victory’s won,  
E’en death’s cold wave I will not flee, Since God through Jordan leadeth me.

He leadeth me, He leadeth me, By His own hand He leadeth me;  
His faithful follower I would be, For by His hand He leadeth me.

Until tomorrow… as you come to life’s fork in the road, don’t look ahead, look above. Reach up and grab God’s hand. He will lead you through Jordan to the promised land! “…and ***that*** has made all the difference!”

I love you. - Rick