

The Old Paths

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[0:00] Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Jeremiah 6, verses 16 and 17, it says, '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 set watchmen over you, saying, hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, we will not hearken. We've heard about the way. We've heard about rest. And here we have the sound of the trumpet.

And it says, ask for the old paths. Ask for them. Old things. I guess I'm probably the oldest speaker today.

[1:05] So I'd like to think older and wiser, but maybe not necessarily so. But we want to have some good old things. There's some good old things in the Bible.

For example, Proverbs 22, 28. Proverbs 22, 28. It says, remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.

The ancient landmark, the boundary markers, show the border or limit. And we use survey markers now to show the extent of the house block before we build.

Without that boundary, we do not have a clear idea of where we are. And this is what the devil is doing. I believe in our world today, the ancient landmarks.

He's trying to remove them. That's what he's trying to do. Stand ye in the ways and see. And ask for the old paths. And ask, where is the good way?

[2:10] And walk therein. And ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, we will not. We will not walk therein.

Have you ever taken a wrong turn? I know I'm renowned for it. For taking wrong turns. And have you ever got lost? Or got sidetracked?

It's made you late for an appointment. It's made you frustrated. I'm used to that. And millions today have taken a wrong turn. Many will miss an appointment.

The most important appointment of all heaven. And they'll endure eternal disappointment and loss. Because they've been sidetracked by sin and Satan.

And Jeremiah calls the people to repent. And the context here in Jeremiah 6 is they wouldn't blush anymore.

[3:08] They lost their sense of sin and shame. Ask for the old paths. Now old isn't often that popular. It's not too trendy or cool.

The old paths. The crowd isn't there. Where the old paths are. It's not a crowded pathway. As many that go in the broad way.

Instead. There's a new brand. A new breed. A new Bible. A new Jesus. A new church today. When I say old.

I mean it as spoken of. And meant in the Bible. In the original. We aren't meaning old in the sense of cobwebs and rust.

But of getting back to the book. Back to the foundation. That's what we need. That's what the church of God desperately needs. A wake up call. Ask for the old paths. In this dying hour of planet earth.

[4:08] We need the old paths. There's a lot of talk about religious fundamentalists. The media paints fundamentalists in a bad light.

We believe in the Bible fundamentals. We do believe in the Bible fundamentals. And that makes us fundamentalists. That's not to say we're going to go and blow up some buildings.

But you could say there is some demolition work needed today. Baal's altars need to be demolished. Torn down. Some reject the fundamentals today.

They reject the old paths. The old fundamentals of God's truth. They'd rather have a man-made substitute. 71% of American adults believe there is no such thing as absolute truth. I'm sure Aussies are just as bad as the Americans. Yes, likely worse than true. And sadly, this view that there is no such thing as absolute truth is shared by 64% of so-called born-again Christians. [5:19] And 40% of evangelical Christians. That's a sad thing, isn't it? The old landmarks have got misplaced somehow. And much of the church today is in that same shape.

Abandoning absolute truth. No wonder the church has been robbed. Of its morals. Its standards. Of salvation. Of the power that it once had.

And we see that in the lifestyles and the behaviour of many. And for some, in the living room, they have their preacher. And all the chairs are pointed towards him.

And everyone receives his message as they gather at certain times. And the preacher's initials are TV. Do we watch movies and programs filled with immorality and profanity?

Do we say, oh, that film was really good. It didn't have too much swearing or nudity. Jeremiah 6.15, it says, God says, Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?

[6:26] No, they were not at all ashamed. Neither could they blush. The church doesn't blush anymore. The filth of the world's all around us. And it's like we're kind of just accepting.

Even within our homes, within our places of worship. Jeremiah 6.10, the prophet says, 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, and they have no delight in it.

They cannot hearken. They have no delight in the word. Israel would not listen to the word. Their ears were uncircumcised, unsaved.

God's word no longer had an effect on them. They were hardened to it. Will we listen? Will we listen? Or will we be like them?

[7:27] Not delighting in God's word anymore. We've been exhorted to hide God's word in our heart. We ought to delight in God's word. Make it our meditation all the day.

In the context too, verse 13 of Jeremiah 6, talks about covetousness. It means greed and selfishness.

And Christians today can be selfish with their time, money, talents, and greedy for the material things, craving for them more than the things of God.

Someone has said that sin is like a river, that it starts like a trickle, and it grows into a mighty river with fast currents sweeping its victims away, dumping them over a massive waterfall into the depths of hell.

Sin is something we should be very mindful of and we've been exhorted that way already. And on the church front, we've lost our sense of shame.

[8:34] We don't blush anymore. And we ought to. Today we have the new fashion church, full of new inventions and innovations, new methods, gimmicks, and psychology.

