

“I Will Teach You the Way”  
(Psalm 32:8-9)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation. We’ve been looking at the many spiritual blessings the Lord gives to those who trust in His Son and walk with Him in holiness from the heart. Last time, we considered the blessing of the communion of the saints.

1. Union with Jesus through faith gives us communion in His benefits.
  - a. Just as in marriage, a husband and wife share in each other’s possessions, so our union or marriage with Jesus gives us a share in His possessions.
  - b. We share in the things He did: His life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and exaltation – this is what saves us.
  - c. We share in what He has earned as His reward: we are joint heirs with Him of the kingdom of heaven – this is our future blessedness.
  - d. We share in the Spirit He has purchased: He has given us His Spirit and gifts – this is the down payment of our eternal joy and happiness.
2. Union with the Head also gives us union and communion with His body – with one another as members of His church.
  - a. Because of this union, there are certain things we are to share:
    - (i) We are to share that love He has given us by His Spirit.
    - (ii) We are to share the gifts He gives us to build each other up.
    - (iii) And we are to share the goods He has given us to provide for one another as the need arises and as we have means.
    - (iv) As we’ve seen, this sharing is to be with His whole body, not just with the local fellowship.
  - b. One further thing we share in is a common battle.
    - (i) We’re waging the same good fight that Luther, Calvin, Whitefield, Edwards and Spurgeon all engaged in.
    - (ii) It didn’t end when their particular battles were over – history continues and so the work and warfare of the kingdom.
    - (iii) And so we are to fight in succession with these brave soldiers.

B. Preview.

1. But to fight this battle well, we need another blessing: God’s guidance.
  - a. Paul tells us that in his own warfare, he didn’t fight as one beating the air.
  - b. He knew precisely what to do and when to do it – all his efforts were calculated.
  - c. He knew because He had direction from the Lord.
2. This evening, let’s consider the spiritual blessing of divine guidance. We’ll see two things:
  - a. First, that the Lord promises He will direct you.

- b. And second, that He promises to guide you even when you don't feel like following His Word.

## II. Sermon.

- A. First, let's consider the promise that the Lord will direct you. The Lord says through David, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you" (32:8).
  - 1. The direction He gives you is like and unlike what He gave Paul.
    - a. It's unlike Paul's in that He no longer gives divine revelation.
      - (i) Paul was one of the writers of Scripture.
        - (a) The Lord breathed His Word through Him.
        - (b) When Paul wrote to address a specific situation in a local congregation, he wrote down divine wisdom and guidance.
      - (ii) The Lord also gave him immediate direction on occasion.
        - (a) After the Jerusalem Council, after they had brought the encouraging words of the Gospel to the churches founded on the first missionary journey, the Spirit allowed them to go into some areas, but not others (Acts 16:6-7).
        - (b) When they were at Troas, "A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'" (v. 9).
        - (c) During one of Paul's trips to Jerusalem after his conversion, while he was praying in the temple, the Lord said to him, "Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me" (22:17-18).
      - (iii) The Lord no longer guides like this today.
        - (a) There are many who believe He still does – most who do typically get into serious trouble.
        - (b) It's not the Lord they hear, but at best their own hearts, at worst a demonic counselor.
        - (c) Divine revelation ended with the closing of the canon of Scripture.
        - (d) And so you should no longer be looking for it.
    - b. But in most ways, it is like what the Lord gave to Paul.
      - (i) Direct revelation wasn't the only way the Lord guided Paul.
      - (ii) And it certainly wasn't the typical way the Lord guided the vast majority of believers in his day.
      - (iii) Rather, it was the same way He guides today.
  - 2. How does the Lord give direction today?
    - a. First, through His Word.
      - (i) That's why He gave it to you: Paul writes, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in

righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

- (ii) If you want to know what to do in any given circumstance, read the Word.
  - (iii) If you want to know how to do what you do for His glory, read the Word.
  - (iv) If you aren’t quite able to find what you need in the Bible, then ask someone who might know where to look, or read books written on that subject from the Bible.
  - (v) If we did this more, we would find ourselves without direction less.
- b. Second, He gives you spiritual knowledge to desire to walk that way.
- (i) Paul writes, “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him” (Col. 3:9-10).
  - (ii) Spiritual knowledge is not so much facts and information as it is the way you view the knowledge you have – it’s the ability to see God’s glory in the knowledge He gives.
  - (iii) How does this help guide you?
    - (a) Unbelievers read the Word and see nothing remarkable about it – which is why they don’t listen to it or follow it.
    - (b) But it’s different for the believer.
      - (1) What he sees of this glory makes him love it, and so he focuses on it and wants to follow it with all his heart.
      - (2) We call this the illumination of the Spirit – He shines from the pages of Scripture with a glory that makes you want to listen to it and do what it says.
- c. Third, He gives you wisdom to help you apply this knowledge.
- (i) Solomon writes, “For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding. He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; *He is* a shield to those who walk in integrity” (Prov. 2:6-7).
  - (ii) And James writes, “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind” (1:5-6).
  - (iii) It’s one thing to know the truth, another to love it and want to follow it, but still another to know what to do with it.
  - (iv) The Lord gives you this ability through His Word, His Spirit and experience – as you apply His truth more and more to your everyday life, you gain the wisdom you need to do it more skillfully.
- d. Fourth, He guides you through His Providence.
- (i) Solomon writes, “The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps” (Prov. 16:9).
  - (ii) Sometimes we need guidance outside of the Word.

