

Eugene Peterson speaks of our faith journey as just that- a journey. A road trip. Specifically: **“Long obedience in the same direction.”**

It takes a journey. There may be no change in geography, but there's a journey of the heart. It sounds cliché, but the image of the Christian life as a journey captures our experience of following Christ. Navigating mountains and valleys. Journeys that involve in momentum, ruts, action, stops and starts, detours, delays, and trips into the unknown.

Our choice becomes the following: settle for what we know, or follow Christ onto the paths he has for us. Often we avoid all of the above by living in the familiar. The known. The safe. The comfortable.

We figure that's the safe route. But in light of eternity and God's purposes that's the small route. Your comfort zone often doesn't just keep you safe. It keeps you small.

Jesus said famously to his disciples: “Follow Me.”

God's invitations in the OT aren't much different:

#### **Isaiah 48:17**

*This is what the LORD says--your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: "I am the LORD your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow."*

#### **Jeremiah 6:16**

*This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."*

God has provided pathways to His promises, His peace, and His purpose for His people. Each week this summer we'll look at stories of God's people in motion on His paths in the Bible, and the principles for our path they can teach us.

The Israelites leaving Egypt had a 240 mile journey to the Promised Land. One could walk that in less than two weeks.

**Deuteronomy 1:2**– *“It is 11 days’ journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kabesh Barnea”*

But it took them how long? FORTY YEARS.

Why did it take 40 years to go a straight-line distance of 240 miles?

They were stuck going in circles, and a 2 week trip took 40 years.

Some of us have been following Jesus for 10 years. Some shorter, some longer.

But we don't have a 10 year faith, we have a 1 year old faith lived 10 times over.

Some of us get stuck in a rut, wandering in circles. The same broken habits. The same stumbling blocks. Never stepping into the starting blocks. Afraid to make the bold step of faith.

So our growth stays stunted.

*At times there are things in your life that may not keep you from ETERNITY in the next life  
But they will keep you from MATURITY in this life*

We have to apply the first Road Rule: **Break the Circuit.**

Point A to Point B vs. Circuit Races (laps in a circle)

Hebrews 12 talks about running with perseverance the race marked out for us. That race isn't a circuit. We're called to a point B.

**Deuteronomy 2:3-** *“you've circled this mountain long enough. Now turn North”*  
Break this circuit. Stop making circles and make your way to the Promised Land.

Again - our journey may not be geographical, but we're called to spiritual movement to maturity. Just as we'd expect to grow physically, we're called to grow spiritually.

**Hebrews 5:11-6:3 (READ)**

*“All over again... let us leave... and go on to maturity...”*

The author is directly confronting the problem of spiritual immaturity. He's saying you've been engaged in the Christian walk long enough to be teaching others, but you're nothing more than infants needing to be fed. Why? Because you've been surviving on a minimalist Christianity, rather than stepping into maturity. To pull from Deuteronomy's imagery, this author is saying look- you guys have circled this mountain long enough. Stop going in circles. Get moving. Get growing.

But this gets us to the second rule we have to consider: **KNOW YOUR DESTINATION.**

**What's your Point B?**

It sounds simple. But if you don't know where you're going, you'll end up going in circles. *Think about the despair in movies when people lost in wilderness realize they're going in circles...*

**This is reality.**

A study in 2009 observed two groups of people in the wilderness- one group lost in a forest in Germany and others lost in a specific region of the Saharan desert. It found people- when lost, and especially without the help of the sun or moon - go in circles.

**KNOW YOUR DESTINATION =**

Our point B is this: to be LIKE Christ in this life and to be WITH Him in the next.  
“with him in the next” speaks to the Hope of Heaven

Steph always wants to know the end of the book first.

A story is only as good as the ending.

I'll never subscribe to the practice, but I see the reasoning.

It allows you to enjoy the journey without dreading what could be ahead.

In life, with anticipation of what's ahead, we can have the heart and hope needed for the journey.

Otherwise, especially in life, it becomes a rat race, an endless struggle... and for what?  
Is this all there is? Is this as good as it gets?

