

# A Way That Seems Right

by Phil Beach Jr.

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of denying ourselves and trusting in God's wisdom and strength in order to follow God's way and experience a deeper level of intimacy and fellowship with Him.*

**Duration:** 38:30

**Scripture:** Proverbs 14:12, Matthew 16:21

**Topics:** "Christian Life", "Self-Denial", "Spiritual Maturity"

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## Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit in redirecting our focus from worldly struggles to Jesus Christ. He warns that there is a way that seems right to us, but ultimately leads to destruction, urging believers to deny themselves and follow Christ's example. The sermon illustrates how true life is found in surrendering our pride and self-will to God, allowing His wisdom to guide us. Beach encourages the congregation to recognize their need for humility and to seek a deeper relationship with Christ, which requires letting go of personal agendas. He concludes by inviting everyone to submit to God's transformative work in their lives, leading to spiritual maturity and freedom from self-centeredness.

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## Transcript

The Holy Spirit of God has been so precious this morning, hasn't he? And one of the wonderful characteristics of the Holy Spirit is He has an incredible ability to turn our hearts toward home, toward the Lord Jesus. Isn't it true that the Spirit of this world gets our attention and our hearts' mind on ourself and on our problems and on our struggles and on our difficulties? And if it wasn't for the Holy Spirit, the work of the Divine Spirit of God that's given to us when we become believers, we would be most miserable, wouldn't we? We would just be under the influence of a world and a Spirit that is constantly, constantly bringing our attention to ourself and to our struggles. So it's refreshing to come under the influence of the good word of God and the Holy Spirit and the testimonies of what He's doing in one another's lives because it has a healing effect.

Actually, what it does is it brings us back into perspective. It brings us back into proper focus where our eyes can get back on the Lord Jesus Christ. You know, when Peter was walking on the water, he was alright until he turned his eyes off of Jesus and put them on the storm and the raging waves of the sea, and then he began to sink.

And so, of course, we know the lesson there is that our eyes must be focused on the Lord Jesus Christ or else the storms of life and the tumultuous waves that are bashing up against our life are going to cause us

to sink. And there's some people here this morning, you're going through some deep waters, aren't you? You feel the bashing of waves. You feel the strong winds of life coming and bashing against you and you have thought, oh God, I'm sinking.

But Jesus is here to tell us this morning through His Word that we are to keep our eyes upon Him and not fear the storm, to draw our strength from Him, and He's able to sustain us. So it doesn't matter what you go through. It doesn't matter how difficult the time is.

If you look to Jesus, He is able to keep you afloat. Now, I'm not saying He's not going to let some of the water get in your boat. I'm not saying that sometimes you might have to start taking the water out of your boat, but He's going to keep you afloat.

I invite you this morning, if you would please, to turn your Bibles to one Scripture in Proverbs and then we're going to read a Scripture in Matthew. The Scripture in Proverbs is found in Proverbs chapter 14, verse number 12. Proverbs 14, verse number 12.

I think it would be very, very profitable for each and every one of us to make it a point to memorize this Scripture. Some of you may know it, but if you don't, I want to encourage you to memorize this Scripture because this perhaps is one of the most important Scriptures that you will ever learn and hide in your heart. Proverbs 14, verse number 12.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death, the ways of destruction. And now, according to this Scripture, we need to understand a few things.

First of all, each and every one of us are going to have to come to grips with the truth that there is a way that seems right to us, but the end of that way, if we go that way, will be death and destruction. And so any prudent, any wise person would want to know what that way is and avoid it at any cost. Doesn't that make sense? Would you choose to step upon a pathway that you knew would bring death and destruction to your life and not avoid it? No thinking, wise, prudent person here this morning would ever do that.

And so we need to realize, first of all, there is a way that seems right to us, but the end thereof is destruction. And now, my second question, or second thought regarding this Scripture is this. If there is a way, what is that way this morning? Now don't generalize this.

Ask God to take His Word this morning and personalize this to your heart, so that you might be able to say there is a way that seems right to Phil. Put your name there. What is that way? Matthew 16, beginning in verse number 21.

There is a way that leads to death. And now the question is, what is that way? What is that way this morning? Matthew 16, beginning in verse 21. From that time forth, Jesus began to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto you. A better translation of verse 22 could render this. Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying, Lord, pity thyself.

Have mercy on thyself. Don't allow this dreadful thing to happen to you. Don't permit yourself to be brought to a bloody cross, there to be handed over to the hands of evil, cruel men.

Lord, pity yourself. Have mercy on yourself. This shall not be unto thee.

