

'The Old Paths & Narrow Way'

Trinity Baptist Church

'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...' - Jeremiah vi.16

'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.' - Matthew vii.14

In the Scriptures, we find these two humbling, and, at times, terrifying verses. The way of life is narrow, and the path of blessedness - what Spurgeon called 'the prosperity of our souls' - is old. But there is rest to be found, an abiding satisfaction and life granted by the grace of God.

Such rest is found along the 'old paths'. These are not roads newly-paved by means of innovation, but paths tested by feet of faithful men who have already traversed the journey. Just as one hiking looks for well-worn paths which mark familiarity and security, so too should Christians seek out life as God prescribes it in His Word and be encouraged by the witness of saints whose pilgrimages were marked by steadfast faithfulness. 'Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ' says the apostle (1 Corinthians xi.1). Notice, too, these paths must be sought for: they require instruction. In an age when GPS is the common mode of finding one's destination, one rarely has to 'ask' for directions. So often the same can be said of believers. It is easy for one to consider faith a private matter - one that comes solely from private introspection and experiences. But the old ways must be inquired. In our sinful nature, we cherish the idolatry of self-sufficiency. The Scripture corrects us: 'ask for the old paths'. Bunyan's Pilgrim needed the help of Evangelist, Interpreter and others along the way to the Celestial City. The Church is the communion of saints, God's covenant people together, and they are matured not only by private and family worship (which are surely vital), but also corporate worship as they partake together in the ordinary means of grace - Word, prayer, and sacrament. While the world has always craved something new and novel, the people of God are those who, by faith, seek the righteousness of Christ and obey His commands as decreed by God in the Bible. The Lord Christ is our sufficient Saviour, and His Word is our sufficient rule. He is the narrow way which is only found by few, yet what abundant life there is in Christ, Who is our only comfort in life and death. We may not veer to the right or the left off of that path. To do so would be to the detriment of our joy in Christ; but to obediently walk in His way is to enjoy the sweetness of union and communion with God, the riches of His Word and the hope of His promises. The path is narrow, and is filled with trials, but it has been set before us by the blood of our risen Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. The nations will rage, the flowers will fade, the trends will pass along, but the Church is the peculiar people called by the holy, eternal, Triune, unchanging God to worship and live in His way and only His way.

May we walk, then, in simple, daily faithfulness to Christ our King. We would do well to look at those faithful men of old who so faithfully lived for the glory of God and imitate them as they imitated our Lord. It is there, in those well-worn paths, that mark the good and narrow way of rest in Christ.