SEEKING THE OLD PATHS

**DATE: 1/7/2018 am**

**TEXT: Jeremiah 6:16; Matthew 7:13, 14**

**INTRODUCTION**

# Quote: Vance Havner, in his book “Jesus Only” has a chapter titled *Beware of the Bypass.* He writes, *“This is the day of the bypass. Great freeways skirt the edge of town after town, detour here and circumvent there. In this madhouse of traffic congestion, when we are safer on a battlefield than on a highway, the bypass is a necessity.”* He continues: *“But there are some bypasses that belong to another category. There is the King's Highway from earth to heaven and all along its course the devil has built a clever system of detours. ‘The way of the cross leads home’ but there is another way ‘that seemeth right unto a man.’ It bypasses the old familiar landmarks and ‘the end thereof are the ways of death’”*

# In some of the most familiar words in the book of Jeremiah

# We are exhorted to beware of *the bypasses of life*,

# Or, to put it another way, *the New Paths*

# Jeremiah writes in our text –

# *“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…”*

# Our Theme for 2018 is found in this passage

# We are exhorting the church to do just that

# Seek the Old Paths

# What are the Old Paths?

# - *“Directed Paths”*

# Proverbs 3:5, 6 *– “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths”*

# - *“Taught or Learned Paths”*

# Psalm 25:4, 5 *– “Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths” “Lead me in Thy Truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day”*

# - *“Supported Paths”*

# Psalm 17:1-5 – *“Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips” “Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence; let Thine eyes behold the things that are equal” “Thou hast proved mine heart; Thou hast visited me in the night; Thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress” “Concerning the works of men, by the Word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer” “Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not”*