It's been called the Mip Church, after McDonald's. Supermarket Christianity, consumer-friendly and seeker-sensitive. User-friendly churches have unlearned some things too.

That's the danger of people today. They are no longer Bible-believing churches. They've missed something.

The old proven ways, God's proven methods are being replaced with a new emphasis. And today we have a new religion.

It's building large churches where people can hide and not have to deal with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. People living with no testimony or holiness, no power to overcome sin.

[9:37] And they are very comfortable in their sin. People supposedly getting saved without getting changed. Some churches use the devil's rock music with Christian lyrics.

Yet God has given us psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to glorify Him. The songwriters of old were not in the music business, but in the ministry.

Now we have mosh dancing, head-banging, disco lights, even sumo suits. In some churches, the platform becomes a stage. The old paths, the old paths have been neglected. The old-fashioned church stood on God's Word. They didn't follow the fans or the trends. They weren't open-minded. They faced the pressure to conform to a sinful society and chose rather to obey God, obey God, obey God, rather than men. [10:45] Stand in the ways. Ask for the old paths. There's an old-fashioned song in our book. It goes, so I was an old-fashioned meeting in an old-fashioned place where some old-fashioned people had some old-fashioned grace.

As an old-fashioned sinner, I began to pray and God heard me and saved me in the old-fashioned way. An old-fashioned conviction made the sinner pray.

That's what we need, isn't it? I'm not saying necessarily everything that's old is good or everything that's new is bad, but certainly the old paths are the paths we should tread. Amen? They're the paths we need.

They're the paths we need. That we stray from. They're getting overgrown today. They aren't popular or crowded. What was the road that the patriarchs and the prophets and the apostles travelled?

It was those old paths. The old paths. The paths of holiness. The paths of faith. The paths of prayer. The paths of righteousness. Of commitment.

[11:48] Of faithfulness to God's word. Of the first works. The first love. Choose the right old path. The good path.

As we heard earlier. Enter ye in at the straight gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction.

And many there be that go in thereat. Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. And few there be that find it.

It's not the popular way. There's few that find it. But we must walk. That good walk. That good path. By old, we don't mean stagnant.

That's the last thing that our Lord wants us to be. We need to be vibrant. Alive. Moving. But moving with the cloud. Moving with the cloud.

[12:46] Not the times. Moving with the cloud. We can use modern technology for the Lord. We don't want to be in a rut. It's like someone has said, if a rut becomes long enough and deep enough, it becomes a grave.

But there's some things that need restoring. So I'll get to my first point now. My first point, I took the liberty of a longer message than I usually do. But the old standard.

Number one. The old standard. We see in Isaiah 59, verse 19. So shall I fear the name of the Lord from the west and his glory from the rising of the sun.

When the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

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God's given us a standard. A standard. We ask, why do we have no revival? It's because we've lost the standard.

[13:51] Now this standard, we're not meaning to be traditions of man or legalism or rules of man's making or of carnal efforts of our own understanding. It's God's standard.

That is the ultimate and absolute that we need. God's standard. It's the standard we see right through the pages of scripture where God moves amongst his people.

As we see in Acts 3, verse 19, there was a refreshing, there's a restoring, a recovery of breath is the sense of it. A refreshing, times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

There's a refreshing of the old as it becomes fresher and more personal. It's more relevant, you could even say, that God's refreshing, God's moving is very personal and he touches our lives.

He refreshes those old truths that he wants us to obey. It's not of man. It's like someone has said that the only man-made thing in heaven are the scars in Christ's body.

[15:00] They're the only man-made things that will get to heaven. There's scars in his body. It's not anything of our own effort, of our own doing.

The Holy Spirit still moves.

He still convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. We live in days of compromise today. Days of compromise.

Many want to even try to widen the narrow way. They're trying to bust that gate a bit wider, trying to stretch that way a bit wider. But God's standard remains.

There's no change to that. The gate's still narrow today and the way is still narrow. We're living in a world where people think there is no standard.

We'll just make our own standard. Anything goes, whatever works. That's the catch cry. If it works, let's do that. It doesn't matter whether it's doctrinal compromise or the ecumenical movement.

[16:01] It doesn't matter as long as we get the numbers, as long as we get people through the gate. But they're going through, you could think, maybe they're not going through the narrow gate. Friends, we need to be careful.

Remove not the old landmark. God sets boundaries and there's faithful, helpful boundaries. I know you could think of it in terms of the boundaries when you go up in the hills and there's some windy roads.

There's boundaries there. There's some, how do you call it? There's some boundaries there. Guard rails. Guard rails, that's it.

There's some guard rails around those roads. And you might think, oh, that's a bit mean. They're kind of confining me. It's a bit restricted. I can't sort of sweep wide around those windy roads.

