



Fork-in-the-Road

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We are like pilgrims through life. We came from nothing and are here some sixty, seventy or eighty, possibly more if our strength endures (Psalm 90:10) and then we shall no longer be here. So here we are as pilgrims through life, restless indeed, looking, searching all the time for that which will make us truly and fully ourselves. **Which Route Are We On?** The way is often rough for a pilgrim and hard going, but pilgrims must keep going resolutely and courageously. They are lost if they stop looking for the right way to reach their destination. But there is one who is on the look-out to guide us: it is the Son of God, who is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). One of the best known pilgrim routes is the Camino de Santiago trail otherwise known as The Way of St. James. The *Camino de Santiago* is not just one route, it's a network of routes. Thousands of pilgrims walked from their homes in Europe, all coming together like

branches of a tree to arrive to their final halt, the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

There are seven well-established routes of St James from start to finish:

- The Silver Way – 1,000 km
- The French Way – 780 km
- The Portuguese Way – 600 km
- The Northern Way – 466 km
- The Original Way 315 km
- The English Way – 120 km
- The Camino Fisterra-Muxía – 28.2 km

It is wise to stay on the routes mapped out. Going on our own will be countless heart breaking dead-end routes before the right one was established in the first place. Those pilgrims who have embarked on their pioneer attempt had done a time tested route that had all the essentials that would point to their final destination. And you could count on the fact that those trailblazing pioneers had marked the route for those of us who would follow after them. The route then was the path of wisdom. If you stick to the route you would be sure to find food, drink, shelter and resting places along the way. Let us pause here to say that we too must be careful to stay on the original trails and the proven route that have been marked so carefully for us.

WE MUST STAY ON THE ROUTE AS THERE ARE NO SHORTCUTS!

Which Route Are We On?

We can live a wasted life. We can live a wise life. It all comes down to the path or the route we choose to walk on.

Every morning when we get out of bed we choose the route that we will travel all over again. We can't really complain about life. We know that life is not a bed of roses. We really can't complain. GOD HAS BEEN GOOD! But then when we look back, we see old age has crept up and our hair has turned gray. The eyes don't work the way they used to. The strength doesn't surge the way it had.

And we humbly ask God to be as faithful to us at the end of the route as He was at the beginning. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"* (Psalm 119:105). Over and over again the Bible speaks of the trail. Job, in the midst of all his sufferings and hardships, knew that he had to stay on the route if he wanted to survive.

"My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and have not turned aside" (Job 23:11). Solomon, the wisest man on the face of the earth, had plenty to say about life on the route. *"Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evildoers"* (Proverbs 4:14).

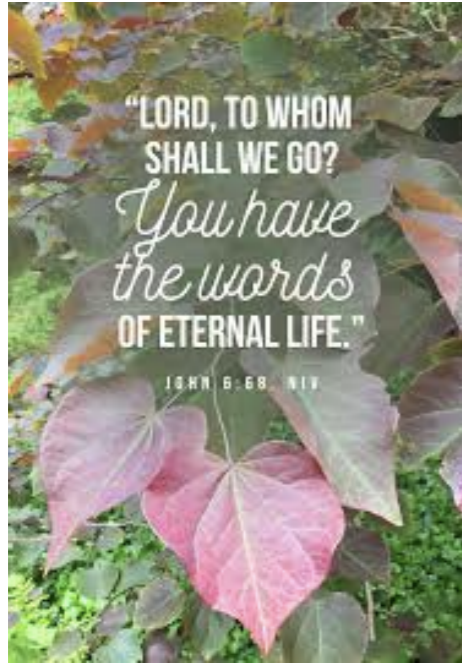
"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day" (Proverbs 4:18).

"Keep straight the path of your feet, and all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil" (Proverbs 4:26-27).

"Make Your way straight before me" (Psalm 5:8)



Which route are we on?



Jesus taught about two of these trails in the Sermon on the Mount. Enter through the **narrow gate**; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the **road is hard** that leads to life, and there are few who find it (Matthew 7:13-14). Many take the **wide route**, a ten-lane highway. There is plenty of space to spread out and get comfortable. But that's the route that leads to destruction. Stick with this route and sooner or later we will crash

and burn. It's the route of disaster. It's the route of

a wasted life. The **narrow gate** is the right route. It doesn't even begin to resemble the wide route. It is not a highway with landscaping in the middle. In fact, it can be a very difficult route to be on. We will find it monotonous at times. We will find it frustrating at times. There will be times where we will be struggling and wrestling with discouragement. It will cause us to ask the question: *"Is it really worth it to be on this route?"* Why? Because this route, though difficult and narrow and rough, is the route of wisdom. It's the right route. If we are not on the right route we will get to the end of our days and look back over the route and realise that we have wasted our life and we don't want to do that. At this very moment in our life we are following a route. It's a route that we have chosen. If we are on the right route, be careful to stay there. If we are on the wrong route, there is still time to change directions, when faced with a **fork-in-the-road**. The third option is a **shortcut**. It's sort of a phantom route that always promises more than it can deliver.

There's always one thing that we can be sure of with a shortcut and that is, that sooner or later it merges with the route to destruction. Solomon tells us about the route called a shortcut in the book of Proverbs. There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way of death (Proverbs 14:12). Sometimes there is a way that seems to be right, but in the end is the way of death (Proverbs 16:25).

This so-called shortcut was nothing more than an untried, untested route that had been successfully navigated in the past, only by a few foolish people and they soon realised they had been trapped and dangerously short of provisions. Satan has similar plans for us. He wants us to pursue a mirage that he will conjure up somewhere along the route of our life. He will promise us something "better." Go ahead. Take his shortcut. We will die of spiritual starvation, and the frostbite of our cold heart will maim them emotionally for the rest of our lives.



Shortcuts are slippery routes. They always look better in the beginning but they can mess up our life in a hurry and lead to more problems than we could possibly imagine.

There is no shortcut to holiness. For it is written, *“You shall be holy, for I am holy”* (1 Peter 1:16). God still considers sin to be sin. Just because the standards of the world have changed doesn’t mean God’s standards have changed.

There are no shortcuts in living for God. We must do it with all of our heart, soul, strength (Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37). We can’t just offer Him spare time when we have it, but He must be first in our life.

There are no shortcuts in getting to Heaven. It’s God’s way or no way. But the enemy will always show up and offer us another way – another route that will be remarkably attractive. Satan is a liar. He’s always been a liar and he will always be a liar. Jesus called him the father of lies (cf John 8:44). Satan is so brazen that he even offered Jesus a shortcut. He actually offered him three different shortcuts to what he called a better route. If Satan tempted Jesus, don’t you think he will offer us a shortcut as well?

The shortcut will always look so good at the beginning. But in the end, we will pay for it with our life. We have talked about three routes.

Each one of them has a final destination and we are on one of these routes right now.

- The broad route that leads to destruction.
- The narrow route that leads to life
- The shortcut that always dumps us on the road to destruction.

Which route are we on?

While on the road we cannot help wondering about God. What is He like? What does He want for us? What does He expect of us? Life is a pilgrimage. We are on the march, and sooner or later we shall reach our destination. That destination we call heaven.

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”
(John 6:68)

**Make my way straight Lord,
let not my feet stray
from the truth I know
let not my heart sway.
Let my mind not wander,
from the path I’m on
let me to Your ways
be faithfully drawn.
Make my way straight Lord,
let not my faith shift
from Your guidance
let not my trust drift.
Let my hope not waver,
from depending on You
let me heed Your direction
in everything I do.
Make my way straight Lord,
let me on You be dependent
in all of Your ways Lord
let me be obedient!**

~ Deborah Ann