# The Old Paths are God’s Paths / God’s Ways

# The Old Paths are the Ways of God found in the Word of God

# And lived out by the Believer of God by Faith

# Let’s pray and then examine the words of Jeremiah and think about -

# *“Seeking The Old Paths”*

# ~~~Prayer~~~

# First, notice -

# I. THE “OTHER” PATHS

# Jeremiah speaks here of the *“old paths”*

# In Jeremiah 18:15 he speaks of the *“ancient paths”*

# However, we see that there are also *other paths*

# The LORD said to the people - *“Stand ye in the ways”*

# The image here is of a intersection

# Implied is that of a choice of direction

# When the LORD said to - *“Stand ye in the ways, and see”* ...

# He is calling for the people to stop, and think about which way to go

# Let’s look at our choices

# What is it, that we should *“see”,* in the Paths we can take?

# First, let me suggest that we should *see* -

# A. Their ‘Difference’

# The adjective *“old”* describing *“paths”* suggests that there are *other* paths, *newer* paths

# It also suggests that there is a *Great Difference* between the two

# Let’s look at this Difference

# 1. The noun *“old”* speaks of *a very long time*

# The *“old paths”* are paths that have existed for a long time

# In fact, the word is translated *“everlasting”* at least 63 other times in the Bible

# The Old Paths are not just paths that have existed for many years …

# But Paths that date back through eternity

# They are Paths from eternity past

# In other words, the *“old paths”* are paths that lead back to God

# The *“old paths”* are paths that were laid out by the Lord Himself

# 2. On the other hand, there are the *“New Paths”*

# These are the paths that have been charted and laid out by *man*

# These *new paths* are the other paths that we see

# a. ‘Popular’ Paths

# Jesus spoke of the popularity of these paths when He said in Matthew 7:13 –

# *“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”*

# It’s *these new paths* that are crowded with travelers and congested with activity

# b. ‘Preferred’ Paths

# The *newer paths* seem easier, smoother, shorter, less demanding and restrictive;

# Therefore they are preferred by the majority

# c. ‘Praised’ Paths

# The *new paths* are always the recommendation of those that travel them

# On these new paths are Places and Things that appeal to the Wants and Desires of the majority

# There is a big difference between the old and the new paths

# - The old paths were *laid out by God*, the new *by man*

# - The old paths are traveled by *the minority*, the new by *the majority*

# - The old paths are often *shunned*, the new *accepted*

# - The old paths are often *criticized*, the new *praised*

# There is a Big Difference between the two!

# Now, we not only see Their ‘Differences’

# But also -

# B. Their ‘Destination’

# The Old Paths lead in one Direction

# The New Paths take you in a totally Different Direction

# When someone comes to the meeting place of these roads

# - The Old Paths go straight ahead

# - The New Paths lead in an opposite Direction

# When Jesus described the destinations of these different paths in Matthew 7:13, 14 …

# He spoke of -

# - A Broad way that leads to Destruction

# - A Narrow way that leads to Life

# The Old Paths, although traveled by the minority, leads to a Delightful Destination

# The New Paths, crowded with the majority, …

# … lead to a Destructive Destination

# 1. The ‘New’ Direction

# Quote: In an interview with *Time Magazine*, Willie Nelson said *“I believe that all roads lead to the same place. We're taking different ways to get there, but we all end up in the same place”*

# Quote: Charles de Lint, a Celtic story teller said, *“When all's said and done, all roads lead to the same end. So it's not so much which road you take, as how you take it”*

# Perhaps you have heard the saying - *“All roads lead to Rome”*

# The saying comes from the fact that the road system of the Ancient Romans was one of the greatest engineering accomplishments of its time

# With over 50,000 miles of paved roads, all radiated from their center at the *golden milestone* [miliarius aurem]

# A gilded bronze monument in the central Forum of the city of Rome

# Therefore, whichever road you took, it would lead to Rome

# 2. The ‘Old’ Direction

# However, when it comes to the Old, they do not lead to the same place

# The Destination is not the same

# The Old Paths lead back to God, they also lead us to God

# It is for this reason God says –

# *“Stand ye in the ways, and see”*

# God says - Think about it

# Look at The ‘Differences’

# Look at The ‘Destination’

# THE “OTHER” PATHS

# Next, we see -

# II. THE “OLD” PATHS

# Now, having asked us to Consider our way –

# *“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see,”*

# The LORD now makes a recommendation for us

# A suggestion to do the sensible thing

# He says *“ask for the old paths”*

# Because we face Different Paths, a Decision has to be made which to take

# The LORD recommends - *“Take the old paths”*

# God says to *“ask for”* the Old Paths

# The word *“ask”* has the idea of *inquiring, to seek information*

# God not only recommends for us to *choose* the Old Paths

# But He also encourages us to *inquire* about them

# Inquire, so that we might see the wisdom of our choice

# First let’s look at -

# A. ‘Who’ We Should Ask

# If we should ask about the Old Paths, Who would we ask?

# First, we should ask *those* who have already walked the Old Paths

# When we look at the Old Paths we find that they bear the footprints of many a saint

# 1. They bear the footprints of Enoch

# *“Enoch, what about the old paths?”*

# I hear his answer, *“On the old paths, one can walk with God”*

# 2. They bear the footprints of Noah

# *“Noah, what about the old paths?”*

# He answers, *“On the old paths, you find grace in the eyes of the Lord”*

# 3. They bear the footprints of Abraham

# *“Abraham, what do you say about the old paths?”*

# He answers, *“On the old paths, you may not know what tomorrow holds, but you know Who holds tomorrow”*

# 4. They bear the footprints of Elijah

# *“Elijah, what about the old paths?”*

# He replied, *“On the old paths, God supplies your every need”*

# 5. They bear the footprints of Daniel & his Friends

# *“Daniel, what do you and your friends say about the old paths?”*

# He answers, *“Just when you need Him the most, He is there”*

# 6. They bear the footprints of Job

# *“Job, we ask you. What do you say about the old paths?”*

# Job answers, *“My Father’s way has many twist and turns, but He maketh no mistakes, and when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold”*

# 7. They bear the footprints of the Sweet Psalmist

# *“David, what is your opinion of the old paths”*

# I hear him say, *“On the old paths, the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. I have been young and am now old, but I have never begged for bread”*

