

Standing at the Crossroads | A Call to the Old Paths | A Spiritual Revival | Jeremiah 6:16

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[0:00] Jeremiah chapter 6, I'm just reading really the verse there in verse 16, Jeremiah 6 verse 16. It reads, 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. You could understand if you could picture it, how we stood at a crossroads here, and the Lord is saying to stand here and to decide which path.

It's like life's crossroads. And we think as we stand at the junction there, at the kind of the wide junction, that it matters what way we are going.

As a nation, as an individual, as a people, the direction that we take. And God's calling us here in this verse to the old paths, the old paths.

And you could understand that to talk about God's wisdom. It's timeless, isn't it? The right path, the godly path, the biblical path.

[1:17] And it says there's a rest for your souls when you take that path. There's a rest that comes as you obey God, as you trust God. But the people rejected that. We will not walk therein.

Think about our nation, Australia. It was once a nation that had somewhat of a godly heritage. There were some Christian values that shaped our nation in the early days of it.

But it's in poor spiritual shape now. Think of Adelaide, the city of churches. It's scarcely that now, isn't it? And it's like we're at this junction here and God's saying, choose the good way.

God's voice is calling us back. We've wandered from God's ways, the old paths. They were the good way. And our world is like at this crossroads as you stood there and you wonder, which way shall I turn?

And there's eternal truths that lead us to spiritual revival, where God gets the glory. We see, as pictured in the verse we've just read, how there's a rest to come.

[2:25] There's a blessing. He's going to pour it out. And there is a good way. There's some old paths that are blessed paths. God's way. Eternal ways. It's the sense you could picture it of this word old.

You could picture it as a sense that there's a timelessness to it, as an eternity to it. It's eternal ways. It's time-tested ways. And there is a way back. The way to rest, the way that is the good way, is reviving again.

It's a way back to God's blessings. And we're told that righteousness exalted the nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. The good ways are the ways to righteousness, to do God's will.

We're at this crossroads, at this pivotal time. Think back at the book of Esther, where she was also at that critical juncture.

And God calls us, as he called Esther, for such a time as this. We think of our nation at the crossroads. And we know in the book of Esther, God used Esther to save her people.

[3:31] And God can use us too in our own different ways to make an impact, to stand in the gap for our nation. Think about our nation. Now, in Jeremiah 6, God says to see. Stand ye in the ways and see, he says.

And it's about opening our eyes and having that discernment. We think about the nation that we're living in, our own nation of Australia. We see the moral drift.

Broken families, youth ensnared. Churches, churches, astray from biblical faithfulness, choosing popularity and crowds.

Without that discernment to see things, spiritually see things, we can miss God's best. Look at Australia today. Consider the state of our nation.

The perilous state of our land. Think of biblical times and biblical instances. For example, in 1 Samuel 4, Israel was in this time of crisis too.

[4:30] And they relied on the Ark of the Covenant as a kind of lucky charm. And it became like an empty ritual that they had this Ark. And they were kind of taking it for granted.

And disobeying God, really. And judgment came. And one had a child and named the child Ichabod. And she said, the glory is departed from Israel.

For the Ark of God is taken. There was this sense of the judgment that was on the nation because of its rebellion. And when Israel strayed, they lost God's glory. In other words, the manifest presence of God.

His presence, his power, his honor, his majesty. And it's like that with Australia, isn't it? Think of our nation. Rather, think of the nation that's blessed. The blessed nation, it says in Psalm 33, 12.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. Yet Australia is far from that kind of standard. God's truth can anchor us. But it's like Australia's lost its moral anchor.

[5:31] I'm going to quote from a sermon that I picked up from Wayne Samish. An old sermon that he put out there. And I'm just extracting a few comments from his message.

And it was the message, will the real Australia stand up? And he says, there was once an Australia where Sundays were sacred. And families rose early.

They donned their finest clothes. They attended church on Sunday. And not organized sports. And shops and petrol stations stood shuttered. Markets were dormant.

Organized sports on the Sabbath were unthinkable. And most families knew their local minister by name. Virtues like hard work, self-reliance and honesty defined the national character.

