

Isaiah

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Date: 23 February 1964

Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

- [0 : 00] As the Lord should be pleased to help me, I should call your attention to a subject you will find in the book of Isaiah, chapter 45 and the 8th verse.
- And an highway shall be there and away, 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, the book of Isaiah, chapter 45 and the 8th verse.
- This is a word which should lead to searching of heart among us, for it speaks of a highway and a way.
- [1 : 20] As I understand the interpretation of it, if you should only be found in the highway, you will not find at the end of it the gates of pearl opening to welcome you into the realms of bliss, but you must be in the way that is referred to.
- The way wherein something must be known and felt of the things of God. The highway can be to be found under the letter of truth, listening to it all your life long.
- The highway of chapel going, we might say, that everything hinges upon you and I being found in the way.
- And that way is set forth by Jesus Christ. I am the way, the truth, and the life.
- No man cometh unto the Father but by me. In the way, in the way, it is good you should be found therein, as you journey on through life.
- [2 : 49] But you may hear the gospel and never get any good for your soul in listening to it. And you must not think the preacher is narrow-minded or severe in making such statements, because I am in life's evening time, and more and more I want to preach in eternity's light.
- And the word of God is very solemn. There is a way that seemeth to be right unto a man. But the end thereof is the way of death.
- And though it seems to be right, and it is, that you should all be where you are in the attitude of worship, you are in the highway. But what goes on between your soul and God, as you are where you are?
- Is there a deep down concern? We would see Jesus. Show me some token for good. Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.
- Because if you are the subject of that exercise unto godliness, then you are in the way, the way of life, the way to God, the way which has got heaven at the end of it.
- [4 : 22] And the wonderful mercy, if you add some evidence to be such a pilgrim, to Canaan bound. The word of God says, bodily exercise profiteth little.
- Margin for a little while. And you know that bodily exercise is you're in the highway of worship.

But godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come. And our great concern must be to be exercised unto godliness, to have some evidence of being in the way, to have some way marks to set up, some eye heaps to raise.

And if you cannot climb as high as that as yet, it is good for you to be found asking the way to Zion, with your faces, with a word.

And now, I want as the Lord to help me to look at this subject, from two or three viewpoints of it. And the setting of the subject is very encouraging to poor sinners, who hardly know what they are or where they are in things divine.

[5 : 54] Many times in my ministerial life have I admired this little chapter in the midst of Isaiah's prophecy. Maybe you all know that the book of Isaiah is sometimes termed the gospel according to Isaiah.

And in this little chapter, there is the gospel set forth, the gospel of the grace of God. And the heading of the chapter is the joyful flourishing of the Church of Christ.

And yet, as you read the chapter down, it suggests very great contrasts in the life of the righteous and that which you are the subject of in your soul's experience.

And it might be helpful in searching out what is the character of the wayfaring man the text refers to to look just a little at the portrait which the Holy Spirit inspired godly Isaiah to record.

And the opening word is the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

[7 : 22] There you see the way which the wayfaring man will be going along in his soul's experience according to how he feels. Sometimes it is like the wilderness, the solitary place, the desert.

And many of you have known what it is to feel like that before God with whom you have to do. Lord, my heart a desert vast thy reviving hand requires sin has laid my vineyard waste overgrowing with thorns and briars.

And now when you feel like that you are made solemnly aware of your utter helplessness in things divine. some scriptures take upon them then their proper perspective in your soul's eyes.

I mean scriptures like these a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. The preparation of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.

Such words you realize in their deep down truth and you know what the word of God says and without me without my divine aid you can do nothing.

[8 : 55] Wilderness solitary place desert strange words to set forth the experience of pilgrims to came and bow and yet the word of God says whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort in the scriptures might have hope.

And then it says of this wayfaring man that he has weak hands and feeble knees. verily a cripple weak hands.

The word of God says hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown but you find even that which God has done for your soul all your hands are so weak that you cannot hold fast your evidences as you would like to do and therefore you lose sight of them.

And you cannot feel them as you would like to feel that you are in the way of life. You need the Lord to appear on your behalf. Feeble knees.

Surely you know what that means when you try to pray sometimes. Surely you can echo the hymn writer's lines our faith is feeble we confess we faintly trust thy word but wilt thou pity us the less be that far from thee Lord.

