

# Ask for the Old Paths, Where is the Good Way, Walk Therein

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Date: 26 November 2023

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Welcome to ourselves this morning as we come before God in worship. We pray for his blessing to be imparted to us, and especially as we sit under the sound of his word.
- We are going to begin by singing the first psalm. The first psalm. That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray, in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sun as we, nor sitteth in his garnished chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his law day and night.
- He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields his fruit, and his leaf fadeth near. And all he does shall prosper well.
- The wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff which wind drives to and fro. In judgment therefore shall not stand, such as ungodly are, nor in the assembly of the just shall wicked men appear.
- For why? The way of godly men unto the Lord is known, whereas the way of wicked men shall quite be overthrown. Behold of this first psalm to God's praise, that man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray.
- [ 1 : 33 ] But man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray.
- In counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinners' way, nor sitteth in the scorner's chair, but placeth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his forgiven night.
- He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields his fruit, and his sweet spirit hath ever.
- And all he does shall cross the well.
- The wicked are not so, but like he are unto the child, which with Christ to plant the low.
- [ 3 : 55 ] In judgment therefore shall not stand such as ungodly are, nor in the assembly of the just, shall wicked men appear.
- For why the way of godly men unto the Lord is known, who the Lord is known, where as the way of wicked men shall quite be overthrown.
- Lord, just trying to gather in prayer, just pray. Ever blessed God, enable us to lift our eyes heavenward.
- For when we decide to do otherwise, what are we to find?
- We can contemplate the world in which we live. We can contemplate the world in which we live. That we possess a beauty that would create in us the desire to magnify creation.
- [ 5 : 54 ] As we survey all around us on a day such as this, we cannot but marvel at the beauty that we survey.
- And yet we know from experience that there are other days when nature is in rebellion.

And the elements are arrayed against us. As battalions seek out destruction, and were it not for the ability that is God given to protect ourselves from these elements, we would be swept from the face of the planet.

As indeed has happened in many instances. The changeableness of our environment, and the uncertainty that confronts us daily, reminds us of the need that we have to look upon something that possesses a sureness and an unchangeableness.

When we look at the fickleness of our own heart, if we dare to dwell upon our own selves, rather than the world in which we live. When we look within, when we look within, and there we find, at times, the temple of the Lord.

[ 7 : 40 ] There we find a place where peace reigns. There we find a sanctuary for our Lord. But, too often, and without warning, that very place that was sanctified for the presence of God as harboring devils.

That very place that, that new peace is in foment, and is full of ugliness, and vileness.

So much so that your word, which comes to bear upon that situation, reminds us that the heart of man is desperately wicked.

Who can know it? Subject to change. We can see. We can see. Wherever we choose to look in this world upon the scene of time, uncertainty, and the fickleness of our humanity, brought home to us.

But you teach us to look beyond ourselves and beyond creation, to the Creator God, who demands our worship, our affection, our attention, who demands our submission.

[ 9 : 15 ] And we give thanks that we are encouraged to bow the knee in your presence even today. To approach a throne of grace where we will receive grace and receive mercy at your hand.

whatever our need is, we give thanks that provision has been made for us, and that you invite us, and treat us even to avail ourselves of it.

We give thanks that when we look for God, we find Christ. And when we look at Christ, we find God. And through the Spirit that you have left here in this world, to speak to us much of Christ, that we see God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit brought before us.

May we magnify your name in our places today. Pour out your Spirit upon us. We ask for without you we can do nothing.

The emptiness of our worship, even as we submit to you, often reminds us of the need that we have for you to permeate the atmosphere, that we breathe with the Spirit of the Most High God, so that we would not be senseless to your glory, that we would be sensitive to your presence, even as we would be sensitive to your absence.

[ 10 : 52 ] How often we have read of your servants of past generations, who brought their pleas to the heavens and cried out, that they would not go from this place except you be with them.

Even your servants, as they came to preach the Gospel, they refused to climb the steps of their pulpit, were it not, with the conviction that the God of Heaven would climb these very steps with them.

