

WEEKLY MEDITATION

THE DESTINATION AND THE PATH

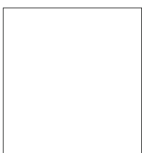
Looking solely to my **destination**, and paying no attention to my **path**, last July I fell down several stairs in a restaurant, breaking my foot and severely spraining my ankle, resulting in months on crutches.

As Christians, our **destination** is heaven. St. Cyprian of Carthage urges us to “desire, not the kingdom of earth, but the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus tells us (Jn 14:2), “In my Father’s house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you.” We must keep our eyes on our destination, for direction, for purpose, for guidance. We accomplish this by attending Liturgy – Sundays and other services – letting the worship and the hymns sink deep into ourselves, and tasting of heaven in the Divine Liturgy.

The **path** to our ultimate destination is our daily, hour-by-hour life. But that path must be God’s pathway (“the path of Thy commandments” Ps 118:35) if it is to lead to our heavenly destination. “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life” (Rev 22:14). And it is needful to keep watching the path one is on, as Prov 4:26 says, “Ponder the path of thy feet,” so one remains on the true path. We watch our path by means of the personal spiritual disciplines. We need to pray daily, both morning and evening; “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord [to pray]... and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths” (Is 2:3). We need to read the Scriptures daily; “Thy word is a ... light unto my path” (Ps 118:105). And we need other disciplines, too, such as fasting and confession.

It is not easy to be continually mindful of our destination and also to watch our path. Sin and the self-centered world are constant distractions and obstacles. “The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble” (Prov 4:19). Perseverance and much effort are needed; the Scriptures use verbs such as strive, be vigilant, fight, finish [the] course, wrestle, gird up (Luke 13:24, I Pet 1:13; 5:8, II Tim 4:7-8, Eph 6:12). Attention to both destination and path is needful – to the former so one can keep going toward it, and to the latter so one doesn’t stumble and fall. “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life” (I Tim 6:12). May the Lord our God show us the way in which we should walk, and grant us mercy to keep our eyes fixed on His Kingdom.

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