

Follow the ancient path of Jesus

Jeremiah 6:16-17

TEXT READING

16 This is what the LORD says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ **17** I appointed watchmen over you and said, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But you said, ‘We will not listen.’

BACKGROUND

The context in which Jeremiah spoke these words of God calls out to the people of Israel to repent. Repentance means to take stock of your life. See where you are at this moment in your life. Admit your mistakes, seek forgiveness, and to change your ways and follow God. This was the call of Jeremiah to the people of Israel. However, as we read further in Jeremiah, the people decided not to heed the call to sincere repentance. It was a period when Israel was in deep trouble. Jeremiah warns Israel of a looming disaster coming: a reference to Babylon. Jerusalem eventually, approximately 50 years later, to the Babylonians.

APPLICATION

The catastrophe that befell Israel could have been averted if they were only willing to listen to four profound words uttered by Jeremiah found in v16: **Stand; look; Ask; Walk**

God offers a way out for the Israelites in these four words. However, we know from vs 17 that the Israelites chose not to. Many times, we stand and look, and ask God, but when God tells us to walk in His way, we become reluctant. The walking part of sincere repentance is probably the most difficult part.

You may have a crisis in your life but if we do not walk in the path of God, we are also doomed to disaster. Let us therefore examine the four paths to full restoration in God.

1. **Stand** –“stand at the crossroads”. Generally, at this point you are seeking for solutions. It is at this time when you come to the crossroads you **STAND**. It means taking stock of your life.
2. **Look** – At the crossroads you **look** at all the signposts. Sometimes the signposts are confusing. Sometimes the biggest mistake people make is to take the first path they find. Many times this path leads to greater destruction. How many people have not turned to other forms of vices to find relief in their moment of crisis? Therefore when you come to a crossroad in your life, **stand** and then **look** and don't follow any path that seems right for you. This leads to the third principle – **Ask**.
3. **Ask** –God says, “Ask for the ancient paths”. Why ask for the ancient paths? Because that is where the good way is. There are many other ways, but the good way is the path of the ancient way: the way of Jesus, the prophets and the apostles. The following verse from Deut. 32:7 is so applicable in reference to the ancient paths. It says:

Remember the days of old,
consider the years of generations past.
Ask your father, he will inform you,
your elders, they will tell you

4. **Walk** – God says, “Walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls”. The only time you would find peace from your crisis is not just standing, looking and asking, which you must do, it is in the walking that you would find rest for your soul. This is the fourth principle and probably the most difficult principle. I am reminded of the command of Jesus to the rich young man in Matt 19:21 “go sell all you have and come follow me”. The man went away sorrowful because that meant sacrificing much to walk the way of God. He kept all the commandments, he listened to all the teachers, but when God told him to make this one big sacrifice which was precious to him, he was not willing to let go to follow Jesus, to walk in the paths of Jesus. Walking in the ancient paths is the most difficult of all the principles we looked at thus far. Listen to Matt 16:24 - “Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” The path of Jesus is indeed the ancient path.

CONCLUSION

Friends, we are living in difficult times right now. Covid-19 has destroyed economies and livelihoods of people. It has eaten through the very fabric of society and has caused immense harm and destruction and has brought much uncertainty. People are suicidal. We are in a crisis. Before finding a quick solution by turning to destructive solutions, let us follow the four basic principles outlined in our text this morning: (1) Stand at the crossroads, (2) look, (3) Ask and (4) Walk and the promise of God is that you will find rest for your souls.

Maniraj Sukdaven
Trinity, Lynnwood
2nd August 2020