[10 : 45] All this way for any man has his portrait drawn by a divine pen in every line then it is evident because he often feels in his soul's experience to be like the wilderness the solitary place in the desert and he has such weak hands that he cannot hold fast even that which God has done for his soul and his knees are so feeble that he makes but very little progress in running the race that is set before him with heaven at the end of it.

And now these strange experiences promote what the word of God says here a fearful heart.

Say to them that all of a fearful heart be strong fear not for it is just what the wayfaring man desires to possess in his soul's experience oh if he could but be strong and that he needs a fear not to enable him to do that and meanwhile he moves onward with a fearful heart and he may have a fear as to whether after all he is what he professes to be maybe he has his name on a church roll and he inquires is the good work indeed begun in me and I be as I am often in my soul's experience can ever God dwell here and fears arise and sometimes he looks at the way he has to go along and he says with

Jacob all these things are against me he cannot learn as he desires in a right mind to live a day at a time and he keeps looking ahead thinking of tomorrow and tomorrow is yet to be and he has a fearful heart but he is to learn this though doubt be my way since he is my guide it is mine to obey and his to provide he is to learn that just shall live by faith he is to learn that you must journey on without having any grace to spare any surplus strength but to learn a lesson oh so hard to learn every moment be receiving strength and yet be always weak and learn when I am weak then am I strong because this wayfaring man when he journeys on right how does he go on who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness leaning upon a beloved leaning moves along yes it says in the margin for fearful heart hasty heart and you find this way fair in man if you got in touch with him at times and heard how he was speaking about the things of

God and what he had hoped his own interest was therein you would find that he was coming to some hasty conclusions as to whether after all he was in the way whether he did possess any religion that God was the author of because he feels to be so opposite with him to what he thought he would feel as he journeyed on think that over prayerfully and it might help you in pondering where you are and what you are this sabbath morn hey but then this wayfaring man although he does come to hasty conclusions he has got to learn a lesson that grace is an emptying principle if you can be helped to believe that and live in the light of it it will bring you down to bedrock truth the life I now live I live by faith upon the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me maybe you like this wayfaring man before us whose character

[15 : 48] I am trying to draw before you in the early dealings of God maybe he was highly favoured in the things of God felt sure of his own interest that in and could say it is good for me to draw near unto God and it may be he was hurt to survey the wondrous cross and see Jesus and feel of a truth that he had got a part and lot in what was done on Colby's cross maybe he came high enough to say how it was done we can't discuss but this we know it was done for us eh but many days have passed since then he is much farther on in life's way than he was when the things of God were so real so beautiful and so blessed it and you could often feel

Lord it is good for us to be here you are now in the wilderness in the solitary place in the desert you are now conscious of having weak hands feeble knees why your fearful heart misgives you and the question will arise pause thou my soul and say if I should die today what is my case then you cannot feel your case to be as you would like to feel it you need this fear not in the text here say to them that are of a fearful heart be strong fear not and now here is a word to encourage you behold your God will come with vengeance even God with a recompense he will come and save you eh but your fearful heart will question it you will say it seems too good to be true eh but it is true you find also not only does this wayfaring man possess this fearful heart hasty heart that I have just hinted at but it speaks of him being as blind because it says concerning this wayfaring man the eyes of the blind should be opened believers own that they are blind they feel themselves unwise but wisdom in the

Lord they find who opens all their eyes and now the eyes of the blind shall be opened and you will remember that Jesus Christ relates this to his own glorious gospel and how often he dealt with the blind and opened their eyes when he dwelt on earth a while is Emmanuel God with us and when the eyes of the blind are opened the eyes of this wayfaring man what does he see oh he sees the truth it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps how then can a man understand his own way he sees another truth which is very attractive the steps of a good man are ordered by the

Lord and he delighteth in his way and he longs to be that good man he cannot often conclude that he is such a character yet he has got one short evidence that he is you find in the word of God it says a level of good men and this wayfaring man although he cannot often feel as he would like to feel matters are right between his soul and God yet there are others whom he meets in the way other wayfarers and other truth them he loves and he loves to listen to what they have to say and sometimes he clings to this evidence we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren oh there is that beautiful scripture he that loveth is born of God then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and sometimes these wayfaring men who helped to do that and they all find to their soul's surprise when they tell out the dealings of God with their souls that they have all trodden in the same way and through the same experiences and they all know something about the wilderness in the solitary place and the desert and they are all the subjects of a fearful heart a hasty heart and they have all had weak hands and feeble knees and they all own that they were blind until God enabled them to say one thing