May we have some measure of understanding of our own inadequacy, and the need that we have as an individual and as a congregation and as a generation, that the God of Heaven would bear his iron and come down into our midst, and that we would not delight in the things of this world that are passing, that are, like all the world, soon to diminish and disappear, as we will from the sin of time.

We give thanks that you are the same yesterday, today and forever. So pour out your blessing upon us, not because we deserve it, because we don't, not because our behaviour merits it, because it doesn't, not because we are worthy for the face of God to be lifted up before us, but because you are the God of all grace.

So hear our prayers. And as we seek mercy for ourselves, we seek it for all who are here and the many who are not.

[ 12 : 50 ] We pray for those who have a desire to be in the house of God. Do not allow these desires to be different other than desires that will be rewarded, that will be proven to be blessed desires.

We pray for those who are indifferent, even resistant to the spiritual blessings of the God of all grace, that they may have their resistance broken down, their hard hearts shattered, that you would grant to each of us a heart of flesh upon which your laws writ large, and a desire to have Christ in us, the hope of glory.

We pray for your blessing upon every home and household represented, every family, every child, every adult, every person arrived at Oortage, depending on the ministry of others.

We pray for all according to need, thankful that you know all our needs. Remember the broken hearted and the downcast, those whose lives have been brought face to face with the harsh reality of our human existence, having taken from them loved ones and left empty places that were so full, being loved and loving in return.

When that happens, it is hard to come to terms with it, and we pray for those who are struggling to do that. Remember, Lord, all the places of this world that have experienced the horrors of war and death death is something that we can become immune to in many respects when we are surrounded by it.

[ 15 : 00 ] And Lord, it is not a good thing for that to happen. The hardening effect of sin is seen in so many different ways.

However it manifests itself, we pray, Lord, for these places and these hearts that have been broken. Remember those in need, whatever the need may be, those who are struggling with illness, those who are burdened by fear of illness, those who are in hospital, those who have been cared for by others and those who deliver such care.

Remember the preaching of the word into all sections of the community. However that word is disseminated, may it be writ large as the alone means of salvation.

We pray for your blessing upon the witness of your people. We pray forgiveness for every time our witness is sullied by our behaviour, by our misbehaviour.

We pray for the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ to be sprinkled liberally upon our misdeeds. Remember, Lord, all who seek to proclaim Christ today in the pulpits of our land, in hostile realms of our world where Christ is the enemy and his people are despised.

[ 16 : 39 ] As he was despised and rejected, so too are they. Remember, they live their life in fear. But praise be to your name that the promise is to them and to all who follow in their steps, is that whatever this world does to them, that there is better by fire awaiting all who have placed their trust in Christ.

So remember those whose life in this world will be ended by the martyr's death. And they are many.

Do not allow us to think that this is something that belongs to a past generation. It is not. There are places in the world today that your people are being sacrificed on the altar of their testimony.

But we give thanks to those who are ready to join Christ in death as they lived with them in life, that their testimony will bear fruit in due time.

So hear our prayers. Bless your word to us, we pray. Remembering all that we commit to your care and keeping. Those who rule over us, those who govern us, those who are responsible for laws that are not honouring to God.

[ 18 : 10 ] Be merciful to them and open the blind eyes that they may see that God alone is the one who will have the last word. Hear our prayers, pardon sin in Jesus name. Amen.

I'm going to sing to God's praise verses from Psalm 119. Psalm 119 at verse 33. Let us sing this whole section of the psalm.

Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts divine. And to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline. Give understanding unto me, so keep thy law shall I.

Yea, even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully. In thy lost path make me to go, for I delight therein.

My heart unto thy testimonies and not to greed incline. Turn thou away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity. And in thy good and holy way be pleased to quicken me.

[ 19 : 23 ] We can sing to verse 40 from verse 33. Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts divine. Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way of thy precepts divine.

And to observe it to the end I shall my heart incline.

Give understanding unto me, so keep thy law shall I.