# 8. They bear the footprints of Isaiah

# *“Isaiah, what about the old paths?”*

# He answers, *“To see Him high and lifted up in all His glory and holiness makes the old paths a glorious journey”*

# 9. They bear the footprints of Paul

# *“Paul what do you say?”*

# He replies, *“For me to live is Christ and I desire no other”*

# 10. They bear the footprints of Peter

# *“Peter what do you say?”*

# He answers, *“Unto you therefore who travel the old paths, He is precious”*

# 11. They bear the footprints of John

# *“John, tell me, what do you think of the old paths?”*

# He answers, *“It is a path of love, light, and life”*

# 12. They bear the footprints of the Martyrs

# Ask, those who were tortured, torn asunder, burned at the stake, and beheaded, …

# … what they think of the Old Paths

# Not one will express regrets

# Not one will deny His name

# Instead we will only hear their shouts of praise and witness a peace that passes all understanding

# Ask any present traveler on the Old Paths and they will tell you that the greatest day of their life was when they stepped on that path

# They will all testify that they have never regretted a mile they traveled for the Lord

# Furthermore, not only ‘Who’ Should We Ask

# But also -

# B. ‘What’ Should We Ask

# What should we ask Those who have already gone that way?

# What kind of questions should we ask them?

# There are many questions we could ask

# The most obvious question, though is –

# 1. ‘*What Are’* the Old Paths?

# Quote: A.W. Tozer, commenting on Jeremiah 6:16 said: *“What shall we find in these good old paths? We will find everlasting truths. We will find what may be called the primary grounds, the irreducible elements, those things that are neither new nor old;*

# *… they are ancient and eternal and have no time quality attached to them at all.”*

# The Old Paths are the paths of Everlasting Truth

# They represent the Truths of God that are from eternity past

# The Old Paths are laid out in the Blessed and Precious Word of God

# Quote: They are indeed old, as Charles Spurgeon said, *“The way of repentance is as old as John the Baptist, yea, as old as David; the way of faith is as old as Abraham; the way of communion with God is as old as Enoch; the way of approaching God by the lamb slain is as old as Abel; yea, the true Lamb was slain from before the foundations of the world.”*

# a. The Old Paths Declare that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, having no beginning or end; born of a virgin, He lived a sinless life upon this earth, died upon Calvary’s cross, rose again the morning of the third day, ascended back to heaven, is now seated at the right hand of God, and one day will come to rule and reign upon this earth

# b. The Old Paths Declare that all men are sinners, lost without God and that salvation can only be obtained by someone putting their faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and that no one is saved by their works or their own righteousness

# c. The Old Paths Declare that there is a heaven to gain and a hell to shun and those who have been redeemed enjoy heaven for all eternity, but those who die lost will spend eternity in the never ending fires of hell

# d. The Old Paths Declare that the Bible is the written Word of God, without error, without contradiction, divinely inspired and preserved by God, and that every page bears the imprint of being God-breathed

# Another question we might ask is -

# 2. *‘What is found’* on the Old Paths?

# What are the Experiences of the Travelers of the Old Paths?

# What can someone expect to find on the Old Paths?

# The blessings and glories that are experienced and enjoyed by those who walk the Old Paths are innumerable

# However, briefly stated, you can expect to find …

# - A Love that can never be Fathomed

# - A Life that can never Die

# - A Righteousness that can never be Tarnished

# - A Peace that can never be Understood

# - A Rest that can never be Disturbed

# - A Joy that can never be Diminished

# - A Hope that can never be Disappointed

# - A Glory that can never be Clouded

# - A Light that can never be Darkened

# - A Happiness that can never be Interrupted

# - A Strength that can never be Weakened

# - A Purity that can never be Defiled

# - A Beauty that can never be Marred

# - A Wisdom that can never be Baffled

# - A Resource that can never be Exhausted

# - A Heaven that can never be Ended

# God says *“ask for the old paths”* and *“walk therein”*

# The Old Paths are the paths that are Promoted and Recommended

# THE “OTHER” PATHS

# THE “OLD” PATHS

# 

# Lastly, we see -

# III. THE “ONLY” PATHS

# The religious crowds will tell you that the New Paths are the Better Paths

# They will tell you that the Old Paths need to be Abandoned, that they are Antiquated

# That they are only traveled by those who are Unenlightened and Ignorant

# Quote: I think of the liberal Episcopal bishop John Shelby Spong. He has written books with titles like, *“Why Christianity Must Change or Die,” “Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism,” and “A New Christianity for a New World.”* All these titles suggest that he believes the Old Paths are no longer worth travelling and the New Paths should be our course