I know whereas I was blind now I can see and the eyes of the blind are open to see this great truth I will lead the blind by a way that they know not sometimes I have been rather amazed in seeing a blind man going along and how swiftly he could go with his white stick denoting that he was blind but he was going along a way that he knew remember that when he comes to a way that he does not know he must have a guide and now you and I do not know what lies ahead of us in life's journey and we cannot tread it on our own initiative in our own strength you must come right down to this guide me oh thou great

[22 : 55] Jehovah pilgrim through this barren land I am weak but thou art mighty hold me with thy powerful hand thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory let us go on with this wayfaring man's portrait and it says that sometimes he has got deaf ears for the ears of the deaf should be unstopped you have been deaf at times even to warnings given to you so that sometimes you have sinned against light and knowledge too deaf to every warning given and then the ears of the deaf are unstopped and you hear what God the Lord has to say then as many as I love I rebuke and chasten be zealous therefore and repent it would seem that this wayfaring man cannot make much progress at any time in things divine he cannot go ahead very speedily because he is said to be lame then shall the lame man leave us an heart and the tongue of the dumb sing lame have you ever felt like that maybe in your early days you seem to move on a little in the things of

God and maybe at such a time when you heard the old grey heads wayfaring men long in the way telling how they felt about being in the wilderness and the desert and the solitary place you could not understand it and you may have thought that when you were as old as they were you would not be as they seem to be in their soul's experience and now where are you now you are old and grey headed if you did ever have such thoughts what did I tell you earlier on grace is an empty in principle and as you go on to grow in grace it is not what you think it is to grow in grace you may think it is to heap up evidence upon evidence and to have abundance of tokens for good and to treasure all these in your heart and you will do but you will find as you go on towards life's evening time and come right down into it you will find what

I have said that grace is an empty in principle and you will come down to this nothing in my hand I bring not even my past experience because sometimes you so lose sight of it although God is the author of it that it affords you no comfort in seeking to look back over it and then you say Lord decide the doubtful case thou who art thy people's son shine upon the work of grace if indeed it be begun and you add another petition Lord if it is not indeed begun oh do begin it let me not be deceived and deceive others round about me as I journey on through life solemn thing the saint to appear grow up with wheat and prove to be a terror you come in with this lame man and you find you have got at times the tongue of the gum for you have got no religion that you can speak about you hope in God but it is to hope against hope sometimes and you try to get a little help by the way as you think like this cold as I feel this heart of mine yet since

I feel it so it yields some hope of life divine within however life a wayfaring man did you ever light on this scripture the lame take the pride no big words of ready talkers no the lame poor sinners who have to lament I am ready to fall and my sorrow is ever before me and they have to depend utterly on God with whom they have to do because they know healingly salvation is of the Lord by grace are ye saved through faith in that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast and now that is only just a little portrait of this wayfaring man as he is lined out in the chapter where the subject is and although he seems to have such strange characteristics he is a sinner born again and he is in the way he is indeed going to heaven although his fears run highest of weather he will ever reach that holy happy place much might be said along that line of thought but I must come to another viewpoint of the subject and an highway shall be there and away and it shall be called the way of holiness regarding it being two ways the highway and then in it a way you do not have this kind of thing as far as

I have seen I have lived in Kent a long while but in Berkshire there are the roads that you go along and on the side there is a bank and that may be several feet higher than the road and you can go along quite comfortably on the top of the bank and it actually refers to that in the book of Proverbs the way of the righteous is made plain and it says in the margin the way of the righteous is raised up as a course way it is not just the road itself it is a road alongside a path that you can tread when maybe floods abound and you can go on dry shod there is the distinction and a highway shall be there and away and it shall be called the way of holiness all this way it is a way of life which means that as you take your steps forward therein you find in your soul's feelings a reaction to whatever the nature of the way may be because your soul is alive unto

[31 : 08] God it may be sometimes to be in heaviness through manifold temptations and then you will be waiting on God Lord help me oh Lord undertake for me I am oppressed or it may be the way is a way of affliction either later from you or yours who belong to you and then your concern will be that God will overrule all these things for your soul's eternal good and the souls of those you love and that you might come into that scripture of Hezekiah oh Lord by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit it may be sometimes the way of a wayfaring man is to be walking in darkness and have no light and that is a painful experience and especially if in the early dealings of

