

Stagecoach Run: The Old Paths



ADULT WRANGLERS

Series of Stand-Alone Lessons/Messages about the Old Paths.

- Riding Shotgun
- Precious Cargo
- It's a Holdup!
- Runaway Stage!
- Who's got the Reins
- End of the Line

Jeremiah 6:16a

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.



Ron & Francine Singleterry
Stagecoach Run Series-Adult Wranglers
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STAGECOACH RUN: The Old Paths

Riding Shotgun!

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Suggested Illustration:

Set up a stagecoach. If you have a small or large class or congregation, adapt and use your imagination to have this illustration with each lesson.

You can simply setup chairs in your classroom, arena, etc. to pretend you have a stagecoach. Place passengers, a driver, the fellow riding shotgun, and others as the lesson warrants. Have hats for the characters. A feathered old time ladies hat, cowboy hats, vests, a wooden shotgun, just whatever you can put together. One lesson has bandits; another uses a mail bag, and another has a strongbox. Have people set up as the characters in the stagecoach. Refer to them throughout the lesson in character. Have fun with the stagecoach and players. Engage your audience.

Other suggestions for a stagecoach: a golf cart, a 4 wheeler, a hay wagon.

Introduction:

In the old John Wayne western movies, especially the one called Stagecoach, there was always a man riding shotgun. He rode next to the driver, kept his shotgun handy, and was willing to die to protect the Stagecoach. While the driver kept the team moving forward as fast as possible looking for cover, the fellow Riding Shotgun was blasting away at the bad guys, keeping them at a distance for as long as possible. His career was usually pretty short however, because he was the first one the bad guys wanted to shoot.

While "Riding shotgun" sounds like a hero's job and many times it was, it is also the place of mortality, first casualties, like front line troops in warfare.

It was a "Position" of importance! It was a "Position" that ensured the well-being of the driver and passengers. But it was not a "Position" to be envied! He was like the guy with a target painted on his back!

The movies tend to exaggerate what it was really like in the late 1800s to early 1900s along the Stagecoach Lines in the West. Not that many people were held up, robbed, and left for dead as one might imagine.

However, there are some things that just don't change over time; and one of those things is human nature.

There was a bit of “glory” attributed to a man that risked his life to get the stagecoach across the frontier. He might be considered a “hero” or “man of bravery” in some circles. But if he was not qualified to handle that shotgun once an Indian raid or a robbery came upon them, then all his bravado was for naught.

It is really easy to get caught up in wanting to be the Head of the Class; the person “on staff” or “on stage” or the leader in any circle we might run in. But in the work of the Lord, it is God that gives us the Power. It is not from within us.

“Stand ye in the ways...”:

Acts 8:18-20

And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Simon made his living by doing things that appeared to be supernatural. He was already highly regarded and powerful, but when he saw that the Apostles could lay hands on people and they received the Holy Spirit, he coveted that ability.

Simon requested a good gift. But he did not understand what he was asking for. In fact, it appears that he desired prestige, power, and recognition for himself. He may have thought that this gift was similar to his “parlor tricks.”

The apostles had to take a **“Stand”**! They had to “draw a line in the sand.” They had to “call out” Simon.

There are times as a Christian that you have to take a harsh **“Stand.”** But if it is the right thing to do, even if someone does not like you for it, you must still do what is right and **“Stand.”**

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness...

Note: In the early church in the Book of Acts, people that became Christians, born-again believers, did not have the entire New Testament to read, as we do. It was being written during their time in history; today, we can look back & see the whole New Testament.

Scripture should be taken as a whole & in proper context. You should not pick & choose what you want to believe & what you do not want to believe.

Understanding the Person and the Purpose of the Holy Spirit is vital for understanding what was happening in this incident in Acts.

Jesus said in ***John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you***

Jesus told us that the Comforter is the Holy Spirit. He told us that the Holy Spirit is part of the God-Head or Trinity. He also told us that we receive Him when we are saved, born-again. So everyone that is a Christian has the Holy Spirit.