- (a) There are certain things the Bible can't tell us – *e.g.*, where to go to college, what courses to take, where to work, whom to marry.
  - (b) The Lord does tell us a great deal about what to do and what not to do in these areas, but there are certain specifics that it doesn't.
  - (c) For this, you need to rely on His Providence.
    - (1) Where has the Lord placed you?
    - (2) What has He placed on your heart to do that will glorify Him?
    - (3) What resources has He provided for you?
    - (4) What doors of employment has He opened?
    - (5) What options has He given you with regard to a spouse, and which has He not?
    - (6) The Lord gives a great deal of guidance by opening some doors and closing others, by giving some abilities and withholding others.
  - e. Finally, He gives a more immediate guidance through His Spirit.
    - (i) He leads you as a shepherd leads his sheep – He says through David, “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake” (Ps. 23:1-3).
    - (ii) And He says through Isaiah, “Although the Lord has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, *He*, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. Your ears will hear a word behind you, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left” (Isa. 30:20-21).
    - (iii) This isn't direct revelation, nor is it merely Providence, but the bringing to mind what He has said in His Word to give you direction at that moment.
    - (iv) Have you ever prayed and asked for direction or for an answer and had the answer laid on your heart by the Spirit in the form of a particular passage of Scripture?
    - (v) This is another part of that illumination of the Spirit – helping you to see how it applies to your life.
    - (vi) Every single one of these means of guidance is infinitely precious – each one is a spiritual blessing He gives to those who trust in Him.
- B. Second, let's consider briefly His promise to guide you even when you don't feel like following His Word. He continues through David, “Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, *otherwise* they will not come near to you” (v. 9).
- 1. The Lord has another way to guide you if for some reason you won't follow His instructions: discipline.
    - a. If you insist on going your own way – if you are His child – He will make sure you get back on the path.
    - b. When the Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach that they should repent, he immediately got on a ship going the opposite direction (1:1-3). And so what did the Lord do?
      - (i) He sent a storm that threatened to destroy the ship (v. 4).

- (ii) When the sailors cast lots to determine who was at fault, the Lord caused the lot to fall to Jonah (v. 7).
    - (iii) When they asked what he had done (v. 8), he told them. He also told them what they must do to save themselves – and so with great hesitancy and fear they did – they threw him overboard and the storm ceased (vv. 9-15).
    - (iv) Jonah still wasn't ready to serve the Lord, so He appointed a great fish to swallow him – but after three days and three nights, he finally relented – he was ready to do the Lord's will – and so the Lord had the fish spit him up onto dry land (2:10), and he went to Nineveh and preached (Jonah 3).
  - c. The Lord may not have a fish swallow you and keep you in its stomach for three days, but He knows the perfect way to get you back on the right path.
2. This discipline is another way He guides us and so a blessing.
- a. What would happen if the Lord let you go your own way?
    - (i) You would undoubtedly hurt yourself and others.
    - (ii) You may end up on the broad road to destruction and finally hell.
  - b. He won't let you go that far – only so far to teach you a lesson and no farther.
    - (i) The author to the Hebrews writes, “He *disciplines us* for *our* good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (Heb. 12:10-11).
    - (ii) If He corrects you, and you still won't listen, He will ratchet it up until you do, “Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that *the limb* which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed” (vv. 12-13).
    - (iii) The point is, if you are His, He will make sure you stay on the path of holiness until you reach heaven.
    - (iv) This is another way He guides and another infinitely precious spiritual blessing.
    - (v) It would be far better to stay on the path to begin with so you don't need to be disciplined – but if you don't, it's far better to endure the discipline of the Lord than to perish in hell forever.
  - c. Again, how do you inherit this blessing, as well as all the others?
    - (i) Believe on the Lord Jesus – trust Him, His righteousness, His death to save you.
    - (ii) And turn from all your sins to walk in His ways.
    - (iii) If you do this from the heart, all the blessings of heaven will be yours.  
Amen.