

TWO ROADS

The Road Not Taken (Robert Frost)

Frost actually intended this now-famous and oft-quoted poem as a gentle jab at his great friend and fellow poet Edward Thomas, with whom he used to take walks through the forest. Thomas always complained at the end that they should have taken a different path. Frost often seemed amused at the interpretation of the poem as inspirational.

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 marked 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.

It is just over a century since the miraculous outpouring that changed the face of modern Christianity forever, and the world's half-billion Spirit-filled believers have much to be thankful for. Once confined to humble quarters "on the wrong side of the tracks," Pentecostal churches today are beautifully designed, comfortably furnished and tastefully decorated. Our preaching is intellectually engaging, powerfully presented and theologically sound; our singing is skillfully executed, wonderfully anointed and enthusiastically received. When you stop to think about it, you have to admit that the modern Pentecostal movement has made a lot of progress in a hundred years.

Even more significant is the fact that the baptism of the Holy Spirit – once rejected by every mainline denomination – is now widely accepted, highly regarded and fervently desired even by those whose own forebears mocked and disdained it. Sincere seekers everywhere are finding that they need a Spirit-led relationship that allows interaction with God instead of a tradition-fed religion that merely gives them information about Him. And in response to this unabashed hunger, God is fulfilling His Word and pouring out His Spirit in unprecedented ways.

But if you can hear what the Spirit is saying to the church in the last of the last days, you will recognize with our forebears the dangers inherent in our success. It is possible to operate in Pentecostal *style* without embracing a Pentecostal *lifestyle*. It is possible to inherit the *blessings* of our elders without shouldering the *burden* they carried for a lost world. It is possible to believe Apostolic *doctrine* without embracing Apostolic *dedication*. It is possible to practice *praising* God but neglect *praying* to Him. It is possible, perhaps even probable – but it is not inevitable!

Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7 by comparing, not unbelievers and believers, but TWO KINDS OF BELIEVERS ... they walk two roads with vastly different destinations, they produce two kinds of fruit with vastly different consequences, and they build two kinds of houses with vastly different stamina in the storms of life!

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

There are two roads in the last days ... and you have to choose one!

2 Timothy 3:1-5 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

THERE ARE TWO DIVERGING STREAMS OF PROPHECY IN SCRIPTURE THAT SPEAK OF “THAT DAY” ...

2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for **that day** shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so **that day** come upon you unawares.

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Isaiah 25:9 And it shall be said in **that day**, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Zechariah 12:8 In **that day** shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

Isaiah 19:19 In **that day** shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD.

Zechariah 14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in **that day** shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against **that day**.

2 Timothy 4:8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at **that day**: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

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Matthew 24:10-13 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

One of the signs of the end time is that **MANY WILL BE OFFENDED!** These are obviously Christians, because their love (agape) will wax cold. Many Christians walk in a selfish love that is easily disappointed when expectations are not met.

Notice that Jesus warns of false prophets immediately after His prophecy of many being offended. Jesus called false prophets “wolves in sheep’s clothing” in Matthew 7:15. Wolves always prey on wounded and young sheep, not healthy and strong ones. False prophets tell people what they want to hear, not what they need to hear. **Offended people are easy prey in the last days!**

I AM AN INCURABLE OPTIMIST WHEN IT COMES TO THE CHURCH!

ILLUSTRATION: A SOLDIER IN THE ARMY OF GOD

I am a soldier in the army of my God! The Lord Jesus Christ is my Commanding Officer! The Holy Bible is my code of conduct! Faith, prayer and the word are my weapons of warfare! I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire! I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity! I will either retire in this army at the rapture or die in this Army; but I will not get out, sell out, be talked out or pushed out! I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable!

If my God needs me, I am there! If He needs me in Sunday School, to teach children, work with youth, help adults or just sit and learn, He can use me, because I am there! I am a soldier! I am not a baby! I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up or pepped up!

I am a soldier! No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me or lure me! I am a soldier! I am not a wimp! I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name and building His kingdom!

No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts! I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for or catered to! I am committed! I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around! I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside! I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit! When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing! If I end up with nothing, I will still come out even! I will win! My God will supply all my needs!

I am more than a conqueror! I will always triumph! I can do all things through Christ! Devils cannot defeat me! People cannot disillusion me! Weather cannot weary me! Sickness cannot stop me! Battles cannot beat me! Money cannot buy me! Governments cannot silence me and HELL CANNOT HANDLE ME!

I am a soldier! Even death cannot destroy me! For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me to a captain and then bring me back to rule this world with Him!

*I'm a soldier in the army
And I'm marching, claiming victory
I will not give up, I will not turn around
I'm a soldier, marching heaven bound.*

2 Kings 7:1-3 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? ... *(The improbable made the impossible possible!)*

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