

Title: BEWARE OF THE EASY WAY

Text: Psalms 34:17-19

Intro: We live in a convenience-crazy society. Getting what people want FASTER, CHEAPER and EASIER is the name of the game. We do the same things that people have always done in the past, but everything is much easier now. Through modern science and technology, tedious chores are getting easier all the time. We live in an automatic, express, online, remote control, microwave, ready-to-wear, ready-to-eat, INSTANT world. It is no surprise then that people would want to apply this same approach to their personal principles, relationships, behavior, and even to their religion. However, while the pursuit of the easy way may work with this material physical world, it doesn't work with the spiritual world. In our passage, God says that the righteous will suffer afflictions but He will uphold them. Let's explore this point.

I. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THE EASY WAY

The Bible is filled with stories about people who learned that the easiest and seemingly shortest path to their goal was not necessarily the best. In **Gen. 13:10-11** LOT chose to move toward the green pastures, but all that he gained quickly was lost in the end because of the immorality of the people he chose for his neighbors. In **Gen. 16:1-4** ABRAM & SARAI tried "helping God out" to speed up the time getting a son. But they only caused themselves grief and waste of time. They had to learn the hard way and wait for God to accomplish His purpose in His own time.

In **Heb. 11:24-26** we read that MOSES chose the hard path. He could have been satisfied with personal comforts while his people suffered. He could even have reasoned that relief for his people would be easier to achieve from a position of power within Egypt. Instead the path to his goal led through forty years of tending sheep in the desert. In **I Sam. 24:3-7** we read where DAVID could have taken advantage and killed the evil King Saul. David could have easily seized the throne instantly but did not! After all, it was God's plan that David should reign. But David refused to do evil to achieve a good purpose. Instead, he patiently spent several more years waiting in the mountains. In **Matt. 4:8-10**, SATAN offered the whole world to Jesus in exchange for just a brief moment of worship. Yet, Jesus won the whole world by choosing the hard way through obedience to God. He suffered, bled and died on the cross to achieve victory (**Heb. 5:8**).

In these great examples, we have seen that righteous men of God who triumphed in their earthly life achieved it only through SACRIFICE, PATIENCE and OBEDIENCE. There are no shortcuts!

II. THE PURPOSE IN HARDSHIP

Some might well ask why the blessed path of God needed to be narrow. Why can't the Lord just make His ways in this planet more convenient and easier for man? Why do the righteous need to suffer troubles and afflictions like the wicked in this life?

The Bible teaches that the easy way is not the best way. God's ways are not like ours. Like pure gold the believer is refined in the fires of trial and adversity. It is through enduring and waiting upon God that we develop godly qualities. The only way to do this is through the narrow, hard path that the Lord Jesus Himself laid before us (**I Pet. 2:21; II Pet 1:5-8**). Such spiritual qualities can only be obtained by living for God in spite of hardships and troubles (**Rom. 5:3-5; Jas. 1:2-3**). Often hardships are not accidental but God's chastisement to his wayward child. They are allowed to bring righteous fruit in the believer (**Heb. 12:10-11**).

III. APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE

A. Christian Life (Acts 14:22). After we are saved, we cannot make the Christian life or the duties it brings (prayer, Bible study, soul-winning, giving, etc.) easier than God has already appointed.

B. Business (Prov. 28:19-20, 22). Wanting to get rich quick out of God's will and time often leads to problems & complication.

C. Employment (Col. 3:22). Being underpaid and working long hours is not an excuse to lie, cheat and steal in your job.

D. Marriage (Mark 10:9). Divorce or separation may seem the easy way to go but learning to build a marriage by sacrifice, acceptance, and selfless love is the only path to true happiness.

E. Parenthood (Prov. 23:13-14). Ignoring to discipline your child God's way may be easier for now, but not in the end.

F. Personal Salvation (Heb. 2:3a). Delaying obedience to the Gospel is so easy, but is it the path you want to take now?

Conclusion: Friend, I have bad and good news for you. The bad news is that, if you have not repented of your sins and received Christ as Lord and Saviour, you will perish in Hell! Yet the good news is that you can be sure of Heaven now. God has provided a way of escape from hell fire through His Son Jesus who suffered, bled and died for you. Heaven or Hell, which shall be it for you?