

THE GOOD OLD PATH

*From a sermon delivered by Rev. Daniel Ikono
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"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways Of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

In the course of this teaching, we would be exposed to two ways and at the end of the day, we have to make a choice. The passage states, "There is a way," that seems so pleasant and beautiful, but in the light of God's Word, it is a wrong way and the end thereof is death. God has brought about camp meeting so that people can come out from their wrong way and enter the right way. The Word of God gives us light so that you and I may not err in our choices. Thank God the Gospel is not obscure. Whatsoever God wants you to do or know, He will present to you in a- very simple way.

"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" (Jeremiah 6:16).

That is what God wants you to do. You have a work to do. You have to enquire. Enquire for what? Enquire for the Good and the Old Way. That is the topic of our teaching for this morning: ***The Good Old Path.***

Naturally, the tendency for us is to do away with old things. But no matter how old the Word of God is, we still must treasure it. The old way is good for us. The Choir sang a while ago — *Give me The Old Time Religion.* Those who walk in the old way are blessed. The old way is good enough for us. A verse of the song states: *'It was good for Paul and Silas.'* Is the old way good enough for you? Prophet Jeremiah says you should stand in the old way. As we have come for camp meeting, we are, as it were, standing in the way. Do you want to line up with the Word of God? Your questions should be, "Where is the good way that Paul and Silas walked? Where is the good way that our dear fathers in the Lord walked? Where is the good way that the Prophets and the Apostles walked?" When you find it, "Walk therein." The result is that "You shall find rest for your souls." We want rest for our souls. If you come here and you fail to achieve that end, you are of all men most miserable.

God exposed the good old way to our foreparents in the Garden of Eden and as long as they walked in that good old way, they found rest for their souls. Beware, the devil, that old enemy, is around. He is wiser than every one of us. He wants to introduce a new thing to you. That is why the Word of God says, "There is a way that see- meth right unto a man." He would bring it and then present it to you and make you think that the old one is useless. But the Bible warns that the end thereof is the way of death, spiritual death. When one is dead spiritually, one is cut off from God and His people; one is doomed.

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:15-17).

That was the Word of God that provided the way. You cannot go to God by your own way. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." John also tells us that Jesus is the Word and the Word is God. If we then

ask the question, "How many of us would want to see God? How many of us would want to go to Heaven?" I know all of us would raise our hands, because we want to go to Heaven, we want to see God. But by what means are we going to see God? By what means are you going to please God? It is by taking heed to "Thus saith the Lord." Consider Adam and Eve. God loved them, He made a very nice world for them and a beautiful home called the Garden of Eden. He also made provision for their living. But he gave them a commandment - the Word of God. He told them what to do and what not to do. He gave them the Light. So, it was left for them to walk in the Light. As you have come to the camp meeting, you will be, exposed to the Word of God, which will provide light for your spiritual life. As 'long as you obey the Word of God and walk in the light of God's Word, you are on the right path.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4).

`A new way, a new life, a new revelation' as they call it, is what people are looking for. They say the Gospel is old-fashioned. They want to discover new grounds. But thank God, this old-time religion is good enough for us. We are satisfied with the Word of God. The purpose of this teaching is that God wants to establish you and me on the Word of God so that we would not be shaken or moved. Paul said, "I know whom I have believed." Do you know whom you believe? Very many people do Snot know whom they believe. Any little bit of suggestion, any new thing would take them off guard. That shouldn't be our lot. In the Garden, Adam and Eve were faced with a new preacher. What did they do? They cast aside the Word of God. When one casts aside the Word of God, one is in trouble. This is because God honours His Word above His name.

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4).

What a contrast! God had told them earlier that if they ate of that forbidden fruit, they would die. A new preacher showed them a new way; a new revelation. Somebody stood before them in the place of God, telling them, 'Eat of this fruit, you will not die!' If it were you, which one would you take? You know the story. They disobeyed by eating the forbidden fruit and went the wrong way. The Bible states, "And when the woman saw that the fruit was pleasant to the eyes." There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end is spiritual and physical death. The Word told them, 'In the day ye shall eat it, ye shall die.' When they ate of that forbidden fruit, they entered the wrong way. Afterwards, God pronounced on them, "Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."

The Bible further warns:

"Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless" (Proverbs 23:10).

The old landmark! God has landmarks for His people. He keeps them there for our good. God instituted these spiritual landmarks for our growth and edification. God put the landmark to differentiate us from the children of darkness. The instruction is that you should never tamper with the landmarks. If you do, you have removed yourself from the good old way. We glorify God for our elders, pastors, ministers and overseers who have by God's grace paid the great price to keep the landmarks for us.

What is a landmark? It is the sound doctrine. Every Word of God is a doctrine and it is a landmark. The instruction is that you should not remove it. If God says, "Stop!" you should stop. If He says, "Go!" you should go. If He says, "Keep quiet!" you should not talk. When God says, "Don't talk" and you do, you have removed the landmark. By God's grace, we shall not remove it.

What does the Word of God say about the hair of a Christian? Do you see that as a doctrine? Do you value that as you value your salvation, sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost? These are things you think are minor, but they are landmarks.

