High-Way Construction

**Read:** Isaiah 40:3-5

**Text:** John 1:23 “He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord…”

**Introduction:** Have you noticed that we have a poor record of road construction in West Virginia? I wanted to deal with that this morning and perhaps someone here can call their representatives in Charleston to explain how to fix the problem. We are going to examine the *four phases of construction* mentioned by Isaiah this morning.

**I. Low Places Exalted:** (brought up) Deal with our sinful condition.

Revival begins with a purging of sin from the lives of believers. God

does not use dirty hands to cleanse dirty vessels. Following the confes-

sion of sin, the church asks the same question as those who followed

the ministry of John the Baptist. “What shall we do then?” The one

who has truly repented will have a desire to please God. When a

believer tries to justify behavior with the response: “What’s wrong

with…? They are not in a repentant state and will not likely be used of

God. In place of our sin we begin to fill the low places with obedience

and righteous behavior. In Luke 3 where this question is posed; the

sins that John mentions are those of selfishness, lack of mercy, and a

failure to love. Revival is rarely held up by scandalous sins, sins of the

heart are far more dangerous than we realize. If your low behavior

does not become high behavior then you are not building this high

way. In Acts 5 we read about Ananias and Sapphira. They sinned and

lied about their sin and God removed them. You cannot live on the

high way and behave in the low way. The church is not hurt at all by

God’s judgment of sin.

**II. High Places Made Low:** (torn down) “Every mountain and hill

Shall be made whole.” God has never been positively impressed with

man’s pride. No matter what you are proud of; unless it starts with the

glory of God then it’s idolatry. An idol is still an affront to God even if

it is the reflection in our mirror. Isaiah 2:17 & 18 says: “And the loft-

iness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall

be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. And

the idols he shall utterly abolish.” James tells us that: “God resisteth

the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.” He also tells us: “Humble

yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.” God is

offended by human pride. It is our responsibility to make ourselves

low. John said of Christ: “He must increase, but I *must* decrease.”

**III. Crooked Places Straightened:** There are many ways to cheat these days. People keep the extra change returned to them by mistake, they exaggerate their hours or accomplishments, they retell events with a twist that puts them into a better light. Revival will come on the day that God’s people become people of integrity. There are some crooked people who go by the name of Christian. There are many who have increased their wealth by cheating others. The most common one who is cheated in many churches is God Himself. In Malachi 3:10 God tells His people that they have robbed Him in tithes and offerings. When God’s people tithe the church will never have to ask for a special offering or sell sandwiches or cookies or any pancakes. We, here at this church have tried Him and He has proven faithful.

It may cost you money and/or your reputation but God’s hands are tied until you straighten up the crooked places in your life.

**IV. Rough Places Smoothed:** This one is the most inspiring. I wanted to title this part: “Filling in the Pot Holes” but I thought that might be a perversion of the scripture. There are some things in the Christian life that are a real hindrance but it would be hard to call them sins. These are imperfections in the life of the believer. It could be an attitude, a hard to break habit, or perhaps an irritating quirk in one’s personality. There are people who excuse irritating behavior by saying: “That’s just the way that I am.” Some people are crude, rude, sloppy, or nervous, or sullen, or sarcastic. Some have phobias that are a real distraction. If it is a rough place (a pot hole) in your highway then you need to smooth it down. You may need to ask for others to help you change negative behavior or attitudes. There is a severe lack of accountability in the church of Jesus Christ today. A pot hole in your highway may not wreck another but it can slow them down and is certainly a hind-rance to others. Ask others to come alongside of you and help. A little pot hole may seem like nothing to you but it can wreck a car and cost a life.

**Conclude:** Christian perfection is not the doctrine of sinless perfection which will happen in heaven. It does imply completeness in Christ. Jesus came to make men whole. He wants to smooth out the highway of our life as we trust in Him and follow in obedience. Get rid of the sin and pride in your life, develop integrity and allow God to remove any and all things that hinder. Now that’s a High Way!