People took any job to avoid government handouts. And safety was a given. Cars and homes went often unlocked. Because home invasion was not a heard of term. The media too reflected this ethos.

[6:29] In the 1930s, the newspaper sent reporters to transcribe church sermons for publication in the newspaper. Amplifying the voices of men of God. Education was rooted in a God-centered philosophy.

Not a humanistic one. Australia has shifted. Sundays are now for indulgence. Shopping centers bustle. Markets thrive. Sports compete with church services.

God has been sidelined. Government handouts are expected. Safety is no longer assured. With theft, assaults and home invasions at alarming levels. Australia grapples with record high suicide rates.

Particularly among youth. Righteousness exalted the nation. But sin is a reproach to any people. This is not a suggestion. But a divine truth. Righteousness brings exaltation.

But sin brings shame. And God promises, If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

[7:37] If God was willing to spare Sodom for ten righteous men, he can spare Australia for the sake of the faithful. Yet this requires a burden for our country, a commitment to pray, to forsake sin, to uphold righteousness.

How many of us have prayed for Australia this week? Australia stands at the crossroads. The righteousness that once exalted a nation is being eroded by sin.

A reproach to any people. God's people must lead the way through prayer, repentance, and unwavering commitment to his truth. Only then will the nation be healed and exalted once more.

End quote. Think about the truth of that. What nation we were, like in history, in old time, there was at least an element of reverence for God of sorts, at least in part.

But now it's like it's thrown out the window, isn't it? Think of our nation today, spiritually dead, largely, isn't it? And church is failing. There's moral decay. There's the perversion of what they falsely call marriage today, that people call marriage today, which isn't marriage.

[8:44] There's the gender confusion, abortion on demand, immorality, materialism. Australia's in a bad shape, really, isn't it? The apathy that prevails.

And we think of our society that calls evil good. And good evil, they've changed the labels. It's still evil, and they're calling it good. It is good, but now they're putting a different label. They're calling that evil. That the Bible says is the good. And it's the contrariness of all of that, isn't it? This compromise of truth. And it's like Israel in these days of judgment, of IChabod. The glory has departed. The glory. God's glory is gone. And what about our own heart? Are we infected by this culture, this godless culture? The old paths. The old paths. We need to get back to where we ought to be. God's call to get right. To get right with God.

[9:45] And we stand at the crossroads. But it's human inclination, when you're at that wide junction, to take the wrong course of action. To take the wrong path. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man.

But the end thereof are the ways of death. We're inclined to take the wrong path, aren't we, as human nature. And rather, let us grieve over our sin and get things right with our Lord. To commit to God. To his glory. To trust him. So, to reflect on this scripture of stand ye in the way. To choose the good way. To seek the old paths and walk therein. Think about it. To stand ye in the way. Now, I know my sermon this morning was talking about standing.

It's another time to stand. To stand again. Alright. It's time to stand. To stand in the way. Stand in the way. Consider the urgency of the hour. You stood at this wide junction. This fork in the road.

[10:44] And consider where you're at. For yourself. And Esther had, really, that sense of divine timing. That, as again, it reads, that she had that sense that this was God's time.

That this was the time to act. That she was in this critical place. This position of influence that she had in the kingdom.

To make a difference. When her nation was in this great crisis. That her courage saved her people. And she risked her life to intercede with the king.

She trusted God's providence. And her courage saved her people. And we could be like Esther. In this time where it seems like our nation is in this state of decline spiritually.

God calls us to be like Esther. To intercede for our nation. Not to a king. But to our Lord. To intercede to our Lord.

[11:43] And Ezekiel tells us of how God sought for a man. That he should make up the hedge. And stand in the gap for the land.

It's the picture of someone standing in the place of prayer. To stand in that place of intercession. At this critical hour of our nation.

Or don't we to pray for Australia. And God's calling for intercessors. Who'll pray. And seek God. Think of Abraham's intercession for Sodom.

In Genesis 18. It delayed judgment. But then you could think of Lot. That he failed to win even 10 souls. To salvation.

He failed to see others. Trust the almighty God. And it's a sobering warning isn't it? He couldn't find 10. So some have reflected how Lot failed to be a witness.

