

## Sunday Morning Message

August 20, 2023

Title – *“Ask for the Old Paths”*

Text – Jeremiah 6:9 - 30

Congregational Reading – Jeremiah 6:9 - 16

### Introduction

*“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.**” (Jeremiah 6:16)*

In our passage today in Jeremiah, God tells the people of Judah to *“ask for the old paths, where is the good way.”* God was telling these people that there was a time when things were right in their nation. There was a time when God was blessing them, when they were enjoying God’s provision and protection. God said that they needed to go back to that place in time and do the things that they used to do when they first came into the land.

This passage in Jeremiah is reminiscent of what God said to one of the seven churches of Asia Minor in the Book of Revelation:

*“4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, **because thou hast left thy first love. 5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.**” (Revelation 2:4-5)*

Jeremiah’s “old paths and good way” were just like the “first works,” and “first love” that the Apostle John wrote about in the Book of Revelation.

Jeremiah was writing to the Nation of Judah back around 600 BC, and John was writing to the Church in Ephesus at the end of the first century AD, but both Jeremiah and John were both stating essentially the same thing. There was a time in both of their past histories when they were each more in love with the Lord and more submitted to His will than they were at the times that each of these prophets were writing to them.

Jeremiah penned these words at a time when Judah was far away from God. The word “backslidden” is used 13 times in this Book. It is only used 4 other times in the entire Bible. “Backslidden” means that the people once were doing right, but had gotten away from those good ways, and had veered off the path.

Note – There are many Christians today who were once passionately in love with the Lord and were delighted to live their lives surrendered to His will, but they have gotten away from Him. They once loved the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength; but now

they are in love with the world. They left their first love and have “slidden back” into a worldly and sinful lifestyle.

It is interesting how this Book of Jeremiah parallels the condition of our Christian churches today.

Though the people of Jeremiah’s day were backslidden, yet they were still going through the motions of religion. In the New Testament, Paul wrote to Timothy and warned him that in the last days Christians would “have a form of godliness,” meaning that they, too, would be going through the motions and rituals of religion, but their hearts would be far from God.

### 1. They were Immoral (Jeremiah 5:1 – 9)

Turn back to Jeremiah 5:1 – 9 – The people of Jeremiah’s day were very immoral.

Note – we live in a sex-consumed society. We have completely abandoned God’s plan for marriage, which is one man and one woman for one lifetime. Fornication between unmarried people is not only tolerated, but also promoted within our society. Adultery involving married people is rampant. Homosexuality is being crammed down our throats. These are all things that God hates. The world says that we who preach against immorality are just “old-fashioned,” but God says that immorality is sin, and He hates it; and he cannot possibly bless the Christian that participates in it and promotes it. Neither can He bless the church that fails to preach against it.

### 2. They were Covetous

*"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely."  
(Jeremiah 6:13)*

We are very covetous also.

*"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, **covetous**, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" (2 Timothy 3:1-4)*

We must have what everyone else has, and few are content and appreciative of what God has given them already.

### 3. They were Idolatrous

*"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee. Seest thou not what they do in the cities*

*of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." (Jeremiah 7:16-18)*

Idolatry is worshipping something other than God or putting something or someone first before God. It may be a job, a toy, a hobby. It could be money. It could be a child, a spouse, a boyfriend, or girlfriend; anything that you value more than God. It's the thing that you spend your money on; it's the thing you spend your time thinking about or participating in. God wants to be first in your life. He will not settle for second place in your heart.

*"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)*

#### **4. As a Nation, They Did Not Fear God**

Turn to Jeremiah 36:1 – 3; 20 – 24

God had to send judgment upon the Nation of Judah, because they had gotten too far away from Him, and refused to come back. During the years of Jeremiah, the Babylonians came into Jerusalem and destroyed it, and took the people into captivity.

America had better watch out. God has already begun to judge America because she, too, is refusing to turn back to the God that made her a great nation. And, if we continue to ignore God's warnings to repent, God will send destruction to us also.