Yea, even with my whole heart I shall observe it carefully.

And thy lost path make me to go, for thy delight therein.

[ 20 : 55 ] My heart unto thy testimonies and not to greed incline.

Turn thou away my sight and eyes from viewing vanity.

And in thy good and holy way be pleased to quicken me.

Confirm to me thy gracious word, which I did gladly hear.

Hear to thee, O Lord, the perfect way of thy father. Hear to thy servant, Lord, who is devoted to thy fear.

[ 22 : 18 ] Turn thou away my feared reproach. For good thy judgments be.

Lo, for thy precepts I have longed. In thy truth quicken me.

I'm going to read from the scriptures of the Old Testament. The book of the prophet Jeremiah chapter 6.

We'll read the whole chapter. O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-Hakerem.

For evil appears out of the north and great destruction. I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman. The shepherds with their locks shall come unto her.

[ 23 : 42 ] They shall pitch their tents against her round about. They shall feed everyone in his place. Prepare ye war against her. Arise and let us go up at noon.

O unto us, for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out. Arise and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces.

For thus hath the Lord of hosts said, Shew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem. This is the city to be visited.

She is holy oppression in the midst of her. As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out wickedness. Her wickedness, violence and spoil, is heard in her.

Before me continually is grief and wounds. Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee. Lest I make thee desolate, and land not inhabited.

[ 24 : 45 ] Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine. Turn back thine hand as a grape-gatherer into the baskets. To whom shall I speak, and give warning that they may hear?

Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken. Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach. They have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord.

I am weary with holding in. I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together. For even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of grace.

And their houses shall be turned unto others with their fields and wives together. For I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord. For from the least of them, even unto the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness.

And from the prophet, even unto the priest, everyone dealeth falsely. They have healed also the heart of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

[ 26 : 00 ] Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed. Neither could they blush. Therefore they shall fall among them that fall.

At the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. Thus, saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths.

Where is the good way? And walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I sat watchmen over you, saying, Harken to the sound of the trumpet.

But they said, We will not hearken. Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. Hear, O earth, behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba? And the sweet cane from a far country, your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifice is sweet unto me.

[ 27 : 16 ] Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them.

The neighbour and his friend shall perish, thus saith the Lord, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.

They shall lay hold on bow and spear, they are cruel and have no mercy. Their voice roeth like a sea, and they ride upon horses, set in array as men, for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.

We have heard the fame thereof. Our hands walk feeble, anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain as of a woman in travel. Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way, for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side.

O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes. Make thee mourning as for an only son.

[ 28 : 22 ] Most bitter lamentation, for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us. I have set thee for a tower, and a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way.

They are all grievous revolters, walking with slander. They are brass and iron. They are all corruptors.

The bellows are burned. The lead is consumed of the fire. The founder melteth in vain, for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing to a reading of this portion of his word. We shall sing again from Psalm 119, at verse 57, singing this section of the psalm.

Psalm 119, at verse 57. Thou my huge portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord, I have resolved and said, that I would keep thy holy word.

[ 29 : 39 ] With my whole heart I did entreat thy face and favour free. According to thy gracious word, be merciful to me. I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well try.

And to thy testimonies pure, my feet then turn at I. I did not stay nor linger long, as those that slothful are.

But hastily thy laws, to keep myself I did prepare. Bands of ill menly robbed, yet I thy precepts did not slight. I'll rise at midnight thee to praise, even for thy judgments right.

I am companion to all those who fear and thee obey. O Lord, thy mercy fills the earth. Teach me thy laws. I pray.

This section of Psalm 119, from verse 57 to 64. Thou my huge portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord.

[ 30 : 41 ] Thou my huge portion art alone, which I did choose, O Lord.

I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word.

With my whole heart, I did entreat thy face unfavorably.

According to thy gracious word, Be merciful to me.

I thought upon my former ways, and did my life well cry, and to thy testimony is pure, my feet and gently die.

[ 32 : 32 ] I did not take nor linger long, as those that sought for life.

