

Why Rivers are Crooked

- I. Introduction:
 - a. Search the world over and you'll never find a completely straight river. Why? Let us look at why rivers are crooked.
 - b. Nature has been spoken of as God's Other Book
 - i. There are many lessons that we can learn from nature – must be observant
- II. Some of the lessons which nature teaches:
 - a. Nature gives testimony to the existence of God
 - i. **(Ps 19:1-2)** "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge."
 - ii. **(Rom 1:19-20)** "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 - b. Jesus used nature to teach great truths about the kingdom
 - i. **(Matt 13:31-32)** "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."
 - 1. This taught in a very familiar way to mankind the expansion of the kingdom of God.
 - a. Start with a seed – Grow to cover the whole earth
 - ii. **(Mark 4:26-29)** "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."
 - 1. This taught the power of God in the seed
 - 2. Paul says, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."
(1 Cor 3:6-7)
 - c. Many things in the natural world that reminds us of the spiritual
 - i. Sun
 - 1. **(Mal 4:2)** "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall."
 - ii. Star

1. **(Rev 22:16)** “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”
 - iii. Rock
 1. **(Ps 89:26)** “He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.”
 - iv. Rock vs. Sand
 1. **(Matt 7:24-27)** “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”
 - v. Grass
 1. **(1 Peter 1:24)** “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.”
- III. A Lesson from Rivers
- a. Noticeable features of rivers are their winding and crooked course.
 - b. Why are rivers crooked?
 - i. “A river becomes crooked by following the line of least resistance.”
 - ii. Mankind isn’t any different
- IV. What is expected of us?
- a. Walk straight paths
 - i. **(Heb 12:13)** “And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.”
 - ii. **(Matt 7:13-14)** “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”
 - iii. Straight paths are not the path of least resistance – Much resistance – many ups and downs –
 1. **Example:** ‘Corridor G’ in West Virginia – Built cutting through the rugged terrain and building bridges from mountain top to mountain top.
 - iv. Some things that may get in our way in walking a straight path
 1. External
 - a. **(Acts 14:22)** “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that

we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

- b. **(1 Thess 3:3)** “That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.”

2. Internal

- a. **(James 1:13-14)** “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”

b. To resist Evil

- i. **(James 4:7-8)** “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”
- ii. **(Rom 12:21)** “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

V. Some Examples:

a. Those who made crooked paths:

i. Cain

- 1. **(Gen 4:3-8)** “And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou **doest not well, sin lieth at the door**. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.”
- 2. Cain took the path of least resistance – God said that he “didn’t do well” and that “sin lieth at the door”
- 3. **(Heb 11:4)** “**By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain**, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”
 - a. Abel offered by faith. Faith comes by hearing the word of God. **(Rom 10:17)** Abel offered according to what the word of God said, and Cain offered according to the path of least resistance

ii. Felix

1. (**Acts 24:24-25**) “And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”
 - iii. Demas
 1. A fellow laborer with the Apostle Paul
 - a. (**Philem 24**) “Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.”
 - b. (**Col 4:14**) “Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.”
 - c. He worked along side of Paul – walking on that straight path
 2. Chose to walk the path of least resistance
 - a. (**2 Tim 4:10**) “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.”
 - b. Those who walked straight paths
 - i. Joseph (**Gen 39**)
 1. Chose to fight temptation and follow God
 - ii. Moses
 1. (**Heb 11:24-26**) “By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.”
 - iii. The three Hebrew children
 1. (**Dan 3**)
- VI. We can walk the straight paths – not impossible
- a. (**1 Cor 10:13**) “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
 - b. Let obstacles build your patience
 - i. (**James 1:2-4**) “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”
- VII. Christians must remember the word of the Lord when they are tempted to follow the line of least resistance – Jesus always answered the temptations of Satan by saying, “For it is written.” We can too!
- a. (**Ps 119:11**) “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

- b. If we remember the word of God, we would remember not to walk in the ways of the world
 - i. **(1 John 2:15-17)** “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”
 - 1. To do the will of God, we need to know the will of God
 - 2. We need to let those words dwell in us
 - ii. **(James 4:4)** “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
 - c. If we remember the word of God, we would remember not to absent ourselves from the assembly or the saints.
 - i. **(Heb 10:25)** “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”
 - ii. The assembly is for our up building and edification
 - d. If we remember the word of God, we would remember not to seek to recompense evil for evil.
 - i. **(Rom 12:19-21)** “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”
- VIII. No obstacle can turn us away from the way of righteousness if we use the strength that God gives us.
- a. **(Phil 4:13)** “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”
 - b. **(Matt 4:4)** “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”
 - c. **(Eccl 7:13)** “Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?”
 - i. The Answer to this, of course, is that God only has the power to make that which is crooked straight.
 - ii. Isaiah prophesies, “And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and **crooked things straight**. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.” **(Isa 42:16)**
 - 1. This is speaking of our salvation
 - a. Lost state – no hope – God gives hope and gives us a way – makes crooked things straight