# Song: A gospel song that was very popular in the 70’s was the Ronnie Hinson song entitled *The Lighthouse.* I think of the second stanza - *Everybody that lives around me says, Tear that lighthouse down, The big ships don't sail this way anymore, There’s no use of it standing 'round. Then my mind goes back to that stormy night, When just in time I saw the light, Yes, the light from that old lighthouse, That stands up there on the hill.*

# When I think of those who say the Old Paths are Outdated and Irrelevant …

# My mind goes back to that day when the Lord Jesus -

# - Saved my hell deserving soul

# - Lifted the burden of sin I carried

# - Filled the emptiness in my soul, and I took my first step on the Old Paths

# I say, give me the Old Paths!

# All who travel the Old Paths will testify, that …

# - On the Old Paths they found What they could never find on the New Paths

# In fact, the Old Paths are the Only Paths that are profitable and worth traveling

# As we look at our text we find that God describes the Old Paths as -

# A. ‘Pleasurable’ Paths

# God calls the Old Paths *“the good way”*

# The word *“good”* is an adjective that means *well-pleasing*

# It is a word that was used to speak of that which is *appealing and pleasant*

# For example, Joshua and Caleb said to the children of Israel in Numbers 14:7 –

# *“The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land”*

# You could say that that life on the Old Paths is an *“exceeding good”* life

# Quote: Again Charles Spurgeon said of the old paths: *“It is called "the good way." It is not the easy way … Neither is it the popular way, for few there be that find it. But it is the good way, made by a good God in infinite goodness to His creatures, paved by our good Lord Jesus with pains and labours immeasurable, and revealed by the good Spirit to those whose eternal good He seeks. It is the way of holiness, of peace, of safety, and it leads to heaven. Is it not good? … It is good at its commencement, for at its entrance men are born again; it is good at its continuation, for they are righteous who hold on their way; and it is good in its termination, for it leads to perfection, to bliss, to God Himself.”*

# The only Ones who complain about the Old Paths are those who travel the New Paths

# All those who are on the Old Paths travel with Praise and Thanksgiving

# They have no Complaints

# They have no Regrets

# It is indeed a *“good way”*

# ‘Pleasurable’ Paths

# We also see that the Old Paths -

# B. ‘Peaceable’ Paths

# God also says that those who travel the Old Paths -

# *“shall find rest for your souls”*

# All those on the Old Paths will tell you that they never knew real peace until they began to travel the Old Paths

# Quote: Richard Ernsberger wrote in an article for Newsweek International (July 26, 2004): *“We Americans are told in our Declaration of Independence that three things are sacrosanct – "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." And like fellow hedonists in Asia, Europe and elsewhere, we've clearly taken the message to heart. We work hard, earn lots of money and spend gleefully on iPods, flat-screen TVs, SUVs and all sorts of expensive nonsense. We indulge, we self-gratify--and therefore we expect to be the happiest … people on the planet. So why aren't we?”*

# Why aren’t people happy?

# The answer is simple

# They search for happiness in everything …

# BUT, the only source for real happiness

# There is no real and lasting happiness apart from the Lord Jesus

# The truth be known, every city, every town, every community is filled with people that are unhappy

# We live in a world of unhappy people

# However, there are those who have found rest for their souls

# They have found a peace that passes all understanding

# It is a peace and rest known only by those on the Old Paths

# Peace and Pleasure

# CONCLUSION

# Notice the very last statement of our text

# There were those who said*, “We will not walk therein”*

# They refuse to heed God Recommendation

# They wouldn’t *“stand”* and *“see”*

# Or their decision may have been different

# If they had looked at the ‘Differences’ and ‘Destination’ of the Old Paths

# They would have understood that it was the Only Path to take

# I am thankful there was a day when I said –

# *“I will walk therein”*

# I would not trade the Old Paths for all the New Paths have to offer

# As far as I am concerned, I am not about to change

# It’s the Old Paths for me!

# How about you?

# The paths of the righteous are The Old Paths

# THE “OTHER” PATHS

# THE “OLD” PATHS

# THE “ONLY” PATHS