But instantly thy lost to keep, myself I did repair.

Bands of ill men, hereof yet I, thy misteth did not slide.

I rise and made thy king to praise, before thy judgment's right.

I am companion to all those who fear and thee obey.

[ 34 : 03 ] O Lord, O Lord, thy mercy fills the air.

Teach me thy laws, thy grace. Can we turn to the chapter that we read in the Old Testament Scriptures, the book of the prophet Jeremiah, chapter 6.

And we can read verse 16. Jeremiah chapter 6, verse 16. Verse 16. Verse 16. Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths.

Where is the good way? And walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein.

It's a word of background before we look in detail at these verses here. I'll just take a few thoughts from the surface of them.

[ 35 : 31 ] The first evening we were looking at the importance of the word of God as the alone means by which God chooses to communicate with us.

And when we look at the Scripture, humanly speaking, we look at it with sometimes a perverse understanding.

We have preferences. We like one apostle over against another apostle. We may like the way John, the apostle, expresses himself with some tenderness, with the emphasis on love.

Comparing that to the apostle Paul, he appears less stern and less formidable. When we look at the Old Testament prophets, we may have favour acts there as well.

We may think that the words of the prophet Isaiah, they're easier for us to read and to embrace the truths that they contain.

[ 36 : 54 ] because the prophet Isaiah is very often spoken of as the gospel prophet, the prophet who has most to say about the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we err when we do that because we have always to remind ourselves that each one of these prophets, each one of these apostles, they are speaking God's word, they are speaking the truth of God.

and they are part of the whole of Scripture and as such every one of them has something to say to us. God speaks to us through them, through their experiences, through the word that they brought to their own generation and because it is a living word, a word that he speaks still to our generation, just as relevant to us as it was the first day these words came from the mouth of the prophet.

We know that Jeremiah, the prophecy, is one of the larger of the Old Testament prophets, prophecies alongside Ezekiel and Isaiah.

But if you were to do just a simple exercise like I did myself, obviously you can do this in your own Bibles, you read, you see how many chapters there are in the prophecies.

[ 38 : 25 ] In Isaiah it has 66 chapters and in my Bible these 66 chapters cover 68 pages whereas Jeremiah which seems a shorter prophecy, 52 chapters and yet there are 71 pages in my Bible and similarly with Ezekiel a shorter chapter I think less number of chapters but over 70 pages.

Now it's not the length of the prophecy that makes it important or the number of chapters but what makes them all of equal importance is the fact that God is speaking to us through the words that are on these pages.

And when you focus your attention as we are today on this prophet Jeremiah the words that he has to say to us are not necessarily comfortable words to read.

They're not words that make us feel easy in ourselves when we read them because the message that Jeremiah had to preach was a message that he himself in many respects did not want to deliver because Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet and the reason he was a weeping prophet was that he loved the people that he was sent to be a preacher and a teacher to so much his heart was bound in with theirs his love for them was a love that was very much because of the relationship that he had with them and yet God had given to him a message to deliver to them that was a message of condemnation we know from the beginning of the chapter there's no point in going into detail as to the biography of the prophet but it begins

Jeremiah begins telling us that he was the son of a priest Jeremiah son of Hilkiah of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin that means he was himself of the priestly caste and were it not for the call of God to come into his experience he would very probably have embraced the priesthood when he got to the age where that would have been his duty he would have followed in the footsteps of his father and his grandfather and so on the priestly caste was set aside by God's law and those who were born into it were destined those males were destined to serve as priests at some point and Jeremiah was one such but we read about Jeremiah that God had called him even before he was born God had set his eye upon him and he had destined to be a prophet and we read in the first chapter again verse five just before

[ 41 : 56 ] I formed thee in the belly I knew thee before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations now that to many people seems impossible because we think that God's choice must inevitably be based upon the gifts and the graces that are there in evidence and that because of these giftings and graces that God will use them and will lift these men up to serve him but that's not the way God works God knows who he will use for his own purposes and the purposes that he had for Jeremiah were not pleasant Jeremiah said that he was young he was too young to embrace the service of