[12:41] He failed to be the light that he could have been in Sodom. And so there wasn't 10 righteous. That God would spare Sodom. And this word where it says stand in Jeremiah 6.16.

It's got the sense of a resolute deliberate posture. To stand. To stand firm. When culture and peer pressure would sway us. We need to stand. As the prophet says.

To stand in the ways. Not to be swayed but to stand. And with the word in that reference in Esther there. For such a time as this.

When they translate it into the Greek. They use this word. The Greek word kairos. Which means a critical opportune moment. It's like it's a critical moment.

That Esther was there for this critical moment. For this divine appointment that she had. To influence her world. And think of the urgency of our time. It's a critical time. Isn't it?

[13:39] Think of our nation. As there's more and more godless laws in train. And like within our own state of South Australia. The godlessness that prevails. And I see it at all levels.

Really. Local, state, federal. The decline of our nation. The ever increasing godlessness of our nation. Consider the urgency of our time. Of this hour.

We see the spiritual ruin. We see secularism taking over. And we see Esther. She was willing to risk comfort. And reputation to stand. To go before the king.

May we be like Esther. To intercede for Australia. To share the gospel. To live for Christ. And God moves in answer to prayer.

We look back through history. For example. In the Hebrides revival. In 1949 to 52. There was just a small group of believers.

[14:35] In this little island nation. Of the Hebrides. Two elderly women. And a small group of believers. Prayed fervently. For God's intervention.

And God brought revival. Where thousands were saved. And churches were filled. As we pray. God can act.

Our text tells us. Seek the old paths. Seek the old paths. Could think of this scripture. As we referred to it. If my people shall humble themselves.

And pray. Seek my face. Think of the old paths. It speaks of eternal truths. It tells in Jeremiah 6. Of the good way. And it tells how there's a pathway there.

To blessing. To life. There's going to be rest. But in contrast to the old paths. We could think about some of the alternative paths. And what the tendency is.

[15:35] Really. Of. Newfangled trends. Of new fads. Of novelties. Of some new innovation. That people jump on that.

Just because it's trendy. Now I'm not saying that every new innovation is wrong. Innovation of itself is not wrong. But we can see where people are just being drawn to what is trendy and faddy.

Instead of what's the right way. The good way. And it's always been that way. We look back. Even at Mars Hill. In Athens. It says the Athenians were spending their time in nothing else.

But telling or hearing some new thing. They just want to hear what's the latest. Tell us all the ghosts. The latest. New fad thing. New doctrine.

And it's like that today isn't it. Where people are jumping on bandwagons. I know. In the circle of churches I used to move in. They used to jump on different bandwagons every so often. There was a new thing.

[16:37] And they would go on this new thing. Whatever the hype was at the time. And it's a bit like that today isn't it. Where things go viral. And people go and chase after whatever is the top of the pops.

Whatever the peer pressure is moving people to. To appeal to younger generations. And sometimes these new methods. These kind of fads. They lack that staying power.

And they fade away. And people get disappointed with that. And we're this kind of drawing away after that. Rather than what's wise.

And proven. And true. And you can think of it. For example. If you like. As a young woman. Looking for something to cook. And she's got a load of modern cooking apps on her phone.

That have got these flashy recipes. But then she goes to her grandmother's old recipe book. That she's inherited. And she reaches out for that time tested recipe.

[17:37] Of a family dish. And that's the real winner. At the family gathering. What was tried and true. Was just the thing. Just the thing.

You think of that in the sense that. The Bible.

Some people might think it's outdated. But really it's always true. It's always for us. It's always relevant. And God's promises are always for us.

And very much real. And proven. And he promises rest. We think of some of the things that happen in scripture. That picture.

This kind of. Hungering after some new thing. Some new thing. Think of Moses. When he was on the mount. The people were down below. And Aaron and the people were getting impatient.

And they chose a newfangled way of work. Sat down to eat and drink. And rose up to play. What did they do? They created a golden calf. To worship. They blended the pagan practices with their faith.

[18:34] It was trendy. It was popular. Everybody loved it. They'd have voted for it. It would have been voted for. Hands down. A tangible God. It was crowd pleasing.

