

**November 4, 2007**  
**"The Test of Rest"**  
**Jer 6:16 NLT**

So now the LORD says, "Stop right where you are! Look for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls. But you reply, 'No, that's not the road we want!'

***Jeremiah's Country Then...***

For most of his ministry Jeremiah lived under evil kings who had no regard for God or morals. The people of his day believed in God, but also worshipped idols. Their lives were influenced not by God's principles, but by what was popular in their culture. God was ignored and now, for a time God would ignore them.

*Jeremiah warned* the people of the little southern kingdom of Judah that they were on the brink of disaster. His message was plain and simple: *Return to the Lord God, or face His judgment.* By their persistent sinning and failure to live as God's people should they would soon be taken into captivity by the mighty Babylon. The people chose to ignore God and His warnings given through His prophets, and so God in love, as any loving parent would do, brought punishment upon the people causing them to turn from their sin and turn back to God that He might restore them.

***Our Country Now...***

I am concerned for our country. We have government leaders who have no regard for God or morals. People say they believe in God, but ignore Him as many other things in their life are more important than the things of God. Lives are influenced by popular culture. People seem to be finding new levels of sinful behavior. People want to be free of any restraints on their behavior. They want to live any way they please, even if it does not please God. And it is getting out of control. God is ignored.

What is even more disturbing is that even Christians are failing to live as God's people should. Jeremiah's message is for America today. The message is as plain and simple today as it was then: Return to the Lord God, or face His judgment. If America does not return to God, it will face His judgment. He will allow other nations to bring their terror upon us, because He wants to wake us up. 9/11 was just a taste of what could happen. America needs to turn from its evil ways.

***The Church Today...***

But why is our nation becoming more and more sinful and morally deficient? It is because the church is becoming more and more insignificant. The church is losing its influence on the world. We are despised. We are seen as hypocrites? We are unimportant. And why is the church becoming insignificant? Because its people, God's people are failing to live as God's people should. We need another reformation.

We are chosen by God to be a holy people. In the New Testament we are called saints. A holy person or saint conveys the notion of a separation from the world, not conforming to the patterns of the world, but consecrated to God, transformed, and our will conforming to His will. If we are truly trusting Jesus to be our Savior and if we have given Him reign over our lives, then He has put His Holy Spirit in us who is in the

process of conforming us into the image of Christ. Is that what the world is seeing in you / us? A holy people, people of moral character, a people belonging to God, Christians, little christs...

**1. *“Stop right where you are!”***

In our text the Lord says, to His people, “Stop right where you are!” This is one of the advantages of coming to church. It is an opportunity to stop, think about the things of God, and take inventory. How important is God in your life? Do you make decisions based on God's purposes for your life? Do you take every major decision and put it before God to determine God's mind on the matter? What is more important, your feelings or God's, your desires, or God's, your wants or God's, your will or God's, your possessions or possessing God? Is your commitment to God as strong as it once was? Is your devotion to God as much of a priority today as it once was? Or have you lost that first love you had for Jesus?

**2. *“Look for the old, godly way, and walk in it.”***

Look at what the Lord says next, “Look for the old, godly way, and walk in it.” Look back at how Jesus touched you with His love, mercy and grace. Remember how you fell in love with Him. You were so moved / deeply touched by His forgiveness, cleansing, by the freedom, peace, love, hope that you experienced that you wanted to live to please Him. Nothing was more important. Look for the old, godly way you were once more committed to, and go back to walking in it.

The word “old” means eternal. The holy, godly way that God wants us to live is His eternal way. It has not changed, because God has not changed. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. The way He has always wanted His people to live will be the way He will always want His people to live. What He says is wrong will always be wrong and what He says is right will always be right. You can rely on His Word. It doesn't change and that is what is meant by His old way, it does not change. And it is a godly way.

It is godly because it is His way. Godless living includes everything we do without taking God into account. Don't just look for the old, godly way, walk in it, travel its path. Live a holy life.

Isa 35:8-10 NLT

And a main road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness . Evil-hearted people will never travel on it. It will be only for those who walk in God's ways; fools will never walk there. Lions will not lurk along its course, and there will be no other dangers. Only the redeemed will follow it. Those who have been ransomed by the LORD will return to Jerusalem, singing songs of everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be overcome with joy and gladness.

Heb 12:14 (NIV)

...be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. (NLT - seek to live a clean and holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.)

For we are not only to look for the old godly way, we are to walk in it.

Stop right now. Don't wait. There is no better time than right now. Stop right where you are. Take a deeper look. I've asked you a lot of questions this morning, let me ask a few more: Below the surface of your life is there peace and rest or is there worry, guilt, hopelessness? Is there something wrong. Is there vanity, envy, bitterness, slander, lies, bad temper, evil thoughts? Do you feel like something within you needs to rest? Not only is your life hectic, your inner life is restless. Is your heart at rest? You see *rest is the test!* Look at our verse again.

### **3. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls.**

"Stop right where you are! Look for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls.

Have you found a place of rest? Is there rest in your soul / a place of rest in your soul. Rest is the test. If there is no rest, if you need rest within then you are not walking in the old, godly way, you are not traveling on a godly path. Because this verse says if you travel the godly path "*you will find rest for your souls.*" No rest means you need to return to or begin walking in God's way. And to look at it from a different angle, if you want rest in your soul, then you must look for and walk in the eternal, godly way that God wants you to. Rest is the test! No rest? Return to the Lord God. Want rest? Return to the Lord God. Give Him yourself, your whole self come and abide in Jesus.

Matt 11:28-29 NLT

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls.

(AMP) – (relief and ease and refreshment and recreation and blessed quiet) for your souls.

### **4. But you reply, 'No, that's not the road we want!'**

Now look at the last part of our text: So now the LORD says, "Stop right where you are! Look for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls. *But you reply, 'No, that's not the road we want!'*

You have that choice, you can say, '*No, that's not the road we want!*' But, today I am not praying that somebody will of their own free will turn or return to Christ. My hope and prayer is that God will lay hold of some of you today and say, "You are mine, and you shall be mine. I claim you for myself." My hope is in God's free grace, and not in your free will. I'm not going to ask you to do anything today, rather I am going to ask God to do something today. I am going to ask God to convict you, to draw you, to allow you to feel His presence, His power, His love. I am going to ask God to lay hold of you. I am going to ask God to offer you rest for your soul. Let me pray for you.