"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man has long hair, it is a shame unto him?" (1 Corinthians 11:14).

The Word of God does not allow for Christian gentlemen to carry bushy hair. If your life or

comportment does not conform strictly to the Word of God, before you know it, you are on the wrong way. Apostle Paul told the Corinthian brethren that if nature could teach them that it was not good for a man to carry a long hair, how much more the Spirit of God in them?

"But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering" (1 Corinthians 11:15).

If shame and glory are presented to you, which will you take? As Christians, we will choose glory, because Jesus is the King of glory. The Word of God states, "But if a woman have long hair, it is a Glory to her." But what do we find? We see people derailing from the old path, ladies cutting low their hair. When you ask them what is wrong, they say they have discovered a new life. We want God to establish us on the Word of God, because the Word of God is a sure foundation. No matter who is trying to convince you, you should know where you stand. A woman's long hair is a glory to her; it is for her covering.

"But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the church of God" (1 Corinthians 11:16).

That is the standard! Go to any Apostolic Faith Church, you will not find contrary customs.

"THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life;

"(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)"

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-3).

Apostle John told the people that what he and the other Apostles heard, what they knew, what they saw and what they received from the Lord Jesus Christ was what he was passing to them. There is a mighty blessing in that chapter, which the people of the world are looking for. The blessing is Christian fellowship. Wherever you come from, when you allow the Word of God to have its way in your life, and you come together with another person who loves the Word of God, automatically, you will have fellowship. The language may differ, the tribe may differ, the cultural background may differ, but the Spirit of God will unite you. We thank God for this. John told the Christians that when they take to the Word of God, they have fellowship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." By the grace of God, we are not boasting, through the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. You may call me "Brother", but it means nothing, if the fellowship is not there! What brings true fellowship is adherence to the Word of God.

Listen to what Paul told Timothy:

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

If you tell people that they should not remove the old landmark, be sure you do not remove it yourself. That is our stand. God is not a respecter of persons.

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:13-16).

This is a serious warning. After Paul had told Timothy to teach the congregation the doctrine of the Bible, he warned him that evil men shall wax worse and worse. You may think Paul was referring to the highway robbers only, NO. He was telling us in this context that there would be people who would not take to the "thus saith the Lord" among the believers. Is that true? It is! Those who say, "It's not so serious, don't mind them. You do it like this or divert it like that. You can do it in a modern way, you can modify it. I have discovered some light somewhere there; it is almost what you are doing in that church." Almost is not the same. Those who say that are evil men. They may be around but by the grace of God, we are for Christians whose feet are on the good old path. The congregational song states, *'We are moving on the path the saints have trod.'* Our fathers have trodden in that path and it was good for them. Why then do you want to get out of such a path? You may say, "Those people do not want anybody to get out of their church." I am not talking about church. The Word of God can never change because God says, "I am the Lord, I change not." You say, "I have discovered something." You have not discovered anything; you are only being deceived. The Bible says, deceivers who don't want to pay attention to the sound doctrine, Will wax worse and worse. So, beware.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of" (2Timothy 3:14).

When you were not saved, you did not understand the Scriptures. It was at the feet of Jesus, after you had confessed your sins and prayed to Him and He forgave you, that He opened your eyes and started to teach you about the good way. He said, "This is the way, walk ye in it." The Bible says you should not stop. It is the way of holiness.

Paul told the Corinthians that he was desirous of knowing nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If you know Him, there is no amount of falsehood in the world or in hell that can take you out of the way of Truth.

***"IF there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,
"And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying,
Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;
"Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul(Deutronomy13:1-3).***

The Word of God tells us that there must be a testing time. Whether we like it or not, sooner or later, every one of us who wants to make Heaven must be tested to prove our worth. The Lord says He will prove you. Our God does not tempt us to fall, God proves us because He wants tested and tried people. He wants to know whether we value the Gospel. Passing that examination will depend upon your knowing and putting the Word of God into action. It is not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of God. If you love the Word of God, there is no test that God will not see you through.

'Continue thou in the things which you have learnt!' At school, kids learn by constant repetition until the concept is established in them. In the same way, the Word of God is established in a Christian by continuing in the Scriptures. When temptation and tests come, quote the Scriptures right, and by the grace of God, you will stand your ground. In 1Kings 13, a record was made of a prophet of God whom God commanded to go to Bethel and pronounce judgment upon the altar of the wicked king Jeroboam. He did and signs and wonders accompanied his mission. Oh, what a success! When you teach, preach, sing, or do anything for the Lord, whatever successes and miracles that accompany your mission, the Word of God is still higher than your achievements. Don't put the Word of God under, and your so-called successes higher. God has done a lot for us here. But day by day, right from our eldest to the youngest, we prostrate before God, saying, "Oh God, help me to line up." That is the Gospel. But when you say, "I can do this, I can do that; don't they know what I did yesterday? Haven't they heard of me in our branch church and how I pull down revival?" Beware! Even when God has placed His seal of approval upon your work, be very careful and live your life according to the Word of God, because that is the area that concerns God most; not your miracles!