But they're for our good, aren't they? Without those guard rails, we'd be in some great danger. And yet, it seems like these days, people just want to get as close to the edge as they can.

[17:03] Let's just get as close to the world as we can. And they think that that's okay. God's put some boundaries, and it's called holiness.

It's called Christlikeness. It's consider him. It's let's be like him. Let's want to be pleasing him.

Friends, we're in a spiritual war.

There's a battle that's raging all around us. A war that's raging in homes. In homes where there's drunkenness and trash in terms of trashy entertainment.

There's wars in our schools where they're saturated with drugs and violence at times. In society where there's a focus on coarseness and obscenity, it used to be a crime to spit.

Times have changed. There's a war on, and it's all around us. We could talk much more about that.

[18:15] But even in the church, even in the church, there's a coldness, there's a lukewarmness, and we need to be very alert to that. Sound the trumpet.

Sound the trumpet. Another thing is a disrespect for authority. A love and respect for parents and for God is God's standard.

We want to have a godly respect to the elder ones. In Proverbs 23, 29, it says, the glory of young men is their strength, and the beauty of old men is the grey head.

I'm getting more beautiful every day. The glory of young men is their strength, but the beauty of old men is the grey head. We need to lovingly respect those who are older, the older brethren in our churches, and we want to respect them.

And yet, the trend is you have a trendy service for the young people and then an old-fashioned service for the oldies. Aren't we one body? Shouldn't that be the case? Brothers and sisters, times have changed.

[19:30] But God doesn't change. God doesn't change. He still says be holy, Leviticus 19. And there's at least 15 other places in the Bible where it says be holy.

Yet the world and the worldly will mock Bible standards. They'll say like this young lady said, a Christian can go anywhere. She was a woman in a white dress.

She wanted to go down into a coal mine. And the miner said, yes, you can. You can wear your white dress down into the mine, but there's a considerable difficulty to keep you from wearing a white dress coming out of the mine.

You know, we've got liberty. We've got freedom. But God puts standards. He puts guardrails in there for our good. We shouldn't lower the standard.

We should aspire to a higher standard. It says in the word, if the foundations be destroyed, what shall, what can, the righteous do? There's times to tear down and to build up.

[20:32] In the word, it talks about that in Isaiah 58, verse 12, that they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places, tear down the idols and rebuild the altar.

That's what we need to do, to tear down the idols and rebuild the altar. And think of it, the old standard. You can think of it in Bunyan's old book of the pilgrim.

And as the pilgrims got to Vanity Fair, they kind of stood out from the crowd. They were markedly different. The pilgrims at Vanity Fair, when they walked into Vanity Fair, they were clothed differently.

They had a language that was different. They cared not for the worldly wares, but they looked up to heaven. And we ought to be like that. It doesn't mean we walk around necessarily wearing old fashioned clothes, but we'll have a different language, we'll have a different love, we'll have a different aspiration from all the world around us.

The old standard. Secondly, the old school, the old school. I'm of the old school, the old school.

[21:47] It's the school of hard knocks. It's the school of life. It's the school of discipleship. And the old school is still taking enrolments today.

It's still taking enrolments today. He says, come, learn of me. God is still taking enrolments in the old school, so to speak.

As we bring, the word speaks to us of God's people as being disciples, as the followers of Christ. And it means learners. We want to learn of Christ.

And as we learn of him, a restoring work goes on. He restoreth my soul, Psalm 23. God's in the restoring business.

He restores us, he brings us back to the original condition. That's what he wants for his church, to restore us to the original condition. So bring times of refreshing.

[22:46] That means getting back to the truth, getting back to the old upper room, getting back to the old cross, getting back to the old truth, the old power, the Holy Ghost power.

He's been moving since Genesis 1 verse 2. There's a sickness in the church. Someone has put it like this, too much machinery and too little power.

Too many committees and meetings and organisations. Psalm 92 10, the psalmist cried, I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

We need to get back to that fresh anointing. Not an annoyance, an emotion, a man comes and thing, but a touch of heaven, a true touch of heaven.

And God will loosen us, he'll liberate us, and he'll restore us. And it says to us of the inward man, that the inward man shall be renewed day by day.

[23:50] 2 Corinthians 4 verse 16. He says to us, behold, I make all things new. I make all things new. How does he make us new?

By restoring, by refreshing the old truth, the old fundamentals of life in Christ, of his word. The old faith that we should earnestly contend for, the faith that was once delivered to the saints.

That's what we need. We've lost our fight in the church, by and large. We've been tricked, I believe, somewhat, in being a bit like the frog in the kettle, as things have changed around about us, slowly, imperceptibly, Satan has diluted the message and the stand of the word of many churches.

Think of the men and women of God through history. Bunyan himself spent 12 years in jail. Why? Because he just wouldn't be part of the establishment.

