

GOD'S WAY, THE WAY TO GO

Text: Psalm 25

For many years I have thought and, to a degree, taught about the “ways of God.” We need to know God’s Word, God’s work and God’s ways. Today, however, I hope to present an entire message dedicated to knowing God in “His way.” God’s desire is to align our will with His. The result of that alignment is spoken of in II Samuel 22:33: “God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.”

Let’s define “way”:

1. Literally, a passing; hence, a passage; the place of passing; hence, a road of any kind; a highway; a private road; a lane; a street.
2. Length of space; as a great way; a little way.
3. Course; direction of motion or travel.
4. Room for passing; to make way.
5. Manner of doing any thing; method; means of doing; mode.
6. Manner of thinking or behavior.
7. Method or plan of life and conduct.

Look at some of the many “ways” we use these familiar idioms: by the way;

in a way; in the way; on its way; long way; the way things are; way of life; no way; way too cool; make your way; my way; the other way; all the way; way to go.

Moses requested of God in Exodus 33:13, “Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation *is* thy people.” God answered in Exodus 33:14: “And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.” God promises peace to those who know Him and His way.

The children of Israel witnessed God prepare the table before them in the presence of their enemies (while in Egypt). Then they beheld the miraculous parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of their would be captors, i.e., the army of Egypt. They enjoyed the miraculous provision of manna and water from the Rock. Yet in all this, Israel failed to trust God when it was time to pass into the promised land. What was the difference in Moses and Israel? It is explained in Psalm 103:7, “He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.” Israel knew of God’s works, but did not know of God’s ways. And as a result they did not know God’s rest. Hebrews 3:10,11 says, “Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.” And that’s a shame, because God declared in Hebrews 4:9, “There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.”

All three of the synoptic Gospels tell of Jesus’ interaction with the chief priests and scribes of the Pharisees, along with the Herodians in Matthew 22:15-22, Mark 12:13-17, and Luke 20:19-26. The Pharisees confessed that Jesus

knew “the way of God in truth...” (Matthew 22:16.) They heard His words, marveled--but went their own way (Matthew 22:22). Proverbs 16:25: “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.” In Matthew 22:22, Mark 12:17 and Luke 20:26, not only did they hear the words of Christ, they marveled at His words.

We may know God’s Word, what He says. We may know God’s works, what He does. But going deeper yet, we may know God’s ways, who He is.

I. GOD’S WAY IS MEANINGFUL

The Church in early days was known as “The Way,” no doubt borrowing from Jesus the words in John, “I am the way...” Alden Bass said, “The history of committed Christian community is a story of roads. The first followers of Jesus called themselves “the Way,” a name that echoes Jewish *halakha*, the “way of life” enshrined in the Torah, as well as the disciples’ belief that Jesus was “the way” to God the Father. It is widely believed the early church drew this from the passage of Isaiah 40:3, ‘The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.’ The early disciples responded to the preaching of John the Baptist as was prophesied in Isaiah. And in following Jesus they were choosing the straight or right way. Matthew 7:13,14,

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

We see other passages of Scripture alluding to the church as “The Way:” Acts 16:17: “The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.”

Acts 18:25: “This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.”

Acts 18:26: “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”

Acts 24:14: “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.”

This Way is none other than, “...the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE...” (John 14:6).

II. GOD’S WAY IS MYSTERIOUS

Isaiah 55:9: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Psalms 77:19: “Thy way *is* in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.” We cannot see the trails in the trailless sea or tracks in the trackless sea. In the ancient days the sailors had to look to the stars. The Bible says in Acts 27:20, “And when neither sun nor stars in many days

appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.” We see from this from this text that without the sky to navigate by, combined with the horrendous storm, peril was at hand. By the same token, when one is in the midst of a storm on the sea of life, it is intimacy with the “Bright and Morning Star” (Revelation 22:16) that will lead us safe to the haven of rest.

III. GOD’S WAY IS MERCIFUL

Nehemiah 9:19: “Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.”

Isaiah 35:6: “Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.”

In the trials of life, God will lead us through, even the most difficult places. We oftentimes panic when God has promised us peace. He does not always deliver us out of the trial, but He does promise to be with us and lead us through the trial. Isaiah 43:2 says, “When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Psalm 23:4, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Jeremiah 6:16 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.” Isaiah 53:6 tells us by our human nature, “...we have turned every one to his own way....” If we take God’s way we are promised peace and rest, even in the midst of the storms. The truth is, God loves us and is willing to bless us and use us, no matter what lies in our past. Psalm 103:10: “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” Micah 7:18: “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.”

-Pastor Pope-