




01 PATHS OF LIFE


The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost' sermon notes

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Today we are starting a journey. A journey that will take us all the way to Easter Sunday.
We are calling it **Paths of Life**.



Let's start with a passage from the prophet Jeremiah. It's an invitation!

"Thus says the Lord: 'Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.'" Jeremiah 6:16a (ESV)

Stand by the roads... stand by the different ways one can travel (the destinations one can take)... stand at the crossroads!

And LOOK! Observe! Examine! Don't just take the easy road!
Don't just follow the crowd! **LOOK!**

Where is this road going? Where will this take me? Where do I want to end up?

And ask for the ancient paths... the old paths, the paths that have lasted the test of time... those are the **"good paths"**!

Big difference between a "path" and a "road"!

- A **ROAD** is a way that has been intentionally built for travel.
It makes it EASIER for you to follow its direction! The way has been levelled, it's smoother, gradual, wider, easy to see, the obstacles have been removed...
- A **PATH** is a way that has been beaten, trodden down, formed by the feet of others. It's raw, uneven, windy, narrower, less intentional, harder to travel, harder to find (You can miss it quite easily).

So **LOOK!** Find it! Seek it! Ask about it!

Illustration: Walking the Hanwell trails and discovering these paths that cut through the forest. There are no signs so you have to intentionally look for them until you spot them. **Paths don't have signs, trails do!**

You have to look for paths!

When you enter a path, you are **following the steps of others that have gone before you.** Their feet have cleared the way for you to follow...

When Jesus called his disciples, he said to them **"follow me"**

He was their path... they then became the path for others. Paul said to the Corinthian church:

"Follow me as I follow Christ. I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you". 1 Corinthians 11:1-2

He said to Timothy:

"The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be able to teach others." 2 Timothy 2:2

- When I do an ordination, I always tell whoever is being ordained that when we lay hands on them, we represent all those that laid hands on us down through the ages... When I was ordained in 1980, I didn't ordain myself, others ordained me who were ordained by others, who were ordained by others... etc. etc. all the way down through the history of the church back to the early church, back to Jesus.
- We are part of a history. We follow a path trod out by others before us, who gave us the Gospel, the Creeds, the Canon, the Story, the Traditions.
- Traditions that are the roots of our faith and give us STABILITY!

(This is one of our church Core Values!)

- I grew up in a Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition with a huge value and emphasis on the move of the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, the Power of the Spirit.

I will forever be grateful for what I was taught!

It has been a huge daily value in my life!

I seek daily the presence of the Holy Spirit, the leading of the Spirit

The Pentecostal/Charismatic movement helped to restore one of the ancient paths of the early Church Fathers. It brought the fire and the life to the Church!

- **That is also one of the Core Values of our Church:** We value the Presence of the Holy Spirit and actively seek the Holy Spirit's work and leading in the life of our church.
- But in my Christian journey **I have also discovered some wonderful "ancient paths"** that have become very key to my Christian journey and have brought me life!

Older traditions and Spiritual Practices like quiet moments of prayer taught in the Psalms and by the Early Church Fathers, the Prayer of Examen by Ignatius of Loyola, Christian meditation, prayer of gratitude, the Jesus Prayer (which is a daily prayer of repentance), solitude, fasting, sabbath, the Sacraments, seasons like Lent, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, Advent.)

These are part of the ancient paths, where the good way is...

AND, as we walk in them, we find rest for our souls.

Does your soul ever get tired? Stressed inside? We find LIFE in those ancient paths! The Psalmist says...

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Ps. 6:11 (ESV)

The ancient paths teach us how to find water in the dry seasons of the soul! How to find the GOOD SHEPHERD that

"...makes me lie down in green pastures. That leads me beside still waters. That restores my soul. That leads me in those right paths for his name's sake." Psalm 23:1-3

- In a week and ½ we are entering the season of Lent leading us to Good Friday and Easter Sunday. During this season we want to invite you to walk with us through the LENT season, follow the PATH of the Gospel, the



steps of Jesus and practice together with us some of those ANCIENT PRACTICES; those ancient paths that bring rest for your soul.