Everybody loved it. And they were eating and drinking. They were playing. It was joy. But really it brought judgment. Ultimately it brought judgment. Because they didn't choose the old paths.

They chose some newfound way. Which was really a false God. Another example you could think of is Nadab and Abihu. A couple of men.

Aaron's sons. They offered this strange fire. This unauthorized fire. This is Leviticus 10. Instead of worshipping according to the old paths. As far as God's way to worship.

Where God had given clear instructions about how to worship. They offered incense and sacrifices in a way that was not authorized. They disregarded God's prescribed biblical worship.

[19:32] And just did their own thing. And it ended badly. You see there. They took the censer. They put fire therein. They put incense thereon. They offered strange fire before the Lord. They were doing their part.

They felt that they were worshipping the Lord. But he commanded them not to do it that way. So they went out fire from the Lord and devoured them. And they died before the Lord. So we might have the best intention.

But our worship can be dishonouring. And it's important as we think about these things. We dare not trifle about holy things. We dare not be careless about such things.

Rather we should tremble at his word. Another example we think of David. As he tried to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. It tells us in 2 Samuel 6 how they brought the Ark on a new cart. It says they set the Ark of God upon a new cart. And brought it out of the house. And Uzzah and Ahioh drove the new cart. And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments.

[20:38] Even on harps and on psalteries and on timbrels. And on cornets and on cymbals. So they had this great enthusiasm. And this great excitement.

That this was something exciting. They're bringing back the Ark to where it ought to be. To Jerusalem. But they were bringing it the wrong way. It was a new and trendy way.

It seemed handy and easy. It seemed like this was convenient. I'm sure they made that cart look really nice. I'm sure that they would have designed it as the best human efforts could design it to be. But problem was it wasn't God's way. God's way was that the priests would carry the Ark on their shoulders. That was God's instruction. But they were disobeying God's direct instruction.

They were ignoring it. It wasn't God's way. That was the problem. God's way is a way of reverence for God's presence. And obeying his holiness. But it's like that today where we see sadly the trend.

[21:39] It can be in any church where there's this entertainment trendy method rather than biblical reverence. And so this was what was wrong here.

They were doing it man's way instead of God's way. They were choosing new paths instead of the old paths. The old paths are what we need. Another example you think of is in Jeremiah's day. False prophets proclaimed peace, peace when there was no peace. God's way was for faithful prophets to call the people back to truth and to repentance. Maybe it was an unpopular message. And it's like that to modern feel good spirituality where preachers are mostly just telling people what they want to hear. And they're just like motivational speakers rather than spokesmen for God. The old paths. The old paths are what we need. Sometimes those old fashioned truths. The truth hurts sometimes doesn't it? The old fashioned truths. The time tested old paths.

[22:41] Old fashioned practices that have endured through generations. They're proven. There's wisdom there. There's stability there. Now again not to say we can't have some different expressions of how we worship or how we serve or how we minister or how we do church.

But we don't want to negate that need for reverence for biblical order and godly spirit. And that foundation of truth that underlies what we are doing.

Old fashioned truth. It can feel rigid or outdated to those that are drawn to novelty. But there's depth and there's meaning there. And we want to hang on to that.

Those enduring principles that are true. So just to kind of put it into some suggestions about what do these old paths look like? What are the old paths?

You could consider for example the path of God's word. We want to be a biblical church. That the pathway of God's word is what is important to us.

[23:46] It's one of the old paths is the word of God. It tells us that thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. The Bible is our

sure foundation.

That's an old path. We don't need some different book. We've got the path. We've got the word of God. We've got the sure word of God. And that sure light that we need. The truth of God in this dark world.

When you look back in every revival through history. For example, Josiah's reforms in 2 Kings 22. It was when they got the word of God that revival came. It's when they opened the word of God.

As Ezra did in Nehemiah's day. It was as they opened the word of God. In the Reformation. When they started having the word of God. In the language of the people. We see the great awakenings. It was when the word of God was opened. And the people of God began to return to the scriptures. And so the old path of the word of God. Is a sure path. Amen. As we read. As we study.

[24:46] As we follow the word of God. We'll let it shape our world view. And our decisions. The path of God's word. Think of the path of repentance. Repentance. We believe in repentance.

