

"Where Could I Go?"

When life falls apart and you have to pick up the pieces, where do you go? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today, we're exploring our need to turn to the Lord.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 11:33 to 36, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the LORD, or who became his counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." Since God's wisdom and knowledge is far deeper than our own, we'd be wise to listen to Him and go to Him. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

I suspect that all of us at some time have fallen prey to a scam, listened to a false report, or believed a lie because we trusted the wrong person. You might think this isn't important, but the Lord Jesus said that the devil "is a liar and the father of lies" in John 8:44. Paul remarked that "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11 verse 14). Trusting in the devil's lies will cost you your soul.

Some years back my friend had a sin problem that led his soul to be troubled. Where could he go? Another friend worried greatly about his salvation, worrying whether not he was old enough to know what he was doing when he became a Christian. There was a husband who was having trouble getting along with his wife. And there was an abused woman who wondered how she could forgive her abuser. Then there's a guilty sinner who wondered how he could forgive himself. A Christian facing a great dilemma was looking for a solution that didn't involve sin. Where could they go to find the answers to their spiritual needs?

Well we offer this study free on going to God for help. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from John 6:66 to 69, and explore the fact that life in God and in His will matters.

Our reading today comes from the gospel of John, chapter 6, verses 66 to 69. Jesus had worked several miracles, He fed the multitudes, and done many wonderful things, in fact the people thought about making Him king. But whenever He said some things they didn't understand and some things they didn't like, they decided to pack up and leave. In verse 66 it says: "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, 'You do not want to go away also, do you?' And Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.'"

And we need to come to that same conclusion, to believe in Jesus, and realize that He's the Christ, the Holy one of God. Let us pray. "Father, we're so thankful that You have given Jesus to us, that we might come to know You and to know Your will. We pray heavenly Father that You will help us to follow You and to go to You in every circumstance of life. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

When people face a serious problem and become desperate they often reach out to any solution they think will work. Sadly, people have many devices and sometimes think they can find answers on their own. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 7:29, "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they've sought out many devices." People put their trust sometimes in the things that are human. Some love the wrong things more than they love the wisdom of God and find all their pursuits worthless.

The book of Ecclesiastes speak of Solomon's pursuits to find satisfaction in life. He explored human wisdom, pleasure, possessions, entertainment, wives and concubines, madness and folly. He said in Ecclesiastes 2 verses 10 to 11, "All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. And thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun." Later he noted, "So I hated life, for the work which had been done under the sun was grievous to me; because everything is futility and striving after wind" (verse 17).

Perhaps you've felt like Solomon. Life didn't provide for you the satisfaction that you wanted. You consider your achievements and wonder what advantage did they bring. You look inside your heart and soul and find emptiness, futility, and a striving after wind. You may wonder what can you do, where can you go to find contentment. If you let your passions rule your life, you'll never achieve enough or get enough.

I've heard people say, "Well you know if I had lots of money, I could be happy"; but you probably wouldn't. Some think, "Well if I had.... (and you fill in the blank), I could be content"; but you probably wouldn't. Some think if they could fulfill their dreams, they'd be happy; but those who seem to be the most successful often are the most miserable. Success, money, and fame often bring great misery and problems. And there are things money cannot buy. Money cannot buy love, cannot buy time, cannot buy peace, cannot buy forgiveness, cannot buy manners, cannot buy true friends, and cannot buy God's grace (which is a gift).

Ecclesiastes 5 verse 10 to 12 says that "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity. When good things increase, those who consume them increase. So what's the advantage to their owners except to look on? The sleep of the working man is pleasant, whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach of the rich man does not allow him to sleep." Many people have an abundance but not contentment.

When a man came to Him and asked Jesus to divide his inheritance with his brother, the Lord Jesus said, "Well beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed [he says]; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." And He told them a parable, saying, "That the land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'Well what shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I'll tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.'

'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, but is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:16 to 21).

Now abundant life, true contentment, can be yours when you become rich toward God rather than becoming rich only with the temporary things of this world! You don't know when the God of heaven may say to you, "This very night your soul is required of you." All the things you thought were

important, all the things you've accumulated, all the success you've achieved, all the money in your bank account won't mean as much as whether your soul was right with the living God. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 16:26, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The apostle Paul found his contentment in Jesus Christ. He said in Philippians 4:11 to 13, "for I've learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I've learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." The apostle Paul had enough of God in his heart that his circumstances could not ruin his happiness and contentment.

Proverbs 3:5 to 8 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body, And refreshment to your bones." Now you may regret many things in your life, but you'll never regret following the Lord Jesus with all your heart. Many people are miserable because they sometimes follow the Lord and then sometimes follow the world. They seem like Solomon to try everything but fully give themselves to God, they want everything else but not Him, and they want to find joy, they want to find contentment, but they end up being disappointed and saying, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity."