God but more than that if he had known what God meant him to do he would have run a mile his ministry was one where he was called to witness to an apostate nation under the leadership of a godless wicked monarch who was supported by a hierarchy of worldly and spiritually dead priests and intemperate people when you see and read of the kind of people that belonged to God those who proclaimed to serve God you have a picture of the place that was consecrated to God's service given to the worship of the Ashtarothe and the idols of their own making children sent to gather the wood for the sacrifices the woman preparing the meals that were to be offered to the gods and this was done in the name of religion and

Jeremiah had a word to them he had a word to them from God and it was a word of God that expressed his displeasure and expressed the imminent judgment that was to befall them and the future judgment that was still to come just to summarize that I'll quote an Old Testament scholar Willem van Gemmer his ministry was characterized by condemnation more than by mediation he declared that God's patience had come to an end and the Lord would appear to his people in judgment Jeremiah loved God's people and wanted to intercede for them but his was a mission of starvation death exile and alienation it's not a nice message it's not a comforting message you're not going to win any friends when you have to deliver such a message and yet that was the task that was allotted to

Jeremiah in his day let us look at the words of the text and we'll just summarize the words there in a few comments from the main parts of the of the verse that we're looking at verse 16 the description that is given to us of a man that has come to a cross in the road and that person as he arrives at the crossroads they are required to make a choice they are told that there is a path that is to be followed and at the end of that path peace is to be found but the conclusions that they come to as a result of their consideration contradicts the promise that

God gives to them that's a summary of what we have in these verses stand ye in the ways and seek the picture that is represented to us is of somebody who comes to a crossroads sometimes we talk of crossroads like we're talking about a cross with four legs four limbs to it but this is really a fork in the road one road leading in one direction and one road leading in the other direction and they come to this crossroads and clearly they are to stop there and to consider which way they are to follow and you would think on the face of it while the emphasis seems to fall stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths where is the good way and walk therein that it all devolves upon them the decision that they have to make concerning the path that they are to follow is entirely of their own making they have to go one way or the other but the decision is theirs the path that they follow is entirely their choice but clearly what we are reminded of is this that

[ 48 : 30 ] God has told them what the right way is and if they are but to sit and reflect on what past experience teaches them they should have learned from that and understood from that that God has already made it plain to them that there is only one choice that there is only one way that they can follow and essentially what that is saying to us is really belying our own experience when we come to following a path that is to God's glory and a path that is decidedly not we're not coming to a decision based entirely upon our own natural tendencies it is an informed decision which we base our actions upon but our decision if it is not to follow the path that the

Lord sets before us is a decision that contradicts what we know the Lord wants us to do if we take this into a New Testament setting and if you're presented in the gospel with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only saviour of sinners and you are reminded of the fact that you are a sinner in need of salvation if you choose not to accept the offer of Christ in the gospel then you are choosing something other than that and you have already been told this is the only way of salvation this is the only means that God has ordained by which a sinner can be saved and if you choose not to be saved by Christ then that is your decision based on the information that you have you are contradicting what



God has said before you as a medium of life we make it complicated we make it seem as if it's really much more complicated than that that it's more difficult than that that is not what the prophet is saying here stand ye in the way look take your time think about what you're going to do see and ask for the old paths where is the good way where is the good way it's a simple question is there a good way that is different to God's way is there a good way that does not include the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is there a good way that we can follow that excludes sin from our life and you know the answer you already know the answer to that and yet that is the way you live your life many today live their life and they say well that's your opinion that's your opinion my opinion is equal to yours well no it's not as long as my opinion is formulated based on the truth that

God has said before me as his truth and I have never come across a word from God that has been proved false they have never been found a word from God that we can deny or discriminate against because it is evil or because it is bad for me and this is what the prophet is saying the way forward for them is the way that God has already marked out for them as the way of life and unfortunately for us when that decision is to be made whether we are to follow God or follow our own inclinations we prefer our own inclinations we prefer the way of the flesh rather than the way of the spirit we prefer the things that satisfy our human instincts and longings rather than things that