According to the biblical terminology of repentance. The sense where we can seek after God. We can see that mind shift. That change of mind. That change of heart.

Of direction. As we read before. Of seeking after God. Of turning unto him. Of finding his truth. Of going his way. We can know God's forgiveness.

And healing. And it's for those who humble themselves. We think of how a nation needs revival. Doesn't it? And it's personal and national revival.

That we need. It begins. With that return to God. The path. Of repentance. We think of the path of prayer. As well. Call unto me. He says. And I'll answer thee.

[25:40] And show thee great and mighty things. Which thou knowest not. The path of prayer. It's one of the old paths. Isn't it? The early church prayed. And they saw God's power. In Acts 2.

They devoted themselves. One of the things. Was they devoted themselves. To prayer. And we see the outpouring of God. And how can we have that more fervent prayer. Our intercessory prayer. Personal prayer. Corporate prayer. The path of prayer. Another old path you could think about. Is the path of holiness. Of holiness. It tells us. 1 Peter 1.

It reads. But as he which hath called you. Is holy. So be ye holy. In all manner of conversation. In other words. In all kinds of your. Of your interaction. Of your conduct.

Of your way of living. Because it is written. Be ye holy. For I am holy. The path of holiness. That's an old path. That's a good path.

[26:33] Amen. That's a good way. To be set apart. To be separated unto. From sin and worldly values. And unto. Our Lord. And holiness is not legalism.

But it's a lifestyle. Where we reflect God's character. We love God. We want to be separated unto God. For his glory. We want to be like him. More and more. Each day. And there's blessing. Blessing there. In holiness. The path of holiness. Another path you could think about. Is the path of soul winning. Soul winning. It tells us that the fruit of the righteous. Is a tree of life.

And he that winneth souls. Is wise. It's a wise thing. For you to tell others. Of the saving grace of God. To tell others. Of the saving gospel. And it tells us that.

He that goeth forth and weepeth. Bearing precious seed. He's going to come again rejoicing.

There's going to be a blessing. There's going to be a return. There's going to be a harvest. It's been said that the principal duty.

[27:29] Of every Christian. Is to share the gospel. It's an old path. It's an old path. But it's the right path. It's the good way. Brother, sister. There's no new path. Than sharing the gospel.

And being a witness for Christ. And sowing the seed of God's word. Even if it be in tears. Can be uncomfortable. Can be threatening to ourselves. Let alone others.

When we open our mouth. And tell of our faith of Christ. But there's a harvest of souls there. Keep on sowing the seed. As we talked about before. So think of these paths.

That we've touched on. And how it tells us to stand in the way. And to seek the old paths. Think of those things. That we can heed God's word.

And live it. And not be drawn aside to what the world might kind of push on us. Or something that, hey. Or the church kind of moves in this direction.

[28:24] That's all about being trendy. Rather than being true to the word. And we can have innovation without negating that. But what matters is that we're centered on the word.

We're founded on the word. That that's the foundation stone. And that we glory in the cross. We give all the glory to our Lord. We're a faithful witness. And God will heal our land as we seek his face.

As we pray. As we turn unto him. We'll see God's power. We'll see God revive us as a land. As a people. Of course we know.

It appears like in the last days. There's going to be a falling away. Some would think there's going to be some great big revival. But really the revival starts in the heart of every soul. Of every individual. And God can revive us as an individual. As a body. As a people. We can pray for revival. We can trust God to revive us. And it's important that we make that decision.

[29:23] As we come. As it were. To the wide junction. The junction in the road. The fork in the road. But we choose the right path. We choose the good path. Choose you this day. Whom you will serve. Judah's tragic response.

To Jeremiah 6.16. Was. Nah. Don't want it. We will not walk in it. And what happened. They ended up in exile.

And judgment. Their pride. Their love of novelty. Blinded them to God's truth. They said. No. We don't want the old paths. We want to go our own way. It's the same today.

Isn't it? Where the world offers fleeting pleasures. But God's old paths offer that rest for us. That peace. We don't. Want to miss.

The good way. We need the old paths. And. Some would say. Well. They want to change things. But.

