The Highway Of Holiness

Intro: As a basis for our study turn to Isa. 35:8-10 “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. 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. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

1. Isaiah 35 is a beautiful passage in the Bible.
   a. It is the triumphant song of Israel’s homecoming.
   b. Isaiah has prophesied of Babylonian captivity, Judah’s desire for deliverance, yet there was a great and terrible wilderness which lay between Babylon and Canaan.
   c. Their hearts would sink as they considered their task of returning.

2. Thus, this beautiful prophecy, to arouse and give courage.
   a. Their redemption would come; the work would be brought to a glorious consummation.
   b. All the terrors of the wilderness would be removed, and they would be brought safely through.

3. One of the most inspiring elements of the prophecy was the promise of the highway through the desert.
   a. This highway, easy to travel and free from dangers, would meet their need.
   b. This was the Divine answer to their fears.

4. There is encouragement for us too for the King’s highway meets our every need.
   a. Early disciples often spoken of the new life in Christ as the “way.”
      i. Acts 9:2 “And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.”
      ii. Acts 19:9, 23 “But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus…. And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.”
      iii. Acts 22:4 “And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.”
      iv. Acts 24:14, 22 “But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets…. And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.”
   b. Way is a most proper and suggestive designation, reminding us that the work of Christ and the purpose of the Gospel is to open up and prepare the way, along which the redeemed of the earth may return to their heavenly home.

5. There are some beautiful and reassuring things said about this way and we shall consider some of them. Let us observe that:

I. IT IS A DESIGNED WAY.
   A. Since it is the Kings highway, we must understand that it is an appointed way.
      1. John 14:1-6 “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”
2. This implies that we are not at liberty to exercise our judgment or wishes in the things pertaining to it:
   a. Heb. 2:1-4 “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; “God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”
   b. Gal. 1:6-9 “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

B. Those who enter this way.
   1. Are directed into it be divine authority.
      a. John 6:44-45 “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.”
      b. Gal. 3:26-27 “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

   2. Their entire journey is under divine direction.
      a. Mat. 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
      b. Eph. 1:22-23 “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

C. The way is described as the Way of Holiness.
   1. That means it is the way of God’s commandments; John 17:17 “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
   2. In no other way can one become and remain holy.
      a. Jer. 6:16 “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. But they said, We will not walk therein.”
      b. Acts 10:34-35 “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”
      c. 1 Pet. 1:15-16 “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”
         (1) We are called by the Gospel which is the Truth
         (2) 2 Th. 2:14 “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

II. It Is A Plain Way.
   A. Some desert tracts are so indistinct or so confusing as to make it exceeding difficult to follow them.
      1. This is not true of the highway of holiness.
      2. Isa. 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.”
B. It may be narrow.
1. There is ample room for all the redeemed to walk therein.
2. It is not hedged in by any intellectually difficulties that only the wise can trace out.
   a. Mat. 11:25-30 “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. 26 Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. 27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”
   b. John 7:17 “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”
   c. 2 Cor. 11:3 “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

C. If it were not plain, then it would not be the case that the Gospel is for all men.
1. Since Jesus came to save sinners, it is essential that His way be characterized by simplicity.
2. This simplicity has been a stumbling block to many.
   a. 2 Kings 5:10-12 “And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. 11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.”
   b. 1 Cor. 1:18-28 “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. 22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness: 24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.”

III. It Is A Safe Way.
A. Isa. 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.”
B. The people who travel this road are protected from the perils that are common to man—their final salvation will not be endangered by them.
1. 1 Cor. 10:13 “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but 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.”
2. Phi. 1:6 “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ;”
3. Jam. 1:2-4 “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

4. 2 Cor. 12:7-10 “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 4For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 5And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

C. This is a practical way of saying that the path of life, narrow as it is, and arduous, gives safety to those who walk in it.
1. Snares and dangers are always to be found in the by-ways.
2. Illustrations:
   a. Love of money; 1 Tim. 6:10 “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”
   b. Cares, riches, pleasures of this world:
      (1) Mat. 13:22 “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”
      (2) Luke 8:14 “He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”
   c. Deceit—Jacob (in receiving the blessing from Isaac)
   d. Lust—David (in his sin with Bathsheba).
   e. The by-ways always lead to sorrows.

D. Anyone who realizes anything about the perils of this life, both seen and unseen, certainly feels the need of a way which is safe.
1. Psa. 27:11 “Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.”
2. Isa. 30:20-21 “And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: 21And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

IV. IT IS A HOMeward WAY.

A. This way promises a safe arrival at the journey’s end.
1. Isa. 35:10 “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”
2. Those who walk in this way always have satisfaction of knowing that they are homeward bound.

B. The whole value and significance of a road depends on where it leads to:
1. It does not matter how pleasant a road may be, it will be no permanent blessing if it does not lead to the desired end.
2. Thus, before one enters upon any course in this life it is well to ask:
   a. To where does this road lead?
   b. What lies at the end of this way?
3. This is very important, for after one has chosen a road and followed it so far, it is not always easy to go back.
   a. Heb. 6:4-6 “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5And have tasted the good word of God,
and the powers of the world to come, “If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

b. Consider Paul who always remembered his former life; 1 Tim. 1:13 “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

C. **Not only does this way lead home, the joy of those who travel it increases as they draw nearer and nearer to their journeys end.**
   1. Pro. 4:18 “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”
   2. Song: “There’s within my heart a melody, Jesus whispers sweet and low, Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still, In all of life’s ebb and flow. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus—Sweetest name I know, Fills my every longing, Keeps me singing as I go.”

Conclusion: Are you in that highway of holiness?