

## Message: Ancient Paths to Soul Rest

Scripture Reading: Matthew 11:25-30

Scripture Text: Jeremiah 6:16

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These are strange and uncertain times. Among other concerns, some of us fear for the welfare of the church and the future of faith in Christ. Many people are giving up and leaving the Christian faith. It seems as though we may be at a crossroads moment. Against this backdrop, which way shall *we* choose to go?

In the sixth chapter of Jeremiah, God says to his people, who were in the midst of their own trauma of national and spiritual uncertainty: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls” (Jer. 6:16).

Evangelical Christians have always appreciated the importance of making good decisions. In this message, we noted the importance of standing still and weighing our options. We examined the commended “ancient paths,” and the significance of describing them as “the good way.” We also examined why, if we choose this way, we must also resolve to “walk in it.” The promised result will be “rest for our souls”—a deep and sustaining peace in the midst of external upheaval and everything else going on all around us. This godly pathway that Jeremiah commended comes into even clearer focus centuries later in the life and ministry of Jesus, who calls us to pattern our lives after his way, and thereby to find (echoing Jeremiah) the ultimate soul rest.

### GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. Do you think that the Christian church in America today is at a kind of crossroads moment? If so, what are the most important choices facing us? Explain.
2. Why do you think so many people are abandoning the Christian faith? What might tempt you yourself to do the same, and why have you chosen nonetheless to stay?
3. What needs to change if the church is to more fully embrace “the good way” that Jeremiah commended?
4. As Christians, how can we take more seriously the moral demands of faith in Christ without falling into an unhealthy legalism or “works righteousness”?
3. How has the perennial challenge of *choosing* the good way of Christ been surfacing in the details of your own personal journey these days? What choices are you facing?
6. From your experience, how does choosing the ancient path (aka the good way, the yoke of Christ) seem to stimulate rest in your soul? How does this work?