For a lot of people Lent is a season for making resolutions.

They give up chocolate or sweets. They decide that they're going to pray more, go to church every Sunday. But beyond that, many have little understanding of what Lent is about.

Let me put it this way: I know it might be hard to believe with temperatures early today at -15°, but in 24 days it will be spring. In spring the gardening will start. The season between winter and summer when people clear the old dead debris from the winter, hoe, turn the soil over, plant, prune, pull weeds, preparing their gardens so they will grow beautiful lush flowers or rich vegetables.

Lent is that season when we as Christians clear the old dead debris from our hearts, hoe, plant, prune, pull those sinful weeds that snuck into our attitudes, and prepare ourselves for renewal and spiritual growth.

- We are inviting you this season of Lent to walk with us through the gardens of our hearts and pulling out the spiritual debris that has settled there through confession. Letting the Holy Spirit examine us and point out those things in our lives that have taken the place of God and prevent us from finding him. Maybe it's a schedule so full there is no time for prayer. Or a heart preoccupied with material things. Or a self-serving career that has stopped you from serving others. Lent is a time to clean out those things in our lives to make room for new spiritual growth.
- One of the key Spiritual Practices, part of the ancient paths that bring us new life is FASTING...
- Pastor Chad is coming to talk to you about what that looks like:

Pastor Chad

One of the paths that lead to life we find in Scripture and in the history of the church is the practice of fasting.

"I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God ..." Ezra 8:21 (NIV)

When his heart was stirred for his people

"For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven". Nehemiah 1:4b (NIV)

Jesus fasted after his baptism before he began his ministry.

Fasting is about humbling ourselves before God, demonstrating our dependence upon him alone, our desire to please him above even our appetite for food.

Reminds me of a **SPEED BUMP**. The point of a speed bump is to slow you down, to get your attention to something important (e.g. don't hit a pedestrian).

In fasting, we intentionally put a 'speed bump' in our day by using our appetite. When we hit the 'bump' we use it as a reminder to pay attention to God and turn our heart towards him in prayer.

Caution: Being hungry does not earn merit points with God.

- God is not impressed with my ability to not eat a bag of chips, it does not give me more persuasive power over God.



“The point of the Lenten fast, for us, is not really about what we give up. It is about what we are supposed to do when we feel ourselves wanting what we have told ourselves we should not have.” – Eastern Orthodox writer

Personal Story:

During a week long fast, my grandfather’s health took a serious turn, and I contemplated breaking the fast, as it ‘was not a good time.’ Then I recalled what God had put on my heart as I was in the fast, “The Lord is my source of strength.”

I continued the fast, leaning into God for strength. There are some lessons that we can learn while in the spiritual posture of posture of fasting.

How Will You Fast During Lent?

Different types of fasting:

- Food – has looked different over the ages, choosing to reduce number of meals in a day, abstaining from meat (especially on Fridays when Jesus shed his blood), abstaining from a type of food (e.g. sweets)
 - Key to remember point is not to have a diet / weight loss plan. It is about reorienting our desires to aim towards God.
- Other Activity
 - Media: YouTube, Television, Radio
 - Social Media

That’s why fasting and prayer go together.

- The goal is not saying “No”, to something, it is about using the no to say YES to God.

When Chad was done, we played a video (Click [HERE](#) for sample)

Pastor Drost

After video

“My soul, wait in silence for God alone, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken.” Psalm 62:5–6

- One of the ancient paths is SILENCE...
- When you find your mind wondering it helps to repeat a key phrase from scripture: “wait in silence for God alone”
- Sometimes I just repeat praises to Jesus: “Praise you Jesus”
- Then I quiet my soul and listen... I listen for His gentle voice that brings peace.

