God's Ways Are Not Our Ways
Isaiah 55:8,9 (NKJV)

We have all heard the saying, “God works in mysterious ways.” In fact, I would imagine many of you believe that is actually a verse in the Bible. I assure you its not in the Bible.

But there is a scripture in Isaiah that does convey a very similar thought. If you would, please turn with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 55:8,9.

ISAIAH 55:8,9 (NKJV)

8    For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the Lord.

9    For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

PRAYER

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INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest challenges to all of us in the Christian life is reaching that level of spiritual maturity where we completely TRUST God. And one reason why that poses such a great challenge to us is because GOD doesn’t always act as we would expect Him to act.

* It seems reasonable to us that GOD would open a certain door of opportunity for us, instead He closes the door.

* It seems reasonable to us that if GOD truly loves us and cared about our happiness that He would heal our sick loved one and give us more time with them; instead He calls them home.

* It seems reasonable to us that GOD would bring our time of trial or trouble to an end after we have asked Him to; and instead He allows the trial to go on and on.

* It seems reasonable to us that GOD would give us exactly what we asked for; and instead He gives us something different.

And when GOD doesn’t do things like we think He ought to, some people become disappointed and disillusioned with GOD; some get ANGRY and BITTER towards GOD; and some even lose their FAITH completely and give up on GOD.

WHY did GOD command Moses to take the Israelites through the Red Sea? Why didn’t HE have Moses take them some other way?

WHY did GOD command Joshua and the Israelites to march around the city of Jericho for seven days? Why didn’t HE just snap His fingers and destroy Jericho and save Joshua and the Israelites all that trouble?

WHY did GOD allow JOSEPH to be thrown into a pit and carried off as a slave to Egypt? Why didn’t GOD just say, “Joseph, I need you to go to Egypt?”

WHY did GOD have young David go out with a sling shot to slay Goliath? Why didn’t GOD just send a bolt of lightning and zap the big lug?

WHY did GOD allow Shadrach, Meshech and Abednego to be thrown into the fiery
furnace? WHY didn’t HE just “wipe out” Nebuchadnezzar and all the Babylonians?

WHY did GOD allow His only begotten Son to die an agonizing death on the Cross? WHY didn’t HE just send ten thousand angels to deliver JESUS?

(P A U S E )

WHY does GOD allow so much sickness and disease and pain in the world? If HE can heal all sickness and disease, WHY doesn’t HE do it?

WHY does GOD allow so much evil to go on in the world? It’s obvious He took evil people out of this world in the Bible? Why doesn’t He do it now?

WHY does GOD allow a godless, wicked President like Barack Obama to continue to make decisions that are destroying America? WHY doesn’t GOD remove him from office?

The answer to all these questions is found in our scripture text:

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First of all...........

I. GOD’S THOUGHTS ARE NOT OUR THOUGHTS (v.8a)

v. 8a “For My thoughts are not your thoughts.”

1. The late Jack Hyles used to say, “God and I don’t always agree; I love Him, and we get along fairly well, but we don’t always agree.”

2. In this verse, God is doing a comparison: He is comparing the way HE thinks versus the way WE think.

3. One of the hardest things for us humans to accept is that GOD doesn’t think like we think.
Just think about that for a minute. You and I have thoughts every day. And to us, our way of thinking is perfectly logical and rational. Our thoughts make sense to us. In fact, when other people don’t agree with our way of thinking, we think something is wrong with them not us, don’t we?

4. We think our thoughts on POLITICS and RELIGION, and how parents ought to raise their kids........and how coaches ought to coach their team......and how somebody ought to do his or her job........and what the courts ought to do with criminals, makes absolutely perfect sense, and we can’t understand how anybody with any sense at all could disagree with us.

5. And we don’t just do this with people. We do it with GOD. Many people believe they could do a better job running the universe than GOD. They think they KNOW MORE than GOD and that they are SMARTER THAN GOD, and that GOD could “learn a few things, “ if He would just listen to them.

6. Before any of us gets too “puffed up with pride” thinking we know more than GOD, we must remember we live in a fallen world. Our minds have been warped by the deceitfulness of sin. Our thoughts have been tainted by living in an environment of evil every day since the day we were born.

7. GOD on the other hand dwells in a perfectly sinless environment. HIS MIND......HIS THOUGHTS have never been contaminated by SIN as ours’ has.

- GOD’S THOUGHTS ARE PURE......OURS’ ARE IMPURE.
- GOD’S THOUGHTS ARE RIGHTEOUS....OURS’ ARE UNRIGHTEOUS
- GOD’S THOUGHTS ARE PERFECT.....OURS’ ARE IMPERFECT
- GOD’S THOUGHTS ARE HOLY.....OURS’ ARE UNHOLY
- GOD’S THOUGHTS ARE ETERNAL......OURS’ ARE TEMPORAL.
- GOD’S THOUGHTS ARE HEAVENLY.....OURS’ ARE EARTHLY.