Simon misunderstood & thought that there was some sort of magical super powers being given out through the laying on of hands by the apostles. He thought if he gave them money, then God would pass this gift onto him, too, and he would be powerful and important in the eyes of man.

This will not win you the most popular in your social or work circles; nor will it leave you with a lot of “friends” either! But it will still be what’s right. And being right is not always easiest to begin with, but it will be the correct place to **“Stand”** nonetheless.

It is always better to please the Lord rather than the people around you. Avoid rude behavior if at all possible, but **“Stand”** for what is right according to God’s Word.

“...and see”:

If you study Acts, you find that Simon had used cheap tricks and magic tricks to get people to give him money. Now he was wanting in on the newest trend, and thought that the Power of God was just another trend that he could use to make money and look powerful. He did not understand God at all. Notice that he did not ask for the power of God; instead he asked for the gift of laying on of hands so that he could give people an experience. He was looking to make a buck off of religion. This is not unlike what you may see on television or amongst some “religious” people today who do not understand the scriptures.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Simon didn’t understand. He was still thinking like a “carnal” person instead of a “spiritual” person. Can you see the difference in a cheap gift and the God given gift? Simon wanted to buy a position. He was concerned with what PEOPLE thought of him. He did not **“see.”**

Why is it that people can be more concerned about what people think of them, instead of what God sees in them?

1 Corinthians 12:31 But covet earnestly the best gifts:...

Because Simon had made his living as a sorcerer or magician, he was used to people paying him to read their palms, or tell their fortunes, or even perform tricks. Now he sees the Apostles with genuine power and he doesn’t understand. The question is, if you received a great power would you be selfish or would you want to use it to be helpful? Some people receive a gift and immediately want to help others, while others become very greedy.

“...and ask for the old paths...”:

Prov. 15:27 He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.

Simon’s desire to get stuff and power only got him into trouble.

Acts 8:20-23 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Simon had been hearing the Apostles explain salvation and the gift of God; but he did not understand. It’s like when you are learning a new math principle. You may not understand what is happening at first because you are trying to do a new procedure in an old method.

It’s like trying to teach a barrel horse to sort! The horse may have been only trained to run barrels and may be afraid of a jumpy bunched up herd of cattle. He has to “think” differently than what he is used to;

he has to be “retrained.” Not every horse and not every person will understand the difference in the way things are done.

In fact, sometimes people want to be born-again, want to be a Christian, but don't want to change anything about their lives. They want BOTH worlds, the worldly or carnal as well as the godly or spiritual benefits. When folks try this, they will be frustrated and confused much like Simon was.

“...where is the good way, & walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”:

The Good News is that Simon appears to have finally understood that God could not be bought! He understood that there were serious consequences in trying to get God's power to use for the wrong reason.

The Good News is that we see Simon finally understood that God is not a magician.

The Good News is that God is a Holy God!

Acts 8: 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

The Good News is that if you have not yet been saved, YOU can also understand and that YOU have a choice to make as well.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.



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STAGECOACH RUN: The Old Paths

Precious Cargo!

Jeremiah 6:16a

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Suggested Illustration:

Set up a stagecoach. If you have a small or large class or congregation, adapt and use your imagination to have this illustration with each lesson.

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Other suggestions for a stagecoach: a golf cart, a 4 wheeler, a hay wagon.

Introduction:

In the late 1800s and early 1900s stagecoach travel in the American West was essential for getting people, mail, and cargo of various types across the countryside.

As a general rule, each stagecoach passenger was allowed a maximum of twenty-five pounds of baggage, which rode in a large rear pouch called a boot. The U.S. mail typically rode in the front or rear boot. Any express shipments, often gold and silver, rode close to the feet of the driver.

When precious cargo was aboard like gold, then a special messenger or person "riding shotgun" rode also to guard them from bandits.