God commends and encourages us to use ask for the old paths he says now today move the old paths that immediately gets people's hackles up the old paths these are in the past they are for the past those who were in the past may have been content to live their lives following the old path but we belong to a modern generation we have better ideas we have greater ideas we have grander schemes we need something contemporary to meet the longings of our heart now I don't suppose that we can make a blanket claim for all that belongs to the old just because something is old doesn't necessarily mean that it is good there are many things that belong to the old ways that were not necessarily good ways one of the puritans put it like this it is the good way as well as old for though goodness was before wickedness yet every way that is old is not good but he says see that your way is both good and old it is not as simple as saying everything that was in the past was good that is nonsense anybody who says to you the church of old was good nonsense the church of old was made up of sinners just as the church of today is made up of sinners and the perversities were exposed at times as things that only grace could deal with and it's still like that to this day it seems obvious to say this but there has to be a consideration to give to the way forward it's not something some people say you live by faith and that's all you need faith and that's the elixir of life faith but it is never faith without information feeding into your faith it is never blind it is never a faith that doesn't rest upon anything except the truth of

[ 56 : 19 ] God and all that it says concerning Christ you have the information you have the necessary light to give you the impetus to go forward let's never go forward with your eyes shut go forward without knowledge of what the future has for you let me quote John L Mackay the good way is the way of the good this does not refer to the character or the quality of the way so much as its terminus it is the path that leads to the enjoyment of covenant blessing from the Lord God I suppose that puts a different perspective on it because some teach very blatantly that just becoming a believer that everything will be grand and everything will be good and everything will be rosy and every problem and other people have they're no longer your problems they've disappeared they're dissipated that's not

Christianity the Christian life is made up of problems and trials and temptations and testings and only by God's grace can you ever overcome any one of them but you have God's grace as a Christian and you have the ability with God's help to go through these things painful as they may be ask for the old paths the past experience of those who followed these paths tell us that only good can come of them not because it was good all the days of their life but because the conclusion of their faith of their walk was the conclusion that God promised them nothing would deflect them from it and is that not what the prophet says those who walk therein will find rest for their souls but there is there a very solemn reminder that we have to walk in these ways that we have to walk in these ways it's not enough to know the two ways and the first psalm we psalm is the psalm of the two ways and describes to you the righteous and wicked and the ways that they are on and how they will what they encompass and how they will conclude but what the psalmist is saying that both are walking in them they are walking in these ways and the

Christian believer the person who follows the teaching of the prophet here is walking on the right way the good way the God appointed way they go on with the Lord they walk with the Lord they wait upon the Lord I'm not very good at geography but I know some people are I've never experienced foreign lands I was thinking about it I did visit France for an afternoon or a morning or whatever I know I went there and I suppose if you count the Republic of Ireland a foreign land have been to the Republic of Ireland but that's my only experience into foreign lands but there are some people who are experts with geography and never left their homes they know all about these lands they know the country they know the cities they know the terrain they know the mountains the height of them the rivers they know all that they have got all the information but they have never been there and that's the problem that some people have with

God because of their unique situation as being under God's word they know the word of God they know the truth that God has said they know what Jesus is all about they know what he teaches they know what he promises but they don't know him their knowledge is all in their head but not in their heart and that's what the prophet really is getting to the ways that before you a good way and a bad way you choose one and you walk in it know that peace waits for you at the end of one and evil at the end of the other that's what he's saying and that's what we need to understand the beginning of this week we were as a presbytery listening to to a talk about the situation in the church and where the churches are today an opportunity was given to a panel of ordinary hearers as to their opinion as to what demerits

I suppose that was the most obvious part of it marked the church of today and a lot has been said about preaching and poor preaching and the need for improvement in a whole host of different ways but the fact of the matter is that today every single one of you hear everything that is necessary for the salvation of your soul from this pulpit or from any other pulpit you have more access to the word of God than any past generation you have access through your computers through the pulpits of this world of ours the most renowned of preachers and those of you who are inclined to that can hear the kind of preacher that suits yourself and yet the comment that has to be made for all the super abundance of gospel opportunity the lack of effect on the lives of the individuals who are sitting under

