

Title: The Plain, Safe, Happy, Sure Way
Text: Isaiah 35: 8-10
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Prophecy is misunderstood unless it be recognized that the history of Israel are types and shadows wherein all the interventions of God foretell the great intervention of redeeming love, in the person of Jesus Christ.

Israel and Judah sinned against the LORD and by God's direct hand, fell into Babylonian captivity. When Adam sinned in the garden all mankind died in Adam and were cast out in captivity to sin and spiritual death. But even when Israel was in captivity--God had an elect remnant chosen before. For the sake of his own glory, God raised up a king, delivered Judah and put them on a highway whereby they returned to Zion--that symbol of the presence of God--with great joy!

Isaiah 35: 8: And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it [shall be] for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err [therein].

Christ is the HighWay.

1. He was high and lifted up in his birth--that holy thing,

Heb 7:26: For such an high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

2. He was high and lifted up in the gospel of John and so he is in our gospel--*Behold, your God! The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!*

3. He was high and lifted up when the Father spoke from heaven--*this is my Beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased, hear ye him!*

4. He was high and lifted up on the cross--the glory of God visibly, unmistakably set forth before all! On the cross, we see God being *merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, AND by no means clearing [the guilty.]* (Ex 34: 6-7).

5. He was raised up high, when God the Father raised from the dead to his own right hand--Heb 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

6. Those who are called by the Spirit of God--lame made to walk, blind made to see, behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus--THE HIGH WAY!

Application: Oh, is there anyone here today, who sees Christ the High Way for the first time?

Isaiah 2:11: The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day....17:7: At

that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel...thy Redeemer!

By this work of God we enter into Christ the Way and we are making our pilgrimage to heavenly Zion, heavenly Jerusalem. Amazing thought--right now, every believer has access through Christ the Way unto the Father--access with boldness and confidence, into the holiest of all!" (Ephesians 2:18; 3:12).

Application: But dear brothers and sisters, are you sometimes unsure about the way? Do you sometimes feel alone, fearful, afraid of turning out of the Way to some by-path? Read the second half of verse 8 again:

Isaiah 35: 8:...but it [shall be] for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err [therein].

I. CHRIST IS THE WAY MADE PLAIN BY CHRIST HIMSELF.

The travelers in this highway have no strength in themselves.

We were in captivity--we are the redeemed, the ransomed of the Lord. Christ had to come to where we are, to pay the price demanded--his own blood--V8: *we are wayfaring men*--pilgrims, sojourners. If Christ did not keep us in the way--our feet would always lead us astray, for we are wholly inclined to vanity.

Christ is the Way and Christ Himself is in the Way with Us

The word in this verse is--*He Himself is by them in the way*. Every believer has the privilege of Christ going with us in the Way, leading us by the Holy Spirit.

1

Moses said to the Lord, "If thy presence go not, carry us not up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? [is it] not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that [are] upon the face of the earth." And the Lord said, "My presence shall go [with thee], and I will give thee rest." (Ex 33:14-16 AV)

As we see our Lord walking this earth, we behold how he is with us now in the Way.

Remember the multitude--Mt 15:32:...I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.--He feeds the multitude of his children lest we faint in the way! Are you being fed right now!

Remember what he did when his apostles became afraid--Mark 10:32: And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him--he teaches us in the way and calms our fears. Do you hear him teaching you right now!

He calls out others to join us in the way; remember blind Bartemaeus--Mr 10:52: And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.--Is there any here who are blind? He is passing by? You know he stopped for this one man!

Does he still do this--he did on the Emmaus road after his resurrection.

Luke 24: 32: And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Do you remember the word of the LORD back in: Isaiah 30: 19-21.

Believer--believe God! He Himself is by them in the way. though we be but weak and helpless fools, we shall not err. Our murmuring and our worrying is unbelief. We would be embarrassed if others knew our sin--but worrying and fretting over things absolutely under the power and control of God who has promised us is sin we don't seem to mind telling everyone about. Believer--believe God! Do you hear him this hour walking with you? Is he giving you his peace through his word?

Psalm 23: 3: He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 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.

II. CHRIST IS THE SAFE WAY

Read verse 4. Believer, do you find yourself saying, "Oh, but I do fear. I fear my own inward enemies, the snares of Satan, those who raise accusations against me, temptations of the world. There are times when I cannot help but fear." Still the Lord says, "Do not fear." Here is why?

Isaiah 35: 9: No lion shall be there, nor [any] ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk [there]:

The devil is described as a "roaring lion seeking whom he may devour". The "Accuser of the brethren". The lion and ravenous beast feed upon the flesh.

In Galatians--"dogs biting and devouring one another." 'Beware of dogs' Such wild beasts make us fearful.