Often that precious cargo was under the feet of the stagecoach driver and his "shotgun rider."

We are precious in His sight. God sent His only begotten Son so that we can choose to accept Him as personal Savior and Lord.

While our first thoughts run to how "precious" we are to God, and indeed we are, we need to consider what PRECIOUS CARGO we carry as the born-again believer.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

We carry the Holy Spirit of God within our very being once we are born-again. What a responsibility rests on us!!! Instead of dwelling so much on how precious we are in His sight [which we are!] maybe it's time we thought more about how Precious is the Cargo we carry within us as believers!

“Stand ye in the ways...”

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Do you believe this verse? Do you really believe that *“the eyes of the Lord are in every place...?”*

If you answered “Yes” then why would you even consider committing any sin just because you think that you won't get caught? If you really believe this verse, then you know that you cannot ever get away with anything, no matter whether you are saved or not?

Think how offensive it is to the indwelling Holy Spirit of a saved person when we commit a sin; especially a willful sin.

God sees everything that you do. You may think that you are getting away with sin, but you are not. God may not zap you immediately, but I have lived long enough to see Him judge the sin of a wicked person and see Him correct the sin of a saved person.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Note: Use the background Bible Story concerning Queen Esther, the King, Haman, and Mordecai found in the Book of Esther, to show a real life demonstration of the principles in today's lesson.

God is clear. He will judge unrighteousness; yet He is patient, giving us opportunity to repent.

What does God see in you?

Esther 6:1-3 On that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two

of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

One pivotal night, the king could not sleep. He didn't know why, but as the story unfolds we can see why: God is bringing things together according to His plan. The king did not know that his top prince, Haman, was plotting to kill all of the Jews, including the king's wife, Esther.

Esther 5:13-14 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and tomorrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

The Lord would not let the king sleep because He wanted the king, on this particular night, to find out that Mordecai had saved his life several months earlier. The king was concerned that nothing had been done for Mordecai earlier, but we know that it was delayed because of God's watchful eyes over His people. He knew of Haman's plans to kill all Jews.

Esther 6:6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

Haman was the second most powerful man in the world, but he could not escape the eyes of the Lord. He thought he could get rid of God's chosen people, the Jews. Haman had fooled the king, but he could not fool God. God was watching.

My father, fought in World War 2. Hitler thought he could get rid of God's chosen people, also. Hitler had modern weapons of warfare, but he could not escape the eyes of God.

Proverbs 15:3 has always been true. No matter where you go: No matter how dark it is, God sees everything perfectly clear.

God had a man that still took a **"Stand"**, his name was Mordecai. Esther didn't know it yet, but she too was going to have to take a **"Stand."**

If you are not willing to take a "Stand" on things like obedience to parents, then how do you think you would "Stand" for God when your life is on the line?

"...and see":

If we could just automatically see what God sees, then maybe we could act or respond as He wants in a better way! At least that's the way we think sometimes. But we just don't think like He does. But we could understand Him better if we would just listen to the Holy Spirit in our hearts! *Esther 4:14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

God could have sent lightening from Heaven and charcoaled that wicked Haman, but that would have been too easy. God wanted to demonstrate that there is nothing that He does not see, He has a plan and it always works out to His satisfaction. God did not bring the good deed of Mordecai to the king's attention earlier because God wanted to get Haman, who hated Mordecai, to decide a wonderful way to exalt Mordecai.

Esther 6:7-10 And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

Haman thought the King MUST be talking about him and gave an elaborate plan to honor himself. Then the king surprises Haman when he says he likes the plan Haman has made to honor this hero; he tells Haman to personally go and setup this honor for Mordecai.

“...and ask for the old paths...”

