



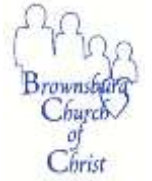
# God's Way Still Works

Brownsburg Church of Christ

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PM Assembly



## Introduction:

Well, it's here. My final sermon at the Brownsburg church. I've preached here just over four years. In fact, I think this is, coincidentally, my 300<sup>th</sup> sermon for this congregation. I've written just over 200 bulletin articles. And almost 150 blog posts. Between home studies, personal Bible studies, and Bible classes, I don't even know how many classes I've taught. I've said a lot of things. I've taught a lot of lessons. We've delved into God's plan of salvation, God's grace, being saved by faith, and being God's workmanship. We've talked about the work of the local congregation, how to study the Bible, the nature of Christ's church, personal evangelism, congregational relationships, and so much more. As I look back and consider some of my favorite sermons, we've learned how to meet the challenge of being foot washers, how to be unremarkably average Christians, how to build our lives on sand, that God is more than enough, the five commitments of forgiveness. But, if you're like me, you don't remember most of that. After all, this is kind of like eating. We eat meals every day. We remember that the eating was good. But let's face it, do you remember what you ate for supper last Tuesday? Me either. So, here we are four years later and it may be tough to remember what all we've learned together over the last four years. Let me make it easy for you. There is really only one thing I hope you remember from the last four years. Can you guess what it is? (Of course, if you're reading this outline, you have a leg up on the listeners, you get to see the title.) If you remember only one thing from my time with the Brownsburg church, remember this: God's Way Works. But while God's way always works, it is not always the way that seems natural or right. In fact, while we are walking God's way it may sometimes seem like things aren't going to work. We may not be able to imagine how they could work. We may be tempted to turn back to our old ways. But don't. I'm here to tell you that God's way works. I see this illustrated especially in **Exodus 14** when Israel fled Pharaoh under the leadership of Moses and the protection of God. Most of us already know how that ends. Israel wins. Pharaoh loses. The victory is miraculous and amazing. But let's see if we can step into the Israelites' shoes to help us gain confidence that no matter what it looks like to us in the moment, God's Way Works.

## Discussion:

### I. God's way can be counterintuitive, but God's Way Works.

- A. In **Exodus 13:17**, God did not lead them the fastest way to the Promised Land. He didn't lead them the easiest way or the closest way. They could have gone by way of the land of the Philistines right along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. But He didn't. In fact, at first, they seemed to be going just about the longest way possible, heading into wilderness and around mountains that were going to be hard to cross. This is completely counterintuitive, especially if what you want to do is get away from the Egyptians.
- B. Let's face it, God's way can be counterintuitive sometimes. For instance, when Jesus says we have to lose our lives to save them (**Matthew 16:25**), how does that work? Or when Jesus said the mourners are the blessed or happiest (**Matthew 5:4**), how can that be? When He teaches us to turn the other cheek and go the extra mile (**Matthew 5:38-42**), we find it hard to imagine how that will help us. We serve a God who says the first will be last and the last first (**Matthew 19:30**).
- C. Let's face it, the Word of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing (**1 Corinthians 1:18ff**). If we think like the world, God's way is counterintuitive. It goes against the grain. But as **Isaiah 55:8-9** says, God's way is different from ours. It is higher than ours. God's way may be counterintuitive at times, but God's Way Works.

### II. God's way isn't always easy, but God's Way Works.

- A. Sometimes we have the idea that if God was really with us, everything would be easy and convenient. The moment something gets tough, we think God has either abandoned us or it simply isn't His will for our lives. But let's face it, the Exodus wasn't easy. They had to rush out without even being able to let their bread rise. They were walking over a million people with herds and children through the wilderness. But then notice where God's way took them. They had been shut in by the wilderness, the Red Sea, and Pharaoh's army. Can you imagine how hard that was? No wonder they cried out against Moses. The way was so hard the Israelites thought they were going to die (**Exodus 14:11-12**).
- B. God's way for us is not always easy. In fact, when Jesus describes the way, He says it is narrow and hard (**Matthew 7:14**). Jesus asks us to pray for those who persecute us, to love our enemies (**Matthew 5:44**), to

forgive our debtors (**Matthew 6:12, 14-15**). When Jesus taught the permanence of marriage and the sinfulness of divorce, the disciples basically said, "This is hard, who can do this?" (cf. **Matthew 19:10**).

- C. Brothers and sisters, the easy burden and light yoke, can actually call us to do some very hard things. God's way is not always easy, but God's Way Works.

### III. God has His reasons for His way, and God's Way Works.

- A. Sometimes we don't know the reasons for God's way. But God has His reasons. Why did God send Israel this very odd way? In **Exodus 13:17**, Moses recorded that it was so the Israelites would not see war among the Philistines and turn back to Egypt. I confess, I don't quite understand what the issue is here. But God had His reasons. However, there was something even greater than this. Look again at **Exodus 14:1-4**, "I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD" (ESV). Why on earth would God do something crazy like march Israel right up to the brick wall of the wilderness and the Red Sea and then allow Pharaoh to come right up behind them? Because that was way He would most be glorified. God had His reasons.
- B. Sometimes we sit back and wonder why God does what He does in our lives, why He asks some of what He asks from us. Why lead us in counterintuitive ways? Why lead us along hard paths? Why? He has His reasons. We may not know every reason in every situation, but we can know this. God's ultimate purpose is to accomplish His own glory. As God said to Moses when Nadab and Abihu were struck down, God will make sure He is glorified before His people (**Leviticus 10:3**). We may not fully understand why God is doing what He is doing or not doing what He is not doing, but we can be assured of this. He will make sure He is glorified and we can trust God that His way will glorify Him.
- C. God has His reasons for His way, and God's Way Works.

### IV. God will provide the way, and God's Way Works.

- A. Israel followed God's way and found itself trapped by the wilderness, the Red Sea, and Pharaoh's army. Initially they had been excited that God chose to free them, but as they rubbernecked between the sea and the army, they thought it was over. There was no way of escape. There was no getting out. Apparently there is a city in Florida named Hypoluxo which comes from the Seminole expression meaning, "Water all around-no get out." Israel could grasp this. But miraculously in **Exodus 14:21-22**, the Lord provided the way. Israel walked across the sea on dry ground. When Pharaoh's army tried to follow suit, the water came crashing down, drowning the army.
- B. God has provided the way for us. As Jesus says in **John 14:6**, He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Through Him we can come to the Father. He is our help in time of temptation (**Hebrews 2:18**). Further, the Scripture is filled with exhortation that God is working with us and will get us where we want to go. Consider passages like **Romans 8:28-29** and **I Peter 5:10**. As Paul explains in **I Corinthians 10:13**, God will provide the way of escape. And while that way is rarely found at the last minute, we know God will provide it. Just as He provided the way of escape for Israel, He will provide the way of escape for us if we simply hang on to Him and go His way.
- C. God will provide the way, and God's Way Works.

### Conclusion:

Whose way are you walking? I can tell you from personal experience, your way won't work. I know my way has never worked. It always ends in struggle and turmoil. But God's Way Works. Our way ends in death. But God's Way Works. It may seem counterintuitive, we may not be able to figure out how it could work, it isn't always easy, but it always works. God's Way Works. Are you working God's way?