Verse 23, But He turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan. Thou art an offense unto Me. For thou savorest not or understandest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Then Jesus said unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. Proverbs 14, verse 12, There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is destruction and death.

There is a way that leads to death, and the question we asked a few moments ago, What is that way that seems right to us, but the end is death? May I suggest this morning that the way that seems right to us, that will lead to spiritual and physical death and ruin, is the way of verse number 25. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. The way that seems right to us is the way of preserving ourselves, preserving our pride, preserving and saving our own human strength, preserving our own tenacity, preserving our own interests, and our own desires, and our own passions.

The way that seems right to us is God, I can do this myself. I don't think I need your help. Lord, my wisdom is adequate for this situation.

My understanding is adequate for this situation. Or like Daniel testified, my training is sufficient for this situation. I know how to pull up my boot strings.

I know how to be tough when I need to be tough. I know how to get the job done and I'm just going to do it. There is a way that seems right, but the end is destruction and death.

He that seeks to save his life shall lose it. But he who loses his life for the sake of Jesus Christ shall find it. Where are you this morning in relation to Proverbs 14.12? Have you come to see that your way seems right to you? But if your way is not in agreement with God's way, if your way is not in agreement with what God is saying to you about that situation in your life, then no matter how right it seems in your eyes, that way is going to lead to death and destruction.

You see, Christianity is not about my way and your way. It's not about my thing and your thing. It's not about us doing our own thing and then asking God to bless it.

It's all about us dying that we might live. Losing that we might gain. Letting go that we might truly possess.

Christianity is coming to a crisis where we realize that Jesus Christ alone is the source of forgiveness, but not only is the source of our forgiveness, but He is our life. And it is His way and His wisdom that will enable us to triumph. Peter, when Jesus told him he was going to Jerusalem, consider his words.

He began to rebuke him. Why do you think Peter began to rebuke Jesus when Jesus told him he's going to have to be delivered unto the hands of enemies and be delivered over to death? I've got a good hunch that Jesus rebuked Peter because by virtue of association, Peter knew that if Jesus was going to go to a cross and Peter was a follower of Jesus, that meant that Peter was going to have to go to a cross. And I don't think that was part of Peter's plan in following Christ.

You see, we have preconceived ideas about what we think it means to follow Christ. We want to follow Christ, but I think deep down inside, we want to follow Christ so that He blesses our agenda. So He blesses our plans.

So we can engage in the way that seems right to us and ask His blessing on it. But see, Christianity is not that. Christianity is like Jesus said in verse number 24, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.

That word deny means to disown. To disown is to actually come to the place where we say, I don't know the man. I don't know him.

You know, Peter denied Christ. Same Greek word. Peter said, I don't know the man.

He denied Him. He refused to acknowledge that he knows Him. And God wants to work in your life and in my life so deeply and so thoroughly by His loving child training so that we can get to the place where we can disown, where we can actually say, I don't know the man.

Talking about yourself. I don't trust in His wisdom anymore. I don't trust in His understanding anymore.

I don't trust in His love anymore. How many of you tried to love someone and it lasted for a little while and then it got tired? And it got critical. And it got bitter.

Why? Why? Because there is a way that seems right unto us. And that's our love. We take pride in our love, don't we? Oh, I love you, brother.

You let that brother speak evil against you. And then you see the nature of that love as human. It's not from Christ.

Because Christ says, Bless them that persecute you. Pray for them that despitefully use you. Love your enemies.

If your enemy is hungry, feed him. If your enemy is naked, clothe him. Oh, we love our brothers and sisters until they cross us.

Until they don't act the way we think they should. And then all of a sudden, in our hearts there's a conspiracy against them. And we're critical.

And we're judgmental. And we close our heart to them. And before we embraced them, but now it's, hi, how are you doing? What's wrong? We've been found out.

God has made us to see our love is not sufficient. It seems right to us. But if it's not a love that's been born of the Holy Spirit, if it's not a love that has come from the power of the Holy Spirit, I'm telling you, beloved, it is going to fail you.

It's going to fail you. What about patience? Oh, we try and be so patient. And what happens to our patience? I'll tell you, God's patience doesn't become impatient.

So whenever our patience becomes impatient, it just shows one thing. It's our patience, not his. So to deny oneself is to be brought to the place where, like Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2, for I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

To be brought to the place where we deny ourselves is to wholly look to Christ as our life. And all the virtues that are in Christ must become part of our very life. And we must learn to distrust all of those earthly carnal virtues in ourselves that we think are sufficient that fail us as soon as there's any kind of test.

As soon as there's any kind of difficulty, we're found out. We come to pieces. That's okay.