Esther 6:13 And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

Haman was totally humiliated but God was not done yet. God wanted everyone to know that He will keep his promise to the Jews. After Haman has walked the streets of the city, and shouted out praises to Mordecai, he is obligated to go to a banquet that Queen Esther has made. At this banquet, the queen tells the king about Haman's wicked plans to kill all of the Jews, and the queen makes sure that they all know that she is a Jew. Now Haman is caught in a plan that the more he tries to talk his way out of it, the worse it got. Ultimately, Haman was hanged on a gallows that he had built just for Mordecai.

You should read the Book of Esther!

In an effort to get his life spared, Haman ends up draped across Esther's bed at her feet begging for mercy. In walks the King! You can imagine how the King reacted to that!

“...where is the good way, & walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”:

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

God is “just” but He is not out to “get you.” He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever may come.

You have a choice set before you today. Search out the Old Path that will lead you in the good way; then once you have been saved, walk therein and the promise is you will find REST for your soul.

Psalm 9 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.



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STAGECOACH RUN: The Old Paths

It's a HOLDUP!

Jeremiah 6:16a

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

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Other suggestions for a stagecoach: a golf cart, a 4 wheeler, a hay wagon.

Introduction:

In the late 1800s and even into the 1900s the Stagecoach was heavily used as cross country public transportation. The railroads were not yet reaching across the continent and the U.S. Mail as well as gold shipments were commonly sent via Stagecoach.

Holdups had to be guarded against. Passengers wrote in journals and newspaper reporters wrote stories about the bandits being part of the trip; they had come to expect a holdup as part of the journey westward. The stronghold box was the usual target of the robbery, but it was not uncommon for passengers to lose their possessions to the robbers either. The driver was often spared as a common courtesy by the bandits! It was an unusual time in history.

John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Just like those folks on the stagecoach ride could expect a bandit to jump out at any time, we too have a thief ready to jump and hold us up, too. He rarely will tell us however, that it's a holdup!

"Stand ye in the ways...":

Matthew 13:44-46 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Have you ever lost your way? Have you had to stop and ask for directions? Have you ever been in a store and had to ask where something was that you needed to purchase?

All of us are searching for something! You can spend your whole life just searching in circles with no direction. Some people never figure out what career they want to work at for their working years. When I, Ron, was a fourth grader, I knew I wanted to be a mechanical engineer. I pursued that, finished college, and took the test to become a Professional Engineer, then worked in that career for 43 years. But did you know that is not the normal thing that happens with people. Many people go back to college in their adult years and change careers. My Dad left the Air Force at the end of WWII. He attempted a great number of different jobs and professions in search of where he fit best.

Everyone is looking for something! Some people are looking for a better job; some are looking for a way to get rich quick! Others are searching to find that special someone to spend their life with. And yet others are searching to find peace of mind and contentment.

The key to all of this searching is to find out which direction to go to start with! The old mining prospectors searched sometimes all of their lives and some never found any gold.

- Some prospectors zig-zag back and forth hoping to stumble across treasure
- Some look up to the stars hoping to get astrological signs to tell them what to do
- Some go wherever the wind blows them
- Some get maps and hope they are accurate and lead them to treasure

The only obvious way that promises any possible success is to get a map and read it.

If you choose to slide through life just taking it as it comes, without a plan, then you will drift with the world and its culture, its influences, and its agenda. But if you want to succeed at life then you must be willing to lose your life in Christ.

Matt. 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

That means you will have to take a **“Stand”** with and for God. Most of the time you will feel left out of things people are doing. Mankind has a sin nature; the person without Jesus as Savior is naturally going to have an appetite for sinful things. But the born-again person has a new appetite, a new desire and will not do well in the lost world's arena of life.

“...and see”:

Matthew 13:44-46 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Even when the robbers of the old stagecoach happened to get a gold filled strongbox, the money inside did not keep him from one day passing from this life. He did not **“see”** or know what real treasure is. Real treasure is laid up in Heaven for the saved person; temporary treasures here cannot be taken to Heaven. These robbers did not know real treasure when they saw it.

Now the question is whether or not you will recognize the real treasure when you get close to it or will you be led away by distractions that you may think are treasure but really are not. Satan is out to hold you up!