He wasn't in the established church of his day. He was kind of a bit unusual, you could say, wasn't he? Because he stood for God, for God's truth.

[25:14] He wasn't willing to please the establishment of the day. And that's what we need, to say it like it is, to be straight down the line. Yet we see today abomination, abomination, in what should be the holy place.

We've got aerobics, Christian rock, there's a lack of awe and reverence. We've lost something, people. We've lost something. There's a chip substitute come in and replace the gospel.

Now we have the easy gospel. Give people what the flesh wants. It's a form of godliness, but denying, the power thereof.

And a new improved religion has come. It's a bit like we see in 1 Chronicles 13, where David was listening to what the people wanted.

In 1 Chronicles 13, verse 4, they had this bright idea, and it says the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

[26:26] You know, they'd have put it to a church vote. Yep, this idea wins hands down. This is the way we're going to go. We're going to carry the ark of God in a new cart. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might and with singing, and with harps and with psalteries, and with timbrels and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

They had the whole kit and caboodle. You know, they were just, it was wild, it was worship, but it was wrong.

It was wrong. It wasn't God's way. It wasn't God's way. And that's the danger of choosing a new car instead of the old school, the old school.

Friends, we need to have the old standard, its holiness. It hasn't changed. It's still a sacred. The old school is still Christ.

Learn of me. And thirdly, the old story. The old story. The old, old story. And yet, it's the good news. It's now. It's now.

[27:35] Our good news. The soul-saving gospel is still the good news. And it's still for today, for right now, for this very moment. Of Spurgeon, they said, an enemy of Spurgeon said, he's not moving forward.

He's teaching the theology of the first century. They didn't like what Spurgeon was on about. He stood for something. But he took it really as a compliment. Because it's exactly what we should be doing, isn't it?

We need to be teaching the theology of the first century. And, friends, there's a famine coming. A famine is forecast in Amos 8, 11.

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land. Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord.

We're seeing spiritually stunted Christians because we've gone astray from the old story. The old story. It's still for now.

[28:47] The salvation message. We've heard about salvation. We've heard of sanctification. We've heard about consider him. The old story. The old message is still vital.

It's still essential today. We need to get back to where we were. Get back to where he wants us to be. Get back to Calvary. Get back to the old rugged cross.

Get back to the blood of Christ, to the uncompromising word of God. Get back to repentance and holiness. It's not optional.

Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. The biblical mandate does not change. It cannot change.

It will not change. The gospel message is still the same now as it ever was. The old time gospel is still the same. And that's what we need. That's what we must seek and find.

[29:44] Hosea 4 verse 6 it tells our Lord speaks of a time when he says my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

They're a bit like the people in Acts 17 21. They said to the preacher, hey, you want to hear and tell some new thing. But people today, sin is still the same.

The sinfulness of sin, it's still the same. Holiness is still the same. The musts are still in here. You must be born again.

You must. You must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Hell is still the same.

It's still as hot. It still is eternal. Of course, we know there will be the final hell. Death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire.

[30:54] And it says that the smoke of their torment will ascend. It will be forever. It's still the same. Hell is still the same. The gospel commission is still the same.

Friends, we need to declare war on sin. We need to stand up for the old standard. The old standard.

We need to be faithful to the old story. The good news. There's no new, revised, updated, improved version. It's still the same salvation.

It's still the same today. It's still true today that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. There's only that one name under heaven.

There's no other name. It's still a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. We ought to still prepare to meet thy God. It's still true except you repent.

[31:57] You shall likewise perish. Friends, I urge you today to consider that vital, absolute, essential truth for all of us to find the good old paths.

To find him who says to you, I am the way, the truth, the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.

no other way. And he still says you'll find rest for your souls. He still promises that and he still gives that.

Friends, in our text we saw that the prophet said stand in the ways and ask for the old paths but they said we will not walk therein.

Their response was we don't want a bar of it. It's too hard. We want some other way. We want to do it my way. We want to go and do our own thing.

[33:06] Friends, it's a great mistake to miss salvation. A great tragedy for you to be lost.

For you to miss out on that rest for your souls. You can have rest today. Rest from a guilty conscience. So have peace that passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Without it you have a guilty conscience. You're like a restless sea. There's rest still today for troubled minds. Let not your heart be troubled.

There's still peace that passeth all understanding. A peace that replaces that fear of judgment and help. There's still rest from your works.

Rest in his salvation. He still extends it. He still offers it. And we can have the rest of knowing we're safe in his hands.

[34:13] In the hands of him in whom all things consist. They refuse to listen in Jeremiah 6. no. We don't want that.

They said. I trust that you won't have that same response but your response will be Lord help me to find the truth.

To find that way that lead a thun to life. That narrow way. Lord let's pray. Shall we go.