God doesn't reject us at that moment. He invites us then to recognize He is our life. He is our source of strength.

He is our love. We must become foolish in order to become wise. We must give up everything in order to get back everything.

We must become weak in order to become strong. We must die in order to live. He that seeks to save his life shall lose it.

But he that loses his life, he that loses his pride, he that loses I want to do this and I don't care what you think. I want to do that and I don't care if it's not the best thing. He that loses that shall find his life.

What life? Christ. He is our life. You know, earlier we were singing a beautiful song.

More, more of the Lord. We want more of the Lord, right? Let me show you something about more of the Lord. Let's just look at this as the Lord in heaven.

And here He's pouring down His presence, His Holy Spirit, His fullness into our lives. Now, you and I pray, Lord, we want more of You. We want to be closer to You.

But as God sends the rain of His Holy Spirit, where do you think this rain is going to end up? Is it going to end up here? Or is it going to flow down to the lowest point? Flow down to the lowest point. Flow down to the lowest point. That's where the rain is going to come.

And as we were singing, the Lord was whispering that into my spirit. And He was saying, if we want to be closer to Him, then we've got to be lowered. These mountains represent our pride.

These mountains represent our self-will. These mountains represent saving our own life. Now, God loves us, even though there's so much pride and self-will and so much of our own life mixed in with our Christianity.

He still loves us. He loves us like a father loves his own children. But He yet says to us, if we want to be closer to Him, if we want to know the depths of His heart and the depths of fellowship with Him and the depths of the understanding of the good Word of God, something's going to have to happen and we're going to have to come face to face with our pride.

Because to get closer, you see the water flows to the lowest point. Isaiah said, every mountain shall be lowered and every valley shall be exalted. He that humbles himself shall be exalted, but he that exalts himself shall be humbled.

And so, the way to closeness with the Lord, the way to intimate fellowship with the Lord is allowing the Lord to deal with those areas in our heart that are like mountains. Because the water doesn't stay at the top of the mountain, does it? The water doesn't stay. Now listen, here's the interesting thing.

When it rains, the mountains are going to feel the rain. You see, and that's why so often when God moves by His Spirit, everybody feels it. Everybody senses the presence of God.

That's because God causes His rain to fall upon the just and the unjust. When God sends His blessing, the tops of the mountains do experience rain. But it's only a temporary thing.

But the real substance of the water and the rain begins to flow and it gathers down at the valleys, at the low points. And God doesn't want us to just experience the blessing in our sin. You know, so often we have pride and self-will and our words are hurting people and our hearts are cold.

And yet, if we gather together and God moves, we feel it and that's good. But God doesn't just want us to feel it and then have it trickle down and we miss it. He wants us to be lowered.

Listen, when God blesses you in spite of your pride, He wants you to lower your pride. When God blesses you in spite of your self-will, He wants you to pray, Oh God, forgive me of my self-will. Forgive me of that tongue that can hurt people.

And as you pray and as God lowers you, then you find that you end up down where the water is flowing. See, these valleys represent Christ's character in our life. The places of humility and meekness.

The places of tenderness. The place where we're willing to say, I'm sorry, I was wrong. That's where the water flows.

You know, Isaiah said, I am the Lord, the High and the Lofty One, and I inhabit eternity, but I also dwell with Him who, what? Is of a broken and a contrite heart. A humble, meek spirit. That's the valley.

And when the rain comes, that's the valley. And if we pray, God, bring us down, then when the water comes, we'll stay in touch with it and we'll walk in the water. And the refreshing of God's presence will be in our life in a wonderful way.

So the way to life is death. And the way that seems right in our own eyes must be forsaken by the believer if we're to know the way of fullness and the way of victory. In closing, I'd like for you to turn to a Scripture in John.

We've read it before, but I'd like to mention it one more time this morning in closing because it seems to be very appropriate to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us this morning. What is the goal? We saw there is a way that seems right. We identified what that way is.

We saw that in order to follow Jesus, we have to submit to God's dealing and be delivered from that way. That way is our own way. But what is the end? What's the result of being delivered from our own way? What is the end? What is God's goal in delivering us from our own way? Here's what it is.

John 21, verse 18. The aim of God's dealing. John 21, verse 18.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Jesus was speaking to Peter now. When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

Our heart attitude, consider this, should be childlike. God desires us to be men and women of maturity. He desires us to grow spiritually in order to accomplish this.

He allows us to meet with many disagreeable circumstances and trials. This scripture refers to when we are young in the Lord, we do what we please. In other words, when we're young in the Lord, we still are addicted to this way that seems right to us.