Many old prospectors from the gold rush days found what is called “fool’s gold.” It was shiny like gold. They would load up a huge, heavy pack and carry it all the way down the mountains to a town only to find out that it was as worthless as any dirt lying out on the main street.

Many people are chasing after “fool’s gold.” They put value in things in their life that weigh them down and at the end of their life they find out that it does not have any more value than a sack of dirt! Satan has robbed them.

[Take a minute and list examples of some “fool’s gold” that has side tracked you or others in the class.]

How can you not be fooled? How can you tell the difference in what is of value and what is “fool’s gold?”

“...and ask for the old paths...”:

Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

What is your treasure exactly? When our son was a young boy, he kept a small box of “treasures.” We still have some things in that little box. A miniature wrench, a pair of dice, a plastic toy soldier, and other “valuable things” were in the box.

Now he is an adult, with kids of his own. Those treasures have been left behind, collecting dust. It doesn’t seem quite as important as it once was. Someday he will be called Home to heaven. Will he be taking his little box with him?

When I was young, I had a suitcase full of comic books. I loved those things. I went away to college and my mom cleaned house; she threw them all away. I was so upset!! They were still valuable to me. Then I graduated from college, got married, and raised a family. My treasures changed.

But even all these things are not the greatest treasure I can have. Jesus is the greatest treasure of all.

So what is your treasure exactly? Is it a good roping horse? Is it a classic car or a truck?

Your treasure might be in knowing that you are going to Heaven!

“...where is the good way, & walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”:

Can you imagine if the streets of the town were made of gold instead of concrete and asphalt?

Concrete and asphalt don’t seem as valuable as gold, do they? And on this earth they are not. But in Heaven gold is what the streets are made of. The stuff that we think is so valuable here won’t be the things of value there. God let John see what Heaven looks like and had him write it down.

Rev. 21:18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

Revelation 21:21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

The Bible is your map; the Holy Spirit is your guide; Jesus is the treasure.

Don't settle for the fool's gold of this world: seek the real treasures of a born-again Spirit filled life. You will be rewarded in this life and in the life to come.



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Runaway Stage!

Jeremiah 6:16a

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Introduction:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Tml4uPAdHc>

Above is a clip from a very old black and white movie with a runaway stagecoach. Enjoy.

Have you experienced being on the back of a “runaway” horse? While few of us will have a true experience with an animal completely out of control, it is a frightening thought!

A few years back while in Texas, a friend of mine took a three year old horse on a trail ride. During the ride something in the bushes spooked the horse. The horse went vertical, head down, tail up. My friend landed face down and broke his arm. This is the kind of experience that no one wants.

Once we had a friend bring in two of her horses to our Wrangler Kids Church on Sunday morning in the covered arena at church. She had one horse that could take anything! You could jump at him, you could poke him, you could try every way in the world to spook him, and he was just not going for it. Then there

was her other horse. You could carry a plastic bag within 20 feet of him, and he just went bonkers. He spooked at everything.

Unfortunately a lot of born-again Christians are like that horse that was spooked easily. Just watch and see for yourself.

The young or young adult that will take a stand for Christ is becoming a rarity. Let a few guys get together for a few minutes down at the arena and before you know it someone is using God's name loosely, or even in vain. They think that a curse or foul word here and there in the conversation makes a guy look like they are more in control. What it really does is expose his spiritual immaturity. You should walk away from that conversation! But rather than do that, the natural thing to do is, stand there and snicker at the conversation, or join in. You are easily spooked.

Matthew 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

How do you think you are going to bring others to Jesus if they don't see any difference in your Christian life and the life of someone without Christ?

Once in a while you are going to have to take a stand if you are going to be obedient to the Lord.

“Stand ye in the ways...”:

Matthew 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Just as Jesus was getting ready to leave the earth and head to Heaven He gave a command to his disciples. We call this “The Great Commission” because Jesus is giving the disciples a clear command on what He expects His disciples to accomplish before He comes back again.