- Ananias was fearful of Saul.
- Paul was fearful that the false prophets would beguile the Corinthian's from the simplicity of Christ, like Satan beguiled Eve.
- Paul was even fearful of this in his own flesh--*who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

Ecclesiastes 10:15: The labour of the foolish wearith every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

But listen to this promise:...*But the redeemed shall walk here*--those purchased by Christ shall be delivered out of darkness, out of the false way of the harlot Babylon and tamed by grace.

Illustration: Saul of Tarsus was tamed like a lamb. The lamb shall lay down with lion.

Every believer shall be protected from being turned back from Christ to the imaginary merit of our works

HERE IS WHY NO LION, NO RAVENING BEAST SHALL BE IN THIS WAY!

Psalm 22: 13: They gaped upon me [with] their mouths, [as] a ravening and a roaring lion. 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. 16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look [and] stare upon me. 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. 19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. 20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. 21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. 22: I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. 23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. 24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. 25 My praise [shall be] of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. 26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. 27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. 28 For the kingdom [is] the LORD'S: and he [is] the governor among the nations.

Because he bore the wrath of God for you, because he was compassed about by ravening lions (religious men who thought themselves holy--dogs), but in that sacrifice he satisfied justice. In Christ who is Holy, Harmless, Undefined--every new man within us is created in righteousness and truly holiness. You are holy, harmless and undefiled in the new creation even as Christ is in glory. Our high priests knows the feelings of our infirmities and he is able to comfort you in all your trouble.

Application: Such beasts may disturb us, by divine permission, but they will be used of God to teach us to cling to Christ--*whom resist stedfast in the faith!*

Illustration: Visiting clients, large dog, "stay close."

The Lord says, "Do not fear, keep close to me, none can hurt you in the Way." Without Christ we are all weakness—within Him all strength; Without Christ all trembling—within Him, all boldness.

1 Corinthians 10: 13:...God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

"Be strong, and **do not fear**,... the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil. (2 Thessalonians 3:3)

III. CHRIST IS THE HAPPY WAY.

Isaiah 35: 10: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads:

In the Psalms we find the "Songs of Degrees". These were the songs the tribes would sing on their way to the celebrations in Zion.

1. The first song of degrees:

Psalm 120: 1: «A Song of degrees.» In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

2. The second:

Psalm 121: "1: «A Song of degrees.» I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2 My help [cometh] from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

3. The third:

Psalm 122: 1: «A Song of degrees of David.» I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. 2: Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

4. I like this one:

Psalm 125: 1: «A Song of degrees.» They that trust in the LORD [shall be] as mount Zion, [which] cannot be removed, [but] abideth for ever. As the mountains [are] round about Jerusalem, so the LORD [is] round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

Believer, the Lord has given us...beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;...we are marching to heavens Zion! We have nothing but reason to sing and rejoice!

Brother Scott Richardson--"There has been no bad news since I heard the good news!"

Application: A merry heart will carry us along, but the song of worry will burden us like a heavy weight.

Ephesians 5: 19: Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20: Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

IV. CHRIST IS THE SURE WAY WHICH LEADS TO A SURE END.

It is never a good feeling to travel a road when we are not sure where it is taking us. But Christ leads us to a sure end.

Count how many shall's are in these verses, not look at this last one!

Isaiah 35: 10: And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion...they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Heb 13:14, he says, "here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

Our Savior has gone to the heavenly world as our Head and Representative. His entrance there is a pledge that we shall also enter there.

HERE THIS:

If you have been born of the Spirit of God and given faith to believe God from the heart, Confess Christ publicly in water-baptism AND unite with the brethren in this one cause of promoting his glorious name in the earth. This is Zion.

All communication between God and his children was in earthly Zion. The church of God is his Zion, in Christ God and his children meet, in Christ we walk. How can two walk together unless they be in agreement. In Christ, God and the believer are one!

All influences of love, kindness, mercy, from God to us, are through Christ the Highway; all our returns of love, delight, faith, obedience unto God, are all through Christ the Highway; —Who can describe the blessedness which flows from the fellowship of heaven?

Brethren, Hebrews 12: 12: Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13: And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

1. CHRIST IS THE HIGHWAY; 2. CHRIST IS THE WAY IN WHICH HE LEADS US; 3. CHRIST IS THE HAPPY WAY! WE HAVE A LOT TO SING ABOUT!; 4. CHRIST IS THE SURE WAY WITH A SURE END!

We shall be given: Rest from conflict; Rest from sorrow; Rest from suffering; Rest from self and sin; Rest from all evil of all time; Holy pleasures for evermore!

Read again and go home humming this tune!

They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Amen!