Because we generally engage in it every day of our life. And we assert that way. We assert it even against others.

We're settled doing our own thing, aren't we? And isn't that indicative of a child? I mean, what child, four or five years old, will come and say, Oh, dear mom and dad, this day I desire to do thy will alone. And if by any chance you see me doing my own will, correct me quickly, dear mother, that I might learn to be grown up. You find me a child like that.

And I'll tell you what, I'll be amazed. See? And that's the way it is with us when we're young in the Lord. What does God do? Does He judge us and get mad at us? No, He loves us.

But He wants us to grow up. We find much pleasure in serving the Lord according to our thoughts. And everything is light and gay.

We feel that we have to live a life of feeling and sensation. We are easily moved by how we feel. If we are happy, we gladly deny ourselves and pour ourselves out in service.

But when we are sad or troubled by our circumstances, we feel as though we have been deserted and we don't really want to serve the Lord anymore or others. The Lord must then reach forth and draw the little sheep back to Himself again. This is the way of those who are young.

They dress themselves. They go where they wish. They serve the Lord according to the way they want to.

And they're trapped in the realm of feeling, emotion, feeling, emotion, depression, despondency, feeling, emotion. I'm sad. I'm happy.

But when we are older in the Lord, the life of faith commences as we stretch forth our hands and surrender and allow. This is a very important word. We allow the life of everyone together.

Another. One more time. Another.

You see, that is an offensive word to a young person, isn't it? Have you ever sat down and talked to your kids and said, well, did you ever think about the way they feel? I'm interested in how they feel. I'm interested in how I feel. And you know, as adults, don't we see that in our own lives? How often is it really about how we feel and not about another? But God is in the process of delivering us from the way that seems right and bringing us to a place where we stretch out our hands and we say, Lord, You lead me.

You guide me. You prosper Your will in my life. Only a few more moments and we're going to close.

We no longer dress ourselves and go our own way. We no longer walk, but we're carried. We no longer consider our own wishes.

We may no longer act according to a will of our own apart from God's will. Instead, we have finally submitted to God's dealings. We recognize at last how we have until now been full of ourselves, speaking many words in addition to what God has given us, performing many acts of service apart from the ones God was calling us to perform.

Likewise, we see how often we have failed to speak and act on many occasions because we simply loved ourselves more than God and loved our own ways more than God's ways. This transition occurs as we are subject to the discipline, loving, scourging hand of our Heavenly Father. God is calling us to become foolish in order to be wise, to give up everything in order to get back everything, to become weak in order to become strong, to come back to the cross and die to ourself that we might live by the life of another, Jesus Christ.

Are you prepared this morning to listen to the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit, confirm His Word, and help you to see that all that He's doing in your life is intended to accomplish one thing, to teach you not to trust in yourself but in another, not to lead yourself but to be led by another, not to seek your own will but to seek the will of another. Oh, blessed release from self and sin, what joyful bliss to rest at the Savior's feet. If you're one of His this morning, sooner or later, if not already, you will have to encounter the way that seems right.

And you will have to discover that it's the life of another that you must learn to live. And by God's love and faithfulness, you will be confronted with this. And I pray at that time, you might, as the Scripture says, submit to the Father of your spirit and live.

Let's bow our hearts in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for Your love this morning. Thank You for Your presence this morning.

Thank You for revealing Your heart to us this morning. Lord, each and every one of us stand in need of this work. Each and every one of us, Lord, have those tendencies that immaturity demonstrates.

We like to do what we want to do. Our life revolves around our desires and our wishes and our plans. But we know, Lord, the words that You spoke to Peter reverberate this morning.

But when Thou art old. Lord, we pray that You will be merciful to us as we surrender to You and Your dealing that You might mature us, grow us up spiritually so that our life can be one of being governed by another, that we can be free from ourselves. Lord, I pray that You'll do that in each one of us this morning.

Help us, Lord, to know that this way is the way of humility, the way of renouncing our pride, the way of being able to say, I'm sorry, I was wrong, the way of forgiveness. Lord, I pray there's not one person in here that will be able to hold a grudge in their heart toward any human being. Release us from bitterness.

Release us from anger. Someone in here, you've been offended. And the offense has gotten so big that it consumes you.

You can't hardly see anything but the offense. You've lost sight of the one who died on the cross for that offense. If you'll look to Him, He'll fill your heart with His love and you'll be able to forgive that person of that offense.

As we sing this song, beloved, just want to commit this last few moments into the hands of the Lord and let Him help you make that decision. Lord, grow me up and teach me to live by another.

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