Did you know that Jesus expects you and me to be fishers of men? We aren't supposed to be twiddling our thumbs waiting around to be entertained or waiting for the next church Barbeque! We are supposed to be out bringing people to Christ!

If your life is like a runaway stage, out of control, then how do you expect that you will be able to do the basic job that Jesus left for every born-again believer to do?

You are going to have to take a “Stand” and live right so we can get the basic job done!

“...and see”:

John 1:35-40 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

The question I want you to think about today is, are you finding people to bring to Jesus?

This Bible story tells you exactly how this “soul-winning” experience begins. John the Baptist introduces Andrew to Jesus. Andrew and another person had been followers of John the Baptist. John points them to Jesus.

Then Andrew tells his own brother, Simon.

John 1:41-42 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone.

And this is only the beginning!

John 1:45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Are you seeing the pattern? Jesus went to John the Baptist to be baptized; John points Andrew to Jesus; Andrew finds Peter; Jesus finds Philip; and Philip finds Nathanael. A Christian is supposed to be finding people and pointing them to Jesus.

“...and ask for the old paths...”:

Matthew 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

It's time we get back to the basics!

Jesus wants us to go fishing, not just sit on the bank.

Inviting your unchurched friends, relatives, co-workers, and neighbors to church is a good start.

“...where is the good way, & walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”:

- **Jesus wants us to go prepared.** This means you will need to spend time with God in prayer and in His Word so that you know when and how to approach people about their need of Jesus.
- **Jesus wants us to go in His strength, not our own.** *Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*
- **Jesus wants us to catch a “bunch” of folks.** *Acts 5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.*

Matthew 9:37-38 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.

So what can you do as a born-again Christian?

You can live a godly peaceable, joy filled life so that others will see Jesus in you. You can invite people to come to church with you. You must pray and read your Bible, so that you can understand what and when and how God wants you to be a fisher of men. Be ready and watching for when and where you can tell others about our precious Savior.

But if you have never accepted Jesus, yourself, then this is the first and most important thing you must do first.



Ron & Francine Singleterry
Stagecoach Run Series-Adult Wranglers
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STAGECOACH RUN: The Old Paths

Who's got the Reins?

Jeremiah 6:16a

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Suggested Illustration:

Set up a stagecoach. If you have a small or large class or congregation, adapt and use your imagination to have this illustration with each lesson.

You can simply setup chairs in your classroom, arena, etc. to pretend you have a stagecoach. Place passengers, a driver, the fellow riding shotgun, and others as the lesson warrants. Have hats for the characters. A feathered old time ladies hat, cowboy hats, vests, a wooden shotgun, just whatever you can put together. One lesson has bandits; another uses a mail bag, and another has a strongbox. Have people set up as the characters in the stagecoach. Refer to them throughout the lesson in character. Have fun with the stagecoach and players. Engage your audience.

Other suggestions for a stagecoach: a golf cart, a 4 wheeler, a hay wagon.

Introduction:

If you use an arena setting, have someone ride a horse into the arena.

As an illustration, have the rider do various things with the reins to guide, direct, and command his horse.

Also, have that rider or another, prepared ahead of time with a horse that has his own mind so that when the reins are slack or the horse will try to head for some feed or even out of the arena. Be sure you have a situation that does not result in injury or harm to anyone, but rather illustrates why it is essential to rein a horse.

Use whatever you have available and set up the illustration to match the points of the lesson.

"Stand ye in the ways...":

Psalm 32:9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

In the old western movies it was not uncommon for horses to get spooked, the driver of the rig to get shot, and the reins to the stagecoach, or a wagon, would be dropped. No one had the reins. The stagecoach or wagon would be running wild and hard, headed for the cliff or the deep ravine. It was a perilous situation; lives were at stake!

