15. The First Gleam of Dawn

Proverbs 4:18  NIV  “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.”

Proverbs 4:18  KJV  “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

The picture that captivates me in this verse is the path. While it is technically appropriate to call it a path, it doesn’t capture the sense of the verse at all. Here in California, a path is usually primarily conspicuous for its definition.

Supposed you want to go for a hike in the hills above Laguna Nigel. There will be a beginning point to the path, and it is usually a loop bringing you back to the same place. The web will tell you how long it is and the degree of difficulty. And, along the way there will be odious signs telling you to stay on the path.

California hiking trails tend to lack mystique. They are plebian. You go from A to B and check it off your cool cat check list.

Now England! That is another story. You can hike far and wide on narrow paths that go back for centuries. You wander through people’s back yards and through ancient high places. Your path is intersected by other paths that invite you to wander off at some tangent. The scenery is variegated as are the other people you meet along the way.

The South West Coast Path in England will give you 630 miles of coastline and is billed as one of the top walks in the world!

THIS is more of the picture captured by this verse. The focus is not primarily on the righteousness life. This is not a blessing for the pious monk who has kept his habit clean of all carnal activities for two weeks.

Not a bit.
This is a blessing for the man on a journey – for the individual who is living life with intensity, wrestling with the grime of reality and seeking to impose the life of God on his patch of land.

This is a blessing for those whose journey has more twists and turns than straight patches; for the man or woman who knows what it is like to make a course correction, and another and another!

This is for our tribe. People on a journey. A grand journey. A messy one. One marked by the triumphs and treasures the godly monk never knew.

And notice if you will, that it is not the man on the path who shines with divine light. Not at all. It is the path that shines.

Again, this speaks of our tribe. We are trailblazers. Where there is no path, we brave the unknown and forge a small trail through the pain and mire of brokenness and sin.

Ah, but where we walked with such pain and sacrifice, we see the pioneers coming along behind us, building and implementing where we only broke trail. And the tiny trace of our first efforts becomes defined by those who follow, until anyone can find this pathway of light for those who are not faint of heart.

So I invite our tribe to pray big this week. THIS is our blessing, our world.

Bless the paths we walk in our defiant, delightful journey to immensity, noble subjects who never look back.

Bless those paths with becoming incredibly light charged, so those coming behind find their way joyously through the fields we stumbled through.

Let the light shine ever brighter!

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