America needs to go back to the first works – she needs to ask for the old paths.

Jersey Shore Baptist Church needs to stick with the Old Paths. We are becoming a dinosaur in the church world. There are very few old-fashioned, Bible preaching, hymn singing churches left that still practice soul winning, and still believe that God wants us to live separately from the world.

The Old Paths for us in New Testament Christianity does not mean that we are to go back in time, get rid of modern technology, and dress like they did in the 1800's. It means that we are to go back to those fundamental doctrines and practices that God states are consistent with Biblical Christian living.

#### **Basics (Old Paths) That We Need to Get Back To**

##### **I. Preaching the Truth**

We must continue to emphasize the Word of God as the answer to all the problems that we face today. We need more of the Bible, not less of it. Preaching will continue to be the largest portion of our services. We will not eliminate any services.

*"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)*

The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth.

*"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (2 Timothy 4:1-5)*

Why should we preach the Word of God?

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

*"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)*

We must preach continually, courageously, and compassionately.

*"11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 **But speaking the truth in love**, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." (Ephesians 4:11-16)*

Preaching the Truth involves more than good news of salvation; it also entails the admonishment of separation. We are to warn God's people to be separated from the world and unto Christ:

*"17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," (2 Corinthians 6:17)*

## II. Praying Fervently

Praying fervently means that we are praying with excitement and anticipation for what God is going to do.

*"13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. 14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. 16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. 17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."* (James 5:13-18)

*"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."* (Acts 2:42)

Jesus said, **"My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."** (Matthew 21:12-13)

"The church that is not jealously protected by mighty intercession and sacrificial labors will before long become the abode of every evil bird and the hiding place for unsuspected corruption. The creeping wilderness will soon take over that church that trusts in its own strength and forgets to watch and pray." (A. W. Tozer)

"We can do nothing without prayer. All things can be done by importunate prayer. It surmounts or removes all obstacles, overcomes every resisting force and gains its ends in the face of invincible hindrances." (E. M. Bounds)

"Shall I give you yet another reason why you should pray? I have preached my very heart out. I could not say any more than I have said. Will not your prayers accomplish that which my preaching fails to do? Is it not likely that the Church has been putting forth its preaching hand but not its praying hand? Oh dear friends! Let us agonize in prayer."  
(Charles Spurgeon)

"Jesus Christ carries on intercession for us in heaven; the Holy Ghost carries on intercession in us on earth; and we the saints have to carry on intercession for all men."  
(Oswald Chambers)

## III. Praising God

*"Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely."* (Psalm 147:1)

*"1 A Psalm of praise. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." (Psalm 100:1-5)*

*"1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. 2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. 3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. 4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. 5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. 6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD." (Psalm 150:1-6)*

*"1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;" (Psalm 107:1-2)*

Praising God involves thanksgiving and worship.

Praising God is expressed through statements, singing, and a surrendered life.

#### **IV. Proclaiming Christ**

We are God's ambassadors:

*"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)*

We who have received Christ have been entrusted with declaring the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the lost world around us:

*"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)*

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the message, the good news, that Christ died for our sins, and that He was buried, and that He rose from the dead exactly as the Scriptures said that He would.

When we place our faith, our trust, our dependence on Christ's gospel than we are saved, born again into the family of God.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)*

*"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:9-10, 13)*

It is the message of the gospel that brings salvation to lost souls. We cannot be saved from Hell, except through the gospel. Therefore, everyone who names the name of Christ should boldly proclaim the message of Christ's gospel.

It is the last thing that Jesus commanded the church to do while He was still on the earth:

*"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)*

*"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:18-20)*

The Holy Spirit was given to empower us to proclaim the gospel:

*"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)*

The reason that Jersey Shore Baptist Church exists is so that the gospel message can be proclaimed here in Galloway Township and the surrounding communities.

## **Conclusion**

We have stated just four of the basic things, the needful things, the Old Path things that God wants to our lives to contain. We can never get away from these things, and we can never have God's blessing without them.