Sometimes the wagon would turn over on its side with a cloud of dust flying into the air. The horses still in all of their gear would run on and out of the movie shot. The wagon would be on its side, people thrown all over the place injured or worse.

Sometimes there would be the hero come on the scene. He would either come along side on his white horse and jump on board the wagon, work his way up through all the tackle and reach down just in the nick of time to recover the reins and bring the horses under control.

Without someone at the reins, things get crazy very quickly.

The Bible tells us that we are not to be like that horse or mule which has “*no understanding*.”

Ephesians 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

“...and see”:

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

For the most part our Bible was written originally in the Greek [New Testament] and Hebrew [Old Testament] languages. When it is translated into English sometimes there are words that had different meanings than they do in our 21st Century. The word translated “reins” is one of those words.

We aren't going into a deep theological lesson here, but it is interesting to see what God's Word has to say about reins.

Using a King James Version of the Bible, the word “reins” shows up 15 times; 14 in the Old and 1 time in the New Testament. If you read the verses thinking that reins are for guiding and controlling a horse, then you are confused as you read these verses. The Bible frequently refers to the “reins” in the same sentence as the “heart.”

Psalms 26:2 Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

Commentaries and translations that I found said the literal translation means the kidneys or the innards of a person. Some might even use the word “guts.”

We often say that we love this or that with all of our heart! We don't literally mean that our beating, throbbing, organ, the heart loves something or someone. We do mean that we have a deep feeling that touches us and compels us to care about something or someone.

When God uses the term “reins” in the Bible, He is referring to our innermost person, who we are inside. He says that He KNOWS us inside and out. He KNOWS our intent; He knows WHO and WHAT we really are.

God knows us better than we know ourselves, so it makes the most sense to give Him the reins. Don't you think an all knowing, all powerful God will guide us better than we can?

Remember, without someone at the reins of the stagecoach, things get out of hand very quickly. So it is with us also.

“...and ask for the old paths...”:

*Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and **know my heart**: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and **lead me in the way everlasting**.*

So who has your reins? Do you control the reins? Or does the Lord Jesus Christ have your reins?

Are you bucking and fighting and foaming at the bit? Or are you having a peaceful God controlled ride?

Do you gripe when you can't afford the truck you want? Do you complain when that raise at work doesn't come? Are you quick to find an excuse to not go to Bible Study? Are you trying to be in control or follow God's plan in obedience?

Do you find it easy to be angry with people? Do you find yourself unhappy because of things not going your way all the time? Time to check who has the reins!

“...where is the good way, & walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”:

Do you find yourself unhappy a lot of the time?

Psalm 144:15 Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.

Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

You can live a godly life! You can give Jesus the reins!

The first step to giving Jesus the reins is to make Him your Savior. Have you accepted Him as Savior yet? Do you have questions about that?

And once you have accepted Jesus as Lord of your life; you need to let go and let Him be the boss. Let Him guide you and stop pulling against His will for your life. He knows best. Let Him lead.



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STAGECOACH RUN: The Old Paths

End of the Line

Jeremiah 6:16a

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the **old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

Suggested Illustration:

Set up a stagecoach. If you have a small or large class or congregation, adapt and use your imagination to have this illustration with each lesson.

You can simply setup chairs in your classroom, arena, etc. to pretend you have a stagecoach. Place passengers, a driver, the fellow riding shotgun, and others as the lesson warrants. Have hats for the characters. A feathered old time ladies hat, cowboy hats, vests, a wooden shotgun, just whatever you can put together. One lesson has bandits; another uses a mail bag, and another has a strongbox. Have people set up as the characters in the stagecoach. Refer to them throughout the lesson in character. Have fun with the stagecoach and players. Engage your audience.

Other suggestions for a stagecoach: a golf cart, a 4 wheeler, a hay wagon.

Introduction:

Have you ever seen a tombstone? What do you see on it? Common to all is a name and two dates. But the most significant part of that tombstone, I heard someone say, was the DASH between the birth date and the death date. That represented the person's life.

