



“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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November 14, 2021

Jump Start # 2955

Jeremiah 6:16 "Thus says the Lord, 'Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

There was a wreck about to happen. There would be casualties. Some would die. The wreck didn't have to happen, but it did. This wasn't a car accident or a plane crash. This wasn't the loss of fortunes on some get rich quick scheme. This was a spiritual crash. The people of God were heading quickly to a brick wall. Wicked kings, corrupt priests, indifferent people was all it took for the hearts of the people to be lukewarm towards God. They embraced idols. They ignored the commands of God. The prophets God sent were ridiculed. And, now, the good days were almost over. On the horizon Babylon was getting stronger and stronger. The Lord would use that wicked nation to teach His people a lesson. Arrogance and irreverence had caught up with them.

In one final plea, God begs the people to seek the ancient paths. But the people are defiant. They not only refuse, but verbally they declare, "We will not walk in it." Stubborn. Rebellious. Arrogant. They weren't going to win against God. No one does.

There are some lessons for us:

First, the ancient paths are just that, ancient. They are well traveled and well worn. Many have gone on that path before and it has worked well for them. Hiking in Yellowstone last year reminded me of this. One stays on the path. If not, you'll get lost, run into a bear or be chased by a bison. Even on the path you must pay attention, bring your bear bell and not be foolish. The path takes you to known places.

There is a spirit among some that want to explore new ways. They tire of the same path that everyone else travels. They want to be spiritual pioneers. They want to be the explorers. And, off they go on a new idea, a new fad, a new tangent. Always looking for something different and new, they are not satisfied with the ancient paths. And, most, who go off on their own, do just that. They go off. They don't stay true to the Biblical message and pattern. They don't follow the apostolic order of things. Danger lurks when you get off the path.

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Second, the ancient paths bring great results. Our verse calls it “the good way,” and, a source of “rest for your souls.” That “rest for your souls” sounds like David’s Psalms 23. And, in that Psalm, David is being led by the Lord. Green pastures, quiet waters, even God’s presence when in the valleys is what one finds on the ancient paths. We find those ancient paths not by reading the latest mega church author who wants the church to look like Amazon. No, the ancient paths are found by spending time in the word of God. This path was first walked by the Lord. Others have followed. It has worked well for them. It will work well for us.

Don’t be looking for shortcuts. They don’t exist. Don’t be trying to find a better way. It’s the Lord’s way that matters. It is the ancient paths that God wants us on. The path that Moses walked. The path that Joshua walked. The path that the prophets walked. Biblical. Tried. True.

Third, some of God’s people just don’t get it. Our verse is not written to Babylonians. It’s not written to pagans. It’s about the people of God. God was telling them what to do. God was telling them why they should do this. The results are beneficial, healthy and helpful. Instead, the people of God turned their noses to God and walked the other way. Like a two-year-old, they declared, “We will not walk in them.” That declaration meant, we will not follow God. It meant we will not do what is good. They would not find rest for their souls. We will do it our way, go our way, and find our own way. And, by saying that, they were creating their own god—it was themselves.

And, today, all these years later, and all those pages of the Bible later, some are still wanting to be defiant and not walk with the Lord. I will not do what the Bible says. I will not do what is good for my soul. I will not find peace and rest for my soul. I will do it my way and only my way.

When it comes to the N.T., that spirit has never understood the concept of discipleship or following Jesus. The first step is to “deny yourself” (Lk 9:23). When one acts like a two-year-old, they have not denied themselves. When a person puts their feelings, their wants and their thinking first, they have not denied themselves. Oh, they may have been baptized, but they are not truly following the Lord. They may come to worship once in a while, but they are not truly following the Lord.

What can be done with the “I will not” spirit? With a child, you can send them to their room. With a grown adult, who is supposed to be a Christian, a “come to Jesus” conversation needs to take place. From that, a Bible study would help. But if that spirit remains, then discipline is what needs to follow. They are not walking in the tradition of the apostles. They are not following the Lord. To allow this to continue only hurts the church.

Some people just do not get it. And, it may just be because they don’t want to get it.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
