

SET IN THE WAY OF HIS STEPS

INTRO: This morning we saw that we have peace with God through justification. Righteousness and peace have kissed in Christ!
 -Justification is God's work for us, done once on the cross, removing the guilt of our sins. We are reconciled to God.
 -The fruit of justification is sanctification, God's work in us, a life-long process, removing the pollution of sin.
 -The great blessing that comes to the church: "righteousness goes before him, and shall set us in the way of his steps."

I. **SET BY GOD'S APPOINTMENT**

A. Righteousness shall go before him.

1. Righteousness occupies every path in Christ's kingdom. This is one of the chief elements of our blessedness.
2. God's righteousness affects the hearts and lives of his people.
3. The Lord works this righteousness in us and calls us to it and teaches us in it.
4. We confess with the Psalmist, "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord..." (Ps. 37:23).

B. Why is this necessary?

1. Because we by nature are so foolish & brutish, walking in folly (Ps. 85:8, Prov. 16:9).
2. We need to confess with the Psalmist, "my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped." (Ps. 73:2)
3. Because our way is so troublesome, obscure, full of danger, sin, and we are so weak.
4. "How shall the young direct their way? What light shall be their perfect guide?" (Ps. 119:9)

C. How God does this.

1. "O LORD, I know that the way of a man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer. 10:23)
2. The Psalmist says, "Order my steps in thy Word, and do not let iniquity have dominion over me." (Ps.119:133)
3. God directs our steps by his Word and his Holy Spirit. Ours is a prescribed way.
4. Ours is an antithetical way.

II. **SET IN HIS FOOTSEPTS**

A. The picture drawn:

1. First, the picture of a father making footsteps in the deep snow.
2. His son follows in Dad's footsteps, giving direction but also enabling his son to walk through the stuff.
3. We use this phrase many times when we see children following after the pattern, example, or occupation of parent.
4. Sometimes we admit that we have to try to fill rather big shoes. Who is equal to the task?

B. God's footsteps:

1. In our covenant relationship with God, God reveals himself and his attributes to us, and the works that flow from it.
2. Specifically mentioned in our reconciliation were four of God's attributes: mercy, truth, righteousness, peace.
3. Calvin points out that these four attributes form the grand and ennobling distinction of the Kingdom of Christ.
4. All these blessings flow from God and are the ingredients of true happiness. May they reign in our lives!
5. Are we those who are merciful, kind and forgiving others as we have been forgiven by God?
6. Are we known for truthfulness, students of God's truth that sets us free?
7. God is righteous, giving us an 'alien' righteousness. Do we now by grace seek to conform to his standard of perfection
8. God grants us peace with him. Do we seek that peace with one another in our families and in the church family?

C. God's perfections meet in Christ Jesus, reconciled in his cross:

1. Christ reigns in his Kingdom. In Christ we have not only the example of how to walk but also the ability and strength.
2. Christ is example: I Peter 2:21
3. Christ is the one who enables us: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13)." day
4. May we be conformed day by day, more and more in the image of Christ: in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

III. **LEARNING TO LIVE THE LIFE OF HEAVEN.**

A. It is God's work.

1. It is good to hear God's Word that he speaks peace to us. But we also need to hear his Word to do it!
2. God's people must govern their lives by his holy Word.
3. God works in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2: 13).
4. Purpose: that we "may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation that we might shine as lights in the world..." (Phil. 2:15).
5. God reveals the glory of his grace in us.

B. It is our calling.

1. We are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil.2:12). We obey gladly, not murmuring or disputing.
2. We have been saved that we might serve our great God and his Christ.
3. These are big footsteps, and at times we miss, but he forgives and helps our infirmities.

C. We are citizens of heaven.

1. By justification, we become citizens of a new country.
2. By sanctification, we learn the language of, wear the clothing of, eat the food of, and adopt the customs of that country
3. It is an antithetical walk:
4. We are separated by his steps from wickedness, for we are a holy nation, a kingdom of priests.
5. We are separated unto, consecrated to, dedicated to God.
6. This is not a part time calling, but our whole life: time, possessions, bodies etc.