We value the Word of God. It is the Word that produces miracles. We don't put miracles ahead of the Word of God. So, the prophet went and said, "O, thou altar, thou shalt be rent and the ashes upon you shall be poured out." And immediately, the altar rent and the ashes poured out. When the king dared to hold him, his hand withered, and the king said, 'O man of God, pray to your God to perform a miracle and restore my hand.'

Did he pray? Yes, he did; and immediately, the hand was restored. The king told him, 'You are a mighty man of God, come to my house and eat, I will give you a reward.' That was to prove him. When God gives a specific instruction, Satan would always come along to tell you to do something otherwise. This man of God told the king, 'No, I have been warned by God that I should not eat here. I don't know why, but it was the Word of God.' You need not understand all "Thus saith the Lord." Your duty is to obey. The prophet continued, 'And I was instructed never to return by the same way I came and that is what I am going to do.' But on the way, something was waiting for him. There is always a testing ground ahead, but don't be afraid, when you meet it, just rest on the Word and God will give you victory. The Word of God says, God will prove you to know whether you love Him with all your heart. God proved that man of God. God wanted to know whether this man valued His Word.

In Galatians 1, God says if an angel should come and say something outside God's Word, don't listen to him. So, an 'Old Prophet' after hearing of the success of that man of God, inquired from his son, 'Which way has he gone?' They told him and he pursued the man of God. The prophet was sitting under the oak tree. May God help us to march on. We should not loiter. There is no resting place here because the enemy is roaming about seeking whom he may devour. The old prophet asked: 'Are you that man of God who performed wonders?' He said, 'Yes I am.' The old prophet continued, "An angel told me to bring you back." He deceived him, because the Word of God says, "Evil men shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." The angel of God and the Word of God, the Spirit of God and the Word of God, are in agreement.

As soon as the man of God heard the word 'angel,' he valued the voice of an angel more than the Word of God. Don't value man's word more than the Word of God. Man's word is weak and feeble, but God's Word is established in Heaven. God's Word is quick, and sharper than any two-edged sword. The word of an angel and the Word of God, which will you take? Listen to what happened to the man who went out of the old way.

"And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and has not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water. thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers"(1Kings 13:21, 22).

This is serious! The Word of God is the mind of God, don't disobey it!

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers" (Deuteronomy 13:6).

The wife of thy bosom, and those people very close to you, if they want to take you out Of the good old way, the Bible says, you should not agree.

"Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him" (Deuteronomy 13:8).

Do not toy with the Word of God. Be committed to the Word. Do not compromise the Word. The Word of God makes us love people. A husband who has the Word of God will love his wife, and a wife who has the Word of God will love her husband and respect him too. A man who has the Word will take care of his family as instructed in the Scriptures.

When it comes to the point of compromise, it is a serious matter! We have an example in the Bible. God proved Job. I guess Job's wife was a very good wife and faithful to him, but when trial came, the affliction was too much on her husband. She could not stand her ground. The Word of God is not to be diluted, even in secret. May be

she whispered to her loving and dying husband in the bedroom, "Look, there is nobody around here now, it is a matter between us, I own you, you married me, I love you, but this trial is too much. I don't think the Word of God has a solution to this matter. The best thing is to curse God and die." That cursing God doesn't mean that Job is going to stand and say, "Woe unto God." It means denying the Word of God. "I know one herbalist in town. No one would know. I, your wife, would do the job. Just believe me, let me go and meet him, he would tell me the cause of this your affliction." Is that not the trial of many today? They know the cause of your barrenness, they know why your business is down. They know who is persecuting you in the church. They know the witches and wizards. But Job told her, No. Trusting God is a do or die affair. I have resolved to follow God to the end. When it is time for us to choose whom we will obey, we should take our stand like Job.

"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

"My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:10-12).

Job kept his integrity. People may laugh at you and say, "What is the point staying in this old way? It is too hard for you. Since you came here, your colleagues have got married; you want to die in this Gospel without marriage?" Yes, it is better we die in this Gospel than to do otherwise. "What good has this Gospel done you? No change of clothes, nothing!" Oh, this Old time Religion is good enough for us. It is not food that is keeping us. Now that the economic situation in Nigeria is bad, it is the Word of God that is keeping us. If we take the Word of God out of our lives, we will die. So, whether there is husband or not, the Word of God is our Guide. Food or no food, the Word of God is sufficient. Whether we are well or sick, the Word of God is there for us. The landmark is there for us and we are not going to remove it for anything's sake.

I believe after the Lord might have turned around the captivity of Job, his wife apologised. Be careful of false brethren. Be careful of your associates. Choose your companions very carefully. David said he was a companion of them that loved the Lord. Press on, God Who helped those who had gone on before will help you. That is the old time religion. The Children of Israel were crying in the camp because they lacked faith in the Word of God, they could not move further. They said the sons of Anak would consume them. But in this old way, did fire consume Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? No! Did the lion consume Daniel? No! Your own lion will not consume you, provided you are in the old way. Your own fire will not burn you, provided you are in the old way. The water will not overflow you.

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

"As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8,9).

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3:11).

Children of God have crowns. We shall wear golden crowns in Heaven. Take heed, lest another man take your crown!