8. God knows things we do not know. God sees things we do not see. God understands things we do not understand.
And therefore “as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are HIS thoughts above our thoughts.

But not only are GOD’S THOUGHTS NOT OUR THOUGHTS.......... 

II. GOD’S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS (vs.8,9)

v. 8b, 9a “Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways.”

1. If GOD allowed you to do HIS JOB for one day, how would you do things differently? (PAUSE)

Perhaps for starters you might get rid of all the liberal politicians and educators. Then maybe you would put all the gays on one deserted island and all the lesbians on another and let them become extinct.

Then perhaps you would call down “fire from heaven” and destroy Hollywood, and Las Vegas, and San Francisco and all the other cities that are renowned for their wickedness.

And chances are before the day was over, you would end all the wars.......remove all the criminals......heal all the sick.......and paint a beautiful rainbow in the sky at the end of the day.

And at the end of the day do you think you would ask GOD to let you run the world another day? Or do you think you might realize, GOD really does know what He is doing?

2. GOD’S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS! GOD’S WAYS ARE HIGHER THAN OUR WAYS! GOD’S WAYS ARE BETTER THAN OUR WAYS!

3. And perhaps nowhere do we see GOD demonstrate this more than in the way He answers our prayers.
a. **We pray for PATIENCE**, and what does God do? He sends some difficult or demanding person our way; because in His divine wisdom GOD knows that nothing will increase our patience like the flame of trials.

b. **We pray that GOD would make us more UNSELFISH**, and what does GOD do? He puts us in a situation where we have to put the needs of someone else ahead of our own and make some sacrifices.

c. **We pray that GOD would make us a more LOVING person**, and what does GOD do? He makes our path cross with someone who’s handicap or physical appearance or obnoxious behavior makes them a challenge to love.

d. **We pray that GOD would make us more HUMBLE**, and what does God do? He puts us in a situation that is so difficult it drives us to our knees in prayer.

e. **We pray that GOD would bless us with STRENGTH**, and what does GOD do? He puts us in a tough situation that shows us just how weak and helpless we are without Him.

f. **We pray that GOD would increase our FAITH**, and what does He do? He allows us to experience the loss of something we trusted in for our security.

h. **We pray for PEACE**, and what does God do? He allows us to go through a very stressful situation where we can know His peace in the midst of the storm.

i. **We pray to be MORE LIKE JESUS**, and what does GOD do? He allows us to feel the sting of
rejection, or the sting of unfairness, or the sting of ridicule and mockery.

I ASKED GOD

I asked for strength.
God gave me difficulties to make me strong.

I asked for wisdom.
God gave me problems to solve.

I asked for prosperity.
God gave me brawn and brain to work.

I asked for courage.
God gave me dangers to overcome.

I asked for patience.
God placed me in situations where I was forced to wait.

I asked for love.
God gave me troubled people to help.

I asked for favors.
God gave me opportunities.

I received nothing I wanted.
I received everything I needed.

GOD'S THOUGHTS ARE NOT OUR THOUGHTS.
GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS.

Finally and briefly..........

III. GOD'S WAYS ARE ALWAYS RIGHT
1. If God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and God’s ways
are higher than our ways, it only stands to reason, **GOD’S WAYS ARE ALWAYS RIGHT**, doesn’t it?

**ILLUSTRATION**

One day a skeptic and a Christian were sitting under an oak tree. The skeptic started criticizing the way God “got everything backwards” in creation.

He said, “Take this oak tree for example. GOD put a little acorn on this tree that has branches that are more than strong enough to support it; and yet GOD put watermelons on flimsy vines that can’t even hold the watermelon up. He said, “If I were GOD, I would have put watermelons on trees and acorns on vines.”

About that time an acorn fell out of the oak tree and hit the skeptic on the head. **GOD IS ALWAYS RIGHT!**

2. Because GOD IS ALWAYS RIGHT, you and I can TRUST HIM with EVERYTHING!

   At times, we may not understand the things that are happening in our lives. PROBLEMS come that we don’t think we deserve. TEMPTATIONS come that we don’t think we can handle. GRIEF and SORROW come our way that we think is too unbearable to survive.

   And yet the Bible tells us, that **“That in all things, GOD works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”** (Romans 8:28 NIV)

**CONCLUSION**

There may be a situation going on in your life right now that you don’t understand. You don’t know why it is happening. You don’t know how
long it will go on. You don't know how its going to turn out.

GOD doesn't ask you to understand; all that HE asks is TRUST ME! TRUST that I am with you in this situation. TRUST that I have a purpose in this situation. And TRUST that I will see you through this situation. JUST TRUST IN ME.

WHY SHOULD WE TRUST IN HIM?

(pick up Bible and read our text to conclude)

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