

Charles Andrew Stanley was born in 1958 and is the son of Dr. Charles F. Stanley, the founder of InTouch Ministries. “Andy” Stanley is a pastor in Georgia, and the author of nearly 20 books.

In his book “The Principle of the Path,” subtitled “How to get from where you are to where you want to be,” he lays out that principal which holds that:

*Direction – not intention – determines our destination.*

As a local example, if you wanted to get to Caro and got on M-81, but if you drove west – it doesn’t matter what you want ... you’re going to end up in Saginaw.

And if you got on M-81 and headed east – hoping to go to Frankemuth ... you’d soon enough end up in Cass City.

Stanley posits that this is a ‘principal’ ... that is, an immutable law of cause and effect. It’s not a question of being ‘right or wrong’ - rather, it’s a question of heading in the ‘right or wrong’ direction.

Today is the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed - customarily known as “All Souls Day.” In fact, not only is the entire month of November dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory ... but for the next eight days, the Church encourages us to visit cemeteries and church buildings ... as little pilgrimages ... with the purpose of praying for the Holy Souls.

Traditionally, sermons in November focused on “The Four Last Things” ... which are: Death. Judgment. Heaven. and Hell.

Whether we’re 8 weeks old, 8 years old, 18 years old, or 80 years old ... from the day we’re born, we’re heading toward death. Not that we should dwell on it in a morbid way, but the old Latin saying, *memento mori*, meaning “remember death” can help us to see that all things are passing in the world ... and that we should focus on eternal things.

Judgment is – for modern people – a touchy subject. In essence, it’s as if most of the population has a big sign on their foreheads that reads: “Don’t Judge Me!” And to that, I say, OK. I won’t.

When we die, we come face-to-face with Jesus Christ ... who has told us in Scripture that He is “*the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*” No matter who we may have fooled in this life – even if we’ve been able to fool ourselves ... when we stand nose-to-nose with Jesus ... Who is the Capital-T “Truth,” it won’t be Him who judges us ... rather, in the face of Truth personified, we will judge ourselves.

But be assured that Jesus has already judged us – and found us worthy – of salvation ... and of His love and mercy. It was His judgment ... after all He saw in the Garden of Gethsemene – that sent Him to embrace His Cross ... and to die for us.

Which brings us to the last two of the “Four Last Things:” Heaven and Hell. If we relied on Hollywood for our theology, not only do “All Dogs Go to Heaven,” but so does every body else.

And as far as H-E-Double-Hockey-Sticks ... this has not been a popular topic in homilies for many years. And after that amazing dance number with the teachers at yesterday’s Hallowe’en party ... do I dare break that 50-years-streak? To this end, I want to return to Pastor Stanley’s writings, and his book, “The Principle of the Path.”

It doesn’t hurt to ask ourselves ... just where are we heading? Is our heart lined up with our actions ... do our words and actions correspond to our eternal desires? Or are we heading East on M-81 thinking we’ll eventually end up in Frankenmuth? Hah! Good luck with that!

As we approach this altar to receive that Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray ... first for our beloved dead ... and unite our prayers with Christ’s sacrifice on the cross ... trusting always in His love and mercy to act powerfully in our lives. And secondly, let us pray for the Light of Christ ... to shine in our hearts and minds ... and to help us to realize what direction we’re headed ... and to inspire us to align our intentions with our actions so that through grace we can be transformed from who we are into who God calls us to be in Christ Jesus.

And for all of our beloved dead: Eternal rest ...