But Colossians 1:5 says - ***“Faith & love... spring from the hope stored up for you in Heaven.”***  
If you take away the hope of Heaven, then our path in this life is nothing but a death march.  
If we believe this life is our one shot at happiness, we’ll live desperate and demanding, and eventually... despaired and depressed.  
But our path doesn’t end here.

***“God has also set eternity in the hearts”*** – Ecclesiastes 3:11

When the world doesn’t deliver for our desires again and again, the lie of the enemy is: ***“Things will never change”*** – He uses the deception to keep us frozen in the present, stuck in a rut, moving in circles.

We must renew our vision for what’s ahead. Point B.  
That things will not always be like the present. Jesus doesn’t just prophetically state the Earth will pass away, He also promises to ***“make all things NEW”***

Faith looks back at Jesus’ empty grave and finds courage.  
Hope looks ahead to Jesus’s promises and gives us the fuel to keep going.

In Hebrews 12, after stating we’re called to run with endurance the race God has set before us, It gives us the gamechanger: “keep your eyes on Jesus.”

### **Hebrews 12:1-2**

“For the joy set before Him” // “that exhilarating finish in and with God”

Heaven – What will it be like? “No eye has seen and no ear has heard” 1 Cor 2:9  
You can’t out-imagine or out-dream God... it’ll be better.  
Those longings for intimacy, beauty, and adventure that seem insatiable and impossible in this life... will find their fulfillment in Heaven.

**Pilgrim’s Progress** begins as a man longs for eternal life, and he knows that to stay where he is would mean unfulfilled desires, and ultimately death. With no greater sense of direction than the knowledge he needs to find the road to Celestial City, he rejects the comforts of his smaller story and sets out. But he hadn’t gone far from his door before the family and friends of his smaller life tried to lure him back, crying out all the threats and excuses they could think of.  
“But the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying ‘Life! Life! Eternal Life!’”

This man becomes the pilgrim and his journey is the story of our own.

But too often we’re like another literary figure, **Robinson Crusoe**.  
He wasn’t a pilgrim. He was a survivor. Living a small life waiting for rescue.  
We don’t blame him for his actions. He was shipwrecked waiting for rescue.

But we shouldn't live like him because our situation is different. We've BEEN rescued. Jesus died to set us free, and to set us free to follow him. And we aren't called to hunker down and survive. We're called to a journey.

Jesus' invitation – come, FOLLOW me – indicates a journey He's calling us on. We don't just sit on our couch and wait for the hope of Heaven. We aren't called to complacency, but to transformation, looking more like Him in THIS life.

How do we walk in sanctification and break free from our ruts?

**12 Pathways** – “the ancient paths” that make us like Christ as we follow Him. If we're following Christ we will walk these out, and as we do so we'll develop the virtues that make us look more like Jesus.

In the limited time left I want to focus on reaching... We aren't called on a solo journey. We'll dig into this more next week. As we strike out on our path, we'd do well to remember **Roman's Road**.

Romans starts in 1:20-21 – God created man, the earth, and everything to glorify Him. **Romans 3:23** – PROBLEM - “all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God.”  
- We are sinners in need of salvation, not just mistaker-makers in need of correction.

**Romans 6:23** – PERIL - “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus.”

**Romans 5:8** – PROVISION - “God demonstrates his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Jesus died for us.”

**Romans 10:9** – RESPONSE - “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans also highlights how salvation is for many.

*Romans 1:16, Rom 2:9-11, Rom 3:9, 29-30, Rom 10:12*

Again and again- it's not just for Jews, but also Gentiles. Not just for me, but for we. Not just for us, but for them. May we have Roman's Road memorized as we follow Christ, because God wants us to invite others to merge onto it.

Each step of the journey each day brings me closer to home. To point B. To looking more like Christ. To spending eternity with Him in Heaven. May we press onward.

One day we'll hit a bend in the road and our finish line will appear. After years of exile we'll meet our eternal home.

*Philippians 3:13-14 - Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*