Someday we ALL come to the end of the line.

The Stagecoaches of the American West had specific laid out routes they ran; there would be Stations along the route for changing out horses, drivers, a place for passengers to rest and eat. But every Stagecoach Line had a beginning and an end. From the end point onwards you had to find a different mode of transportation to go any further, be it on foot, or by horseback. There was always an end of the line.

We also have a lifetime that is a journey. Some have a longer journey while someone else has a shorter one. But there is always a beginning and an end.

So what are we supposed to be doing on that journey? Is it all about how much stuff we can get? Is it all about how popular we are? What contests and awards we can win? Is it about anything important at all?

“Stand ye in the ways...”:

Psalm 90:12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Have you ever had a “timed” test in school? Especially at the end of the school year, you have achievement tests. Generally, you have an allotted amount of time to do a series of questions before you have to stop. Sometimes, you may not be able to complete all of the questions before the time is up. Sometimes, you may be able to do the whole test and have time to go back and check your work.

Our life is defined by a fixed amount of time. Everything we do consumes some of this precious commodity, our time. Some of the time is spent putting food on our table or providing for our necessities. With the rest of our time we have more options on how we spend it.

You have a choice. You can either follow His plan or make one up of your own. Which do you think would be more successful? Which will be more rewarding?

Since life is so brief, why not do the right thing and choose a life of pleasing the Lord, instead of pleasing self? That’s just good horse sense! Instead of living a life that is reckless, lawless, and away from God’s protection, why not choose a life that is pleasing to the Lord? Remember the clock of your lifetime is ticking: use it wisely.

The Bible says: **“Stand.”** The Bible is talking about choosing a godly life as opposed to an ungodly path.

“...and see”:

God wants us to understand that we will not be on earth forever. He wants us to understand that we must make a choice to be His, to be saved while we are on the earth before we reach the “end of the line.”

We probably have all lived long enough to attend the Memorial Service for a friend or a loved one. It’s a fact of life that someday we all will grow old and pass away or at some earlier point in life, we may get sick and not get recover, or be in a fatal accident. While all of that pleasant to think about, it is best to keep things in perspective.

We need to realize that death is just the “end of the line” for this mortal life we now live.

If you have ever walked around a really old cemetery you will see lots of grave markers for young children. Before there were nice hospitals and modern medicines to take, children often died young.

Francine’s Great-Grandmother had a twin sister that only lived a few months. She had a Uncle that had a twin sister and she only lived a few years. Ron’s Father had a sister that lived to be six years old. It was more common to hear of young people passing away just a few decades back in time.

Even if we live to be 100, that is not a very long time in the big picture of history. Keep in mind that when we get to the “end of the line” in this life, we need to be prepared for the next, much longer journey: the eternal journey.

Matthew 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Whatever our number of days may be, wouldn’t it be wonderful to hear Jesus say: Well done!

“...and ask for the old paths...”:

On the stagecoach line, what would happen if the driver got his directions all messed up and you went down a different path or roadway than his map said to go?

If you have been around cattle, you know that they make a path, a trail, and then they all stick to that trail. You can change out completely a herd from a pasture and then put all different cattle in, and they will still look for the old paths.

Do they not have a mind of their own? They tend to follow the old paths because it will lead to water, or to shade, or to a favorite place where the rancher puts out the hay bales in the winter.

They will go where their predecessors went.

The Bible says that if we will pay attention to what God wants, and stay on the path He has for our life, then we can have a successful life.

Proverbs 3:1-2 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.

“...where is the good way, & walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”:

Something we don't often think about is that once we are at the “end of the line” then we are actually at the beginning of a whole new experience!

Matthew 25:21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

John 14: 1-7 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

What a wonderful experience awaits all the people that have accepted Jesus as Savior!

Your “end of the line” can be just the BEGINNING of eternity with Jesus.

Remember that your “end of the line” will begin eternity somewhere!