God you walked in the light of his countenance and then to find such a darkness descending upon you that you look back over life's journey and you say with the church in the sound we cannot see our signs zeal extinguished to a spark life is very low all my evidence is dark and good work are none to show and yet using the illustration I have done your soul will react as you go in that way wherein you walk in darkness and have no light and you will find a corresponding exercise unto godliness oh send out thy light and thy truth let them lead me let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles you will be humbling yourself unto the mighty hand of

God and appealing to him as the light of the wolf when he declared I am the light of the world he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life oh how you will long for the son of righteousness to arise with healing in his wings to help you feel as you want to feel that the way you are going along is indeed the right way a highway shall be there and away and then this way as you go along it may sometimes be to be persecuted by the world in which you live and move especially if you should have to labour to earn the bread which perishes and have the ungodly round about you and you to them as a speckled bird the birds all round about are against her the word of God says and then it may be in the way you go you find everyday new straits attend because difficulties seem to increase and you feel to need more grace and yet more grace and you cannot always feel that you are the subject of it and yet you keep going on times yet pursuing ever sinking yet to swim as dying and behold we live this may seem a very strange sermon to some of you dear young people but

I'm preaching to the greyheads this sabbath morn you shall have your turn if all is well when the lord makes the way but this is the way for heaven bound pilgrims and you must learn to walk in it let us run with patience the race that is set before us looking unto Jesus looking off all beside and it says a highway shall be there and away and it shall be called the way of holiness and it and it is the and it if some of you dear people can look back as grace is given and analyse the dealings of God with you you will find that in life's journey as you are here before God this sabbath morning as you look back over it there has been a highway in which all your everyday circumstances have come about but have you got in the midst of it a way that you have trodden before God as well as before man have you got something that you can ponder in your heart wherein you have done business in heaven's marketplace and gain by trading there and though you seem amazed when you remember the way you have come along because you have come through great and sore troubles and you have come through difficult circumstances and yet here you are in the attitude of worship after the spirit the things of the spirit and you could make this testimony though straight be the way and with dangers be set and we in the way are no farther yet our good guidance savior has helped us thus far and tis by his favor we are what we are and you will live to realize it is a mercy to prize to be what you are

I know that you preacher alike you are not what you would like to be and what you ought to be you ought to be in accordance with what you profess to be that you and I are so often like Peter of old who followed a far off but he did not give up and go back and walk no more with Jesus like some disciples did are you going to do that surely you say Lord hast thou made me know thy ways conduct me in thy fear and grant me such supplies of grace that I may persevere oh you want to be this way fair in man you want to be found in the way of life and you find in Jeremiah's prophecy where it says oh this way fair in man goes along they shall come with weeping and with supplications will I lead them margin leading for supplications favors and you must admit that with favors will I lead them

[39 : 10] I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble for I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my firstborn and now it says this way of the wayfaring man as it goes on it says it is a straight way and yet if you look at a map of the children of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness which you should have at the end of your bibles you will find it was full of windings and turnings and they seemed to go backwards sometimes turned again into the wilderness but they were continually going forward as the cloud moved and in that sense of the word it was a straight way and now how can it be that he led them forth by the right way a straight way and you find the way as you do find it so very different to what you thought it would be long years ago the straight way means this every step you take in it you are looking on to Jesus desiring to go forward with that grace which he alone can communicate and you sometimes light on this scripture it is enough for the disciple that he be as is

Lord and remember how you approach the worship of God how do you approach it Lord Jesus make thyself to me a living bright reality and there it is a straight way I am the way the truth and the life no man cometh unto the father but by me and an highway shall be there and away and this way is not only to a desired end a desired haven it is from the world to be separated from it choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season you ask this wayfaring man whenever you meet him how he really feels about the way he goes along compared with the life that worldlings live and he will tell you

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness because he finds within an aching void which this world cannot fill he finds the world to be a wilderness a solitary place a desert and no earthly source can supply the immortal food he needs for his immortal soul's welfare remember that and an highway shall be there and away and it is said to be the well of holiness the unclean shall not pass over it it is said in this book of Isaiah and they shall be called and holy people and as they go in the way that

Jesus Christ is holiness as the sinner's friend is imputed to them and they are as God looks upon them and holy people and yet you would not hear one way fairer at any time as he draws near to God saying anything at all about his holiness what he does say is this woe is me for I am undone I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips behold I am vile but as he draws near to God desiring to no deny or take while he pleads for Jesus sake the holiness of Jesus as the sinner's friend is imputed to him and therefore he is accepted in the beloved there is one God one mediator between

