

## TRAVELING ALONG LIFE'S PATHWAY

### **TEXT: PROVERBS 3:5, 6**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. One of the most interesting Scriptures is Psalm 90:10 -- "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."
2. Our days are numbered by the LORD.
3. Our steps are numbered by the LORD. Proverbs 3:5, 6 teaches God promises to direct our steps. God Himself has promised to lead us as we travel along life's pathway. We can be certain that He will bring us safely to our journey's end.
4. Just as the LORD led the Israelites by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, He leads us today (Exodus 13:21,22).
5. Psalm 32:8 says, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."
6. Isaiah 58:11 says, "And the LORD shall guide thee continually."
7. God says that if we will acknowledge Him, He will direct us along life's pathway until we reach our journey's end (Pro. 3:5, 6).

#### **I. WE WALK BY FAITH**

1. Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart..."
2. To "trust" in the LORD means to depend on the LORD. "Trust" means to "believe."
3. Illustration of drowning man trusting in the lifeguard. He depends on the lifeguard. He is trusting the lifeguard. He believes the lifeguard can save him!
4. When the great British preacher, G. Campbell Morgan, was a young man leaving home to go off to school, his father said to him, "Son, I want to give you a text for school and for life: *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*"
5. Years later, Morgan wrote these words: "This text has a peculiar place in my heart. It has been with me day by day for thirty-three years. It was on the morning when I was first leaving home for school that my father gave it to me without note or comment, save the note and comment of his own godly life."
6. G. Campbell Morgan's father knew that these words would be a great help and a great encouragement and a great blessing to his son as he traveled along life's pathway.

7. Psalm 78 is a beautiful description of how the LORD led the children of Israel. Psalm 78:52 says He "guided them in the wilderness like a flock."
8. The Lord Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He leads us safely as we travel along life's pathway. Like a good shepherd, He protects us from the wolves. Psalm 78:53 says, "And he led them on safely, so that they feared not."
9. Is Jesus *your* Good Shepherd. David wrote these famous words: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters" (Ps. 23:1, 2).
10. Many years ago, a Baptist preacher by the name of Joseph Gilmore was supplying the pulpit of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At the mid-week service, on March 26, 1862, he set out to give the people an exposition of the Twenty-third Psalm, which he had given before on three or four other occasions.
11. But this time was different. This time he could not get further than the words "He Leadeth Me." Those words took hold of him as they had never done before, and he saw them in a significance and wondrous beauty of which he had never dreamed.
12. This is how Joseph Gilmore described what happened: "It was the darkest hour of the Civil War. I did not refer to that fact — that is, I don't think I did — but it may subconsciously have led me to realize that God's leadership is the one significant fact in human experience, that it makes no difference how we are led, or whither we are led, so long as we are sure God is leading us."
13. At the close of the meeting a few people met in the parlor of a church deacon, and they continued talking about the theme which Joseph Gilmore had emphasized. And then and there, on a blank page of paper, Joseph Gilmore wrote down his thoughts.
14. He then handed the paper to his wife and thought no more about it. His wife sent it to *The Watchman and Reflector*, a newspaper published in Boston, where it was first printed.
15. Joseph Gilmore did not know until 1865 (three years later) that his words had been set to music by William B. Bradbury. He went to Rochester, New York to preach as a candidate before the Second Baptist Church. During the song service, he picked up a hymnal to see what they were singing, and opened it at his own hymn, "He Leadeth Me." He had no idea his hymn had been published.
16. Is Jesus your Good Shepherd? Is He leading you? (John 10:27-30).

