

## Who's Afraid of...Getting Lost!

Psalm 25:1-10

June 16, 2019

### **"Not all who wander are lost!"**

I have always enjoyed this statement of adventure and journey in life. In fact, my wife bought me this t-shirt with the saying on it and a picture of a pair of hiking boots. I have on my new hiking boots with my hiking pants as my wandering robe. I enjoy my next step of wandering in the woods or whatever trail I get to travel.

Does anyone know the origin of this life journeying phrase? I would have thought it would have been some great adventurer/backpacker like John Muir. I googled it and was shocked to find that it was a line of a poem from, *The Lord of the Rings*, by J.R. Tolkien.

### **"Not all who wander are lost!"**

However, reality of life tells us, Some who wander do get lost!

I was intrigued by the story of Amanda Eller who recently was rescued after being lost for 17 days in the Makawao Forest Reserve in Maui, Hawaii. In an interview she made this dramatic statement, *"Down to life and death and I had to choose. I chose life!"*

She shared how she was simply going for a 3 1/2 mile run on the trail. However, due to trees down over the trail from a storm she got disoriented and frustrated. After about a mile and a half she realized she was lost, so she sat down to meditate and try to reorient herself. By the way, that is the first thing rescue expert, Robert Klester, says you should do when you find yourself lost on a trail...sit down, relax and reorient.

Amanda couldn't find her way back to her car where she had left her cell phone and water bottle. She confessed her irresponsibility of not taking these essential tools of hiking with her. In her disorientation she chose the wrong way and went that way. 17 days later, after breaking a bone in her leg and surviving on water from a water fall and native berries, she was rescued.

She was fortunate to have life after being lost. Not all who wander and get lost are able to choose life.

Today we ask ourselves, those of us who have and will get lost in life's adventure, "Who's afraid of getting lost?"

How do we get lost?

I know the wives are all over this one after traveling with their husbands who always seem to get lost.

How do we get lost?

We don't ask for directions! Men, we truly believe we have installed in us a God-given GPS. I can assure you we don't! Take it from one who has wandered and has gotten lost.

We get lost because we don't look at a map or use our mapquest app. Even if we have a map we don't follow it or we think we know a better way than mapquest.

We get lost by not paying attention to where we are.

Not all who wander are lost, but usually those who wander and don't listen to directions or follow a map will eventually get lost. Adventurers who think their way is the way will often find themselves lost.

We are bombarded today with relentless appeals to go in various directions. The direction distractions are t.v. advertising, political correctness, religion, social media appeals, social groups with agendas and people with self-entitlements.

Add to that decisions we make, must make, concerning our job, our family, our money, our time, the world we adventure through these days and we can easily become lost in our wandering. We desperately seek for someone to rescue us, to show us the way, the right way to wander in our adventure of life.

The bible is faithful to show us that all God's people who wander do get lost.

The prophet Isaiah spoke this truth from God when he proclaimed,

**"We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong on Him, on Him."** (Isaiah 53:6 Message bible)

We all have wandered and we all have gotten lost along the trail. How did we get lost? We decided to do our own thing. We chose to go our own way!

A follower of Jesus, Peter, put it this way when he described the people who chose to follow culture's corrupt ways, **"They've left the main road and are directionless..."** (II Peter 2:15a Message bible)

So how did the people who wandered in Peter's day, the day of the Early Christian Church beginning get lost? They took a side path of their own choosing and likes. They believed their way was greater than God's.

How does a person who wanders in life and gets off the side trail, lost in life from God, feel?

I came across this prayer that begins to describe the lost feeling of a wanderer from God.

*"Dear God, I'm spiraling. I'm floating. I'm spinning. I'm losing sight of you and your love in my life. I keep trying to stay focused on the person I'm supposed to be, the person you've created me to be, but right now I just feel so lost. I need your help.*

*I don't know when this all began---the feeling of separation from you, the fear, the exhaustion, the struggle to just get out of bed in the morning , the hopelessness when it comes to my purpose, my place in the universe. I used to be so put together...*

*God I need a reminder of who I am and where I'm going. I need a reminder of who you are and have always been. I need a reminder of the powerful, loving Savior I serve and the incredible things He's forever doing in the lives of those who follow Him.*

*Bring me light when I'm in darkness and a path to follow when I feel like I'm wandering in circles..."*

I don't know about you but I have in some form or another prayed that prayer of being on a path to nowhere...finding myself lost in my wandering in life.

The Apostle Paul was on that path and Jesus found him and redirected his life. Paul then issued this challenge to the Christians:

***"I want you to get out there and walk---better yet, run!--- on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with HUMILITY and DISCIPLINE--- not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love..."*** (Ephesians 4:1-3 Message bible)

The path to nowhere! How do we find ourselves on this path? How did we who wander get lost on this path to nowhere? There were two words that give direction to the path to somewhere, to God...**humility** and **discipline**. The opposite direction of these two words gets one to the path to nowhere. Those words would be **pride** and **personal lifestyle choices**.

We seek our ways in life. We think our personal preferences in how to live our lives is greater than God's. We allow pride and personal desires guide us down this path to nowhere. I would imagine we are familiar with parts of this trail or path to nowhere.

God desires us to seek His way while He can be found. He desires us to forsake our wicked self-pride ways and turn to God's path of mercy. He reminds us through the prophet, ***"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*** (Isaiah 55:6-9)

As most of you know I have this desire to hike the Appalachian Trail. For anyone who seeks to thru hike the AT there is a book that is recommended by those who have done the entire AT. I have a copy of it with me: [The Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers' Companion](#). This happens to be the 2017 guide book. Each year a new updated book is published. There is a wealth of information in this book for each step of the 2200 mile trail. The wanderer is shown the mileage, the elevation, locations of shelters and water supplies as well as towns along the way. It is a must!

What a foolish wanderer to take off on the trail without this guide book, this companion.

There is a guidebook, a wanderer's companion when it comes to following the path Jesus sets before us...I have a copy of it with me...the bible. It's info is the same yesterday today and forever.

David the psalmist described God's Word as a light for the path he walks in following God's way. (Ps. 119: 105-112) God's truth guides. His truth keeps us from stumbling over rocks and roots along the way. How foolish it is for those who follow Jesus to wander in life without it. It is a necessary tool to keep us on the path to somewhere.

Along the Appalachian Trail there are painted white blazes rectangles 4 inches by 6 inches about every 75 feet. They mark the path, the way to go. The companion guide suggests that if you go more than a quarter of a mile without seeing a white blaze then turn around and go back till you find one and follow them closely. As long as you pay attention to the white blazes you will not get lost as you wander along the AT.

We read earlier how the psalmist warned us to, "**Follow the covenant signs, read the chartered directions.**" (Psalm 25:10 Message bible)

The choice is to follow God's signs and directions, His Truths, or head down that path to nowhere.

Jesus made it clear one day when He called his disciples to follow him. Thomas spoke up and said they didn't know where Jesus was heading. He asked Jesus, "**So how can we know the way?**" Jesus gave him this companion guide direction: "**I am the Way, and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**" (John 14:6 NIV)

You and I wake up each new day, each next step in our journey of life, with a choice:

God's way or My way?

Amanda chose life over death when she was lost.

The path to nowhere is the of path pride and self-seeking life chooses.

The path to somewhere is the path of humility and daily discipline in God's companion guidebook...His Word. It is the path that chooses Jesus!

Not all who wander are lost...those who wander life's journey with Jesus!

We don't walk alone!

He leads us!

The next step comes with that choice.

Not all who wander are lost!

The next step of your life is always before you!

What path will you take?

Not all who wander are lost!