[ 63 : 47 ] God's word is patently obvious it's there to be seen lives are not changed by the word of God and that's true for every single person including myself we hear God's word we know it to be God's word and if God's word does not change us there's something wrong wrong there is something wrong that is true for every one of us when the prophet is here speaking to our people he is saying God is speaking and they are choosing not to listen now those who are choosing not to listen you could say it's not my fault my ears are closed

God needs to open them oh you're very informed are you not do you really believe that God needs to open your ears is that your excuse God needs to open your ears well if God needs to open your ears what are you doing about it if that needs to happen and that's what you believe then that's what needs to be dealt with first and foremost but if your ears are opened and God is not changing your heart or changing your life or changing the way you behave something is wrong I was listening this week to a sermon of my own minister I always call him my own minister the late Carl Madison and he had a tape of his sermon on Isaiah 64 and he was preaching on the words oh that you would rend the heavens and come down and whenever

I listen to his preaching I go back to my youth I go back to my experience of being a recent convert but he was saying in process of preaching he was saying what Dr.

Kennedy who was a minister in Dink was saying he said I don't believe for one minute he says that God will leave us without the gospel I don't believe that God will leave us without the gospel but I do fear that he may leave us with the gospel and without the spirit that is necessary for the gospel to be believed and to be acted upon what do we find here do we find that people who are not conscious of the way who are not aware of the two ways that they are two ways there's no blurring of distinctions a fork in the road go one way or the other one way is the good way one way is God's way one way is the way that God says will bring blessing and the other will bring condemnation but what does he say they said they said we will not walk therein they were determined to follow a path that suited themselves they preferred the trends of their day they preferred the popular theologies of the day they preferred to believe that things can't be as dark as

God says they are John L. Mackay put it like this it's not a matter of knowledge but a stubborn disinclination to acknowledge the Lord we will not walk and it's always a matter of will it's always a matter of will to refuse to listen to what God is saying however his word comes to your attention brings disaster and that's exactly what the prophet had to tell this people he had to tell them that God's displeasure would be made known to them what lay ahead of them was the invasion of enemies what lay ahead of them was the condemnation of

[ 68 : 57 ] God and some of these prophecies may yet be seen being fulfilled today who knows and nobody is saying that to you nobody it's what you saying nobody else and that's what God will judge us for when God make us think of these things whenever he brings home to us that there are crossroads whenever there are paths that we see open out before us we should consider where is this going to take me where is this going to take me what will what will the consequences be and if you don't bring

God into your thinking don't be surprised when God will meet you and say well you never thought of me but I'm here may he bless this word let us pray ever blessed God we pray that your word would impress itself upon us that it will fulfill in our hearts the need that we have to follow the right way the good way the old way the way of salvation ordained by your own hand cleansed from sin in Jesus name Amen of concluding psalm is psalm 125 psalm 125 I'm going to sing the whole psalm psalm there the Lord that firmly trust shall be like Zion hill which hath no time can be removed but standeth ever still round about

Jerusalem the mountains stand all way the Lord his folk doth camp us so from henceforth and foray for in men's Lord upon the lot of just men shall not lie lest righteous men stand forth their hands and to iniquity sing the Lord son the Lord that firmly trust shall be like Zion hill which at no time can be regroup but standeth ever still as round a fowl check

Jerusalem the mountains stand all way the Lord his hope doth come and so from henceforth and morning for ill men brought brought upon the laws of just men shall not lie lest righteous men set for their hands unto iniquity to thou to all those that be good thy goodness

Lord impart heart and do thou good to those that not upright within their heart but as for  
such as turn aside after their crooked way God shall lead forth with wicked men on his trail  
he shall stay may grace and peace from God the

[ 74 : 37 ]    Father the Son and always amen