God and man the man Christ Jesus but I look at the subject from another viewpoint the unclean shall not pass over it you find this way fairing man whenever you get him to tell out a little of how he feels before God he says with Isaiah again from the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it but wounds and bruises putrefying sores and oh how he please God be merciful to me a sinner how he laments with Ezra oh my God I am ashamed I blush to lift up my face unto thee but you look at the life that man lives before man it is not unclean he feels unclean in his approaches to God because he comes in this category and which shall know every man the plague of his own heart but as he lives his life before man it is his great concern to let his life and acts express the holy gospel he does profess remember that and now it says it shall be for those the wayfaring men though fools shall not err therein and now there is a twofold interpretation to this word fools and don't balk at it the word of God says if any man will be wise let him become a fool that he may be wise

[46 : 12] I believe some of you with the preacher too have learned fools because of their transgressions and because of their iniquities are afflicted because you have thought with your little bit of common sense or something equivalent that you could put your hand to this and that and get it to go the way you would like it to go and you have found the word of God has said I will overturn overturn overturn and you have learned there is a rod for the fool's back yes this word has got this meaning very often these wayfaring men before they are called by grace are some of the most unlikely and you might even think some of them according to the judgment of this world are equivalent of fools for they seem to have very little wisdom to know what to do and how to do it or when but when they are born again then

God takes them in hand yes and he makes them wise unto salvation you will find if you come in touch with these wayfaring men and women too that many of those who feel very humble spheres in life and whose lives are very limited in their outlook sometimes living and dying in the same village where they were born and never moving very far away but when it comes to the things of God oh out of the abundance of the heart the mouth can speak and those who are wise in this world's wisdom are not able at times to tell out the things of God like that because they have not gone deep down into these realities like those who are in a humble sphere often do you

John Flavel used to say that those who have to live on the providence of God day by day see both sides of God's face who so is wise and will observe these things even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord the wayfaring men though fools shall not err therein it does not depend on them as they go on in living the life of the righteous God has given them a guarantee concern in the future it shall be well with them that fear God in every state secure kept as Jehovah's eyes is well with them while life endureth and well when called to die but this word wayfaring is very suggestive there is the way and as you go along it you will desire to fare well in the things of

God I've already quoted the just shall live by faith Jeremiah has a word and he speaks about all that I could find a lodging place for a wayfaring man and now as regards the fare of a wayfaring man he is brought down to a bedrock truth that a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven and so what he desires for his fare is live in bread live in water and this concern is to obtain it in the means of grace the wayfaring men those fools shall not err therein in this lodging place the house of prayer especially where there is a course of truth with the faster at the head of it is like an inn wherein in everyday life you can call and rest and be refreshed and then go on your way to reduce to practice what you will find before God with whom you have to do and if you should be helped to remember the way

God has led you and you know many of you are able to do that as grace is given you will find that you have lived your life in accordance with what I read to you in the psalm they go from strength to strength every one of them in Zion shall appear before God here a little there a little line up in line preset to form preset sometimes you have come to such a point in your soul's experience that you have found your tongue failing for thirst and oh how hungry you were felt for a crumb from that bread of life and yet if you weigh the matter up before God and in his light you will help to see light you will find that you have fared well in the dealings of

[52 : 43] God with you you may not have anything outstanding to set up as yet as way marks and eye keeps but you can look back and see where the Lord has enabled you to fare well in the means of grace it may be sometimes in singing a hymn or in looking into the word of God or in speaking one to another about his dealings and under the gospel when you have found knowing brethren beloved your election of God for our gospel came not unto you in word only but also in power when you have had a touch of the love of God when you have felt you could draw near to God and feel where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty and that which will strengthen you most of all is to see Jesus get a glimpse of him as the sinner's friend and be helped to feel that when he came down into this world to save sinners it was on your behalf he came but I must come to the amen and a highway shall be there and away and it shall be called the way of holiness the unclean shall not pass over it but it shall be for those the way fair in men those fools shall not err their end think of these two things if you ponder this subject as grace is given having obtained help of

God I continue unto this day and as you go on the weakest soul shall win the day though earth and hell obstruct the way and you will come into this beautiful scripture and he led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation amen have