Psalm 118 verse 8 says, "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man." Some people think the popular advice "oh, follow your heart" is the best way, people will tell you that, but they find only to realize that their hearts may not be leading them to what's truly best. People can deceive themselves into believing what they want to believe. Their hearts may cause them to make horrible decisions that bring them a lot of misery. Jeremiah 17:9 to 10 quotes what God said, "That the heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds." If the Lord were listening to your justification and looking into your heart, would He be pleased, with what you're thinking?

You've probably seen people spin the truth in order to justify their ways. "One time won't hurt." "Well, I can quit anytime!" "No one's perfect!" "Why, God is too good to condemn anyone." "Love makes our sins okay." I'm amazed how far people will go and contradict what God has declared! They think they can change things. They say sin really isn't sin or sin isn't any big deal. Our culture seems to think because they have turned God's morality upside down, that God won't mind and will still bless them.

Psalm 50 verses 16 to 21 says, But to the wicked God says, "What right have you to tell of My statutes, And to take My covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline, And you cast My words behind your back. When you see a thief, you're pleased with him, And you associate with adulterers. You let your mouth loose in evil, And your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. These things you have done and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes." God isn't naïve or blind. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). We can't hide from God or presume that God doesn't care or notice.

The rebellious spirit of this generation isn't new; we can't ignore biblical history. Other generations thought they could set God's ways and God's morals aside and do as they please. They thought they

could get away with changing God's laws and God's morals and make their own rules. Our culture thinks we're no longer accountable to God. They presume they can make their own rules, and God won't care. They will one day have a rude awakening. Folks talk about being "woke"; but the real awakening will come when we all stand before Jesus Christ on Judgment Day! Isaiah 5 and verse 20 says, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And clever in their own sight!"

I tell you, wouldn't you hate to hear your Creator and Judge pronounce a "woe" upon you? Wouldn't you hate to hear Matthew 7:21 to 23. Where the Lord said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" I tell you, if you seek the Lord's blessing, then do the will of the Father rather than practice lawlessness. Ignoring and dismissing, or rewriting God's laws, you see that's lawlessness, and the kind of lawlessness that Jesus will never accept!

You don't have to listen to popular thinking. You can find the contentment and joy that you're looking for by following the Lord Jesus and doing the will of the Father. Now if you want to find life, Jesus came to give us an abundant life and eternal life. In Christ we have every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1 and verse 3). If you want to find true love, turn to the love of God. If you want the spiritual truth that matters to your soul in eternity, turn to the word of God! Jesus is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; and no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14 and verse 6).

People search the world trying to "find themselves" and forget God made them. Revelation 4 verse 11 says "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created." God created you to seek and He created you to seek and find Him. Isaiah 55 verses 6 to 9 says, "Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.'"

Now seeking the Lord matters. Throughout Scripture God distinguishes those who seek Him from those who go their own way. Psalm 119 verse 118 says about God, "You spurn all who go astray from your statutes, for their cunning is in vain." You see, God's ways are righteous and good; they lead to eternal life. The ways of the world will only lead you to confusion, chaos, and misery. Won't you seek the Lord?

Let us pray. Oh Father, help us always to come to You, to give our hearts to You, to love You and to serve You in every way. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior, Amen.

The Lord Jesus calls us in Matthew 11:28 to 30, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." We need hearts that say, "Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart" (Psalm 119 verses 33 to 34). We should follow the Lord's teaching carefully and lovingly.

You see, love moves us to comply with God's instructions. This means paying close attention and carefully obeying God's word. We must not only seek the Lord, we must fully commit ourselves to Him. Whatever He says, we believe. Whatever He instructs us, we will do. Whatever example He sets, we'll follow. The Lord Jesus is worthy of our trust and commitment. And no one can bless you with eternal life but Jesus; there's no place else to go.

The Lord Jesus did not leave us ignorant about His marvelous grace and the need to trust and to obey Him. Now if you believe in Jesus Christ, you will not argue with Him or correct Him. Faith and love will lead to repentance, giving up our sinful thoughts and behaviors. Faith and love will lead us to confess our faith in Jesus Christ. Faith and love will lead us to be baptized into Christ, immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins, just as Acts 2 and verse 38 teaches. Faith and love will lead us to remain faithful and committed to worshiping and serving for the rest of our lives. Will you believe and serve the Lord?

Well we hope that today's study about going to the Lord has stirred you to trust the Lord Jesus. Now if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches, many of them may be right in your area. And you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Just subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMInistry," and you can watch every week. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. And if you get a hold of us, we're not going to be asking you for money, we're going to try to help you to get to heaven.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God, you need to turn to Him. And you can do that by worshipping at church. Now everybody needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ in your area. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about the program. As always, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.