[30:20] God says. Remove not the ancient landmark. Which thy fathers have set. There's some things that are a landmark. I know there's some work going on in the block next door. And I'm sure they've got some pegs in the ground.

The surveyors plant these posts don't they. And they make sure they're in the right spot. And some things are. Are locked in. That. You can't budge them. And they. You can't.

Just move that. Surveyor's. Post. It has to stay where it. Has been planted. There's some things in the word of God. Hey. That's not something you shift. It's not something you change.

It's not something you try to. Deviate from. It's something that's marked. It's something that's a landmark. It's. A settled truth. And God's truth is.

Is what matters. Isn't it? To hold that fast. And. So we think about it. How can we put that into practice. In our lives. Parents. Teach your children. God's ways. Teach your children.

[31:17] The way. That is the good way. Be a role model to them. Hold fast. God's truth. And let's pray for revival. Let's choose to walk in the old paths. As Joshua.

As for me and my house. We will serve the Lord. And Jeremiah 6 promises. Rest. For your souls. Think of the scripture. That our Lord tells us. Come unto me.

All you that labor. And I have you laden. And I will give you rest. He tells us to come. To him. And. The old paths are.

Are going to lead to rest. There's a rest that comes. There's a rest that comes to your soul. When you're. When you're doing things God's way. When you're knowing God. When you're knowing his way. When you're walking in his way.

He says walk in. These ways. Walk in these ways. We'll just go back to that scripture again. And he says. Stand ye in the ways. And see. Have that discernment.

[32:14] And ask. What's the old path? That's the one I want to take. When I come to that decision point. That fork in the road. Hey. I want to go the old paths. I want to go God's way. Because that's the good way.

And he says. Walk therein. Walk therein. Make it a day by day walk. One foot after the other. To walk in that way. And he says. You shall find. There's a promise. You shall find rest.

For your souls. But they said. We will not. Walk therein. Wouldn't it be better. Had they said. We will walk therein. We will walk therein. We will trust God.

We will go God's way. The good way. And we'll see his glory. Because we'll do it his way. Think of revival. As it came. As preachers evolved. Preach the word of God.

Faithfully. The world was changed back then. Think of our community. Of our nation. Can we see God work in us.

[33:11] In our little microcosm. Of where we're at. Of our own heart. Can we see revival. Think of those old paths. God's word. It's unchanging. Repentance.

Biblical repentance. We see prayer. It's. It's a landmark. It's not something. There's no other way. Prayer is the way.

Holiness. It's a landmark. Isn't it? Soul winning. Choose the old paths. The sense that they're eternal paths. They're God's paths. They're going to lead to rest. They're going to lead to revival. To God's glory. Let us not make Judah's mistake. In their rebellion. They said. We will not walk therein. We will not walk in it. Rather let's respond like Esther did in faith.

As the critical juncture of her life. She said. I'm going to stand. I'm going to intercede. As Joshua. Stood up for his family.

[34:08] His household. As the saints of old. Don't let Ichabod be written over your life. That God's glory would go. What a shame that would be.

To go our carnal way. Instead of God's way. To rather seek the good way. Let us pray. Lord we thank you for your eternal ways.

Your eternal truth. Lord for your word. For these truths of repentance. Of prayer. Of holiness. Of soul winning. Lord we think of.

The time tested. Honored word of God. Of your truth. Which never changes. Lord help us to. Have a heart that will seek your will.

Your way. And that will serve and. Honor you. With that heart that is right. That good way. Lord we pray for us. Any here present. Yet to trust you.

[35:05] As their saviour. They'll say. Jesus save me. Forgive me of my sin. Cleanse me of my sin. Pay for my sin. As I trust you. As my saviour. Who died on the cross.

For my sin. That will know that. Saving grace of God. By faith. Lord we pray that each one. Might have that heart. To seek after you. To seek to walk in your ways. Lord that we'll walk in the light. We'll walk in the spirit. We'll walk by faith. Not by sight. Help us Lord to stand in the ways. To see. To have that discerning heart. When choices come our way.

We'll choose your way. Not the world's way. We'll choose your way. Not our own selfish way. Lord help us to see that. To discern that. And to walk in your truth.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.