## II. LOOKING BACK ON LIFE'S PATHWAY

1. Deuteronomy 17 gives instructions to the nation of Israel regarding a future king (17:14). I want to focus on a statement found in verse 16 - "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."
2. Young people, I am glad you enjoyed Vacation Bible School. "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."
3. Enjoy Sunday School -- "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."
4. Enjoy the youth group -- "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."
5. Parents, enjoy spending time with your children. "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."
6. Some people look back with regret on life's pathway.
7. To sinners -- get right with God and you will have no more regrets!
8. If you are saved, the good news is you have been pardoned. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).
9. Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."
10. When sin is pardoned, it is never charged again. The guilt of sin can no more return than east can become west, or west can become east.
11. Micah 7:19 says, "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." And God put there a "No Fishing" sign!
12. Isaiah 38:17 says, "For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."
13. Isaiah 44:22 the LORD says, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins."
14. Hebrews 10:17 says, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."
15. God will remember our sins no more, though we may (cf. I Tim. 1:12-15).
16. Some look back on life's pathway with feelings of regret. Remember it is impossible to take back what you have said or what you have done. You cannot retrace your steps. There are no "do-overs" in life.
17. Too much introspection can lead to discouragement and even depression. Let us learn from our mistakes, and make up our minds we will never repeat them.
18. A young Christian confessed to me she got drunk. She felt ashamed. But she said she had made up her mind never to drink again.

19. Young people, learn from your mistakes. Make up your mind you will never again listen to worldly music or watch dirty television shows or movies, or look at garbage on the Internet, etc.
20. Others look back on life's pathway, not with feelings of regret, but with feelings of sadness and sorrow. Loved ones have passed away. The family circle has been broken. There is an empty chair at the dinner table. There is a pain in our hearts that will not go away.

*In the center of the circle*

*Of the will of God I stand:*

*There can come no second causes,*

*All must come from His dear hand.*

*All is well! For 'tis my Father*

*Who my life hath planned.*

*Shall I pass through waves of sorrow?*

*Then I know it will be best;*

*Though I cannot tell the reason,*

*I can trust, and so am blest.*

*God is Love, and God is faithful,*

*So in perfect peace I rest.*

### **III. LOOKING AHEAD ON LIFE'S PATHWAY**

1. Joshua 3:4 says, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore."
2. Every day brings new responsibilities, new experiences, new people, new friends, new ideas, new hopes, new plans, and new dreams.
3. In fact, the word "new" is an important Bible word. There are 27 books in the New Testament.
4. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
5. We call this the "new birth." Jesus said in John 3:7, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."
6. Ezekiel 36:26 says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you."
7. Ephesians 4:22-24 says to put off the old man, and "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."
8. We see many new things in the book of Revelation: "a new name written" (2:17), the "new Jerusalem" (3:12; 21:2), "a new song" (5:9; 14:3), and "a new heaven and a new earth" (21:1).

9. Revelation 21:5 says, "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."

10. The songwriter put it this way:

*Every day will be the brighter  
When Thy gracious face we see;  
Every burden will be lighter  
When we know it comes from Thee,*

*Spread Thy love's broad banner o'er us,  
Give us strength to serve and wait,  
Till the glory breaks before us  
Through the city's open gate. (James D. Burns )*

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. As we travel along life's pathway, we must be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. In John 16:13, Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."
2. God leads us by His Holy Spirit. We read in Acts 8:29, "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."
3. Soon the Ethiopian eunuch was saved and baptized. Then "he went on his way rejoicing" (8:39).
4. In Acts 16, we see the Holy Spirit opening and closing doors of ministry for the apostle Paul and his companions. Soon Lydia was saved, and a strong church was established in Philippi.
5. R. A. Torrey wrote this many years ago, "A friend of mine walking the busy streets of Toronto suddenly had a deep impression that he should go to the hospital and speak to someone there. He tried to think of someone he knew at the hospital and he could think of but one man. He took it for granted that he was the man he was to speak to, but when he reached the hospital and came to this man's bedside there was no reason why he should speak to him, and nothing came of the conversation. He was in great perplexity, and standing by his friend's bed he asked God to guide him. He saw a man lying on the bed right across the aisle. This man was a stranger, he had been brought to the hospital for an apparently minor trouble, some difficulty with his knee. His case did not seem at all urgent, but my friend turned and spoke to him and had the joy of leading him to Christ. To everybody's surprise, that man passed into eternity that very night. It was then or never."

6. That man's journey along life's pathway ended that night. Thank God a Christian was sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and led him to Christ before it was too late.