

The Will of God

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[0:00] I want to address this evening the subject of God's will.

God's will. The will of God. What is it? What is God's will for me? What is it? His purpose, His plan for me? It's something He has designed way back in eternity past for mankind.

The question is, for each one of us, what does God want me to do? What is His will? There was a famous preacher once said that a successful man is a man who finds out what God wants him to accomplish with his life and then fulfills it.

This is a very profound statement. The true measure of a person's success, it's not their social status or their bank account or their influence or fame.

It is simply this one thing. In doing what is God's will. Doing what God wants him to do. And it's the greatest joy for a Christian to know that they are pleasing God by their life.

[1:22] By doing God's will. So it's important to us. It's important to all of us. What is God's will? And I'd like us to think about this question. What is it that God desires for my life?

Firstly, how can I know God's will for my life? And I read this. Someone has put it this way. How do we find God's will? There's different methods you can use.

There's what's called the random finger method. The random finger method is whenever you need to know God's will. You just go like this a few times.

And you close your eyes. And you open your Bible at random and you put your finger down on a verse. And then you open your eyes to discover what God's will is for your life. Well, that might work.

You never know. And then there's the astonishing miracle method. You look for a burning bush like Moses did. Or a blinding light like Paul found.

[2:20] And there you will find the will of God. And that can happen too. It did. And the list goes on. We could have the cast the fleece method. Which requires testing God to see what he wants us to do.

Cast the fleece method. Then we have the still small voice method. Which advocates waiting for God to speak in a still small way.

You've got to listen very carefully for that one. That can happen soon. God can impress us in such a way. Then we have the open door method. When God opens up an opportunity.

Something comes across our pathway. And it's obviously his will for us to take it. Not always. Of course. And another method is the closed door method.

So like the open door method. And that says if a decision seems difficult. It's obviously not God's will for us to make it. No.

[3:19] Some people would consider that God would never want us to do anything difficult. Would he? Of course he does.

Sometimes we've got to get that door open. Sometimes we can be mistaken about the will of God. We can miss the will of God.

What a tragic thing to miss the will of God. There was a bishop of a century ago. He pronounced from his pulpit. And he had a periodical that he published. And he said this.

Heavier than air flight is both impossible and it's actually contrary to the will of God.

Contrary to the will of God. This was Bishop Wright. He had two sons. Orville and Wilbur. Wright was wrong. Sure of himself.

[4:17] But he was wrong. He was wrong. He made this declaration about the will of God. Which is blatantly wrong, isn't it? Because of course we know people are flying today. His own sons were instrumental in that.

So what a shame it would be for us to miss the will of God for our own lives. How important that is. It's a very important thing to consider.

What a shame to miss God's will. God wants us to find his will. To find it and to do his will. And he commands us to know his will.

In Ephesians 5.17. If you flick there. Ephesians 5.17. He commands us to know his will. Ephesians 5.17.

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.

[5:19] Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. We read here, we can come to discern it. To know it. To understand his will.

How can, how can I know God's will for my life? I read a good quote lately. It said, the word of God is the will of God.

That's a good one, isn't it? The word of God is the will of God. Now God leads us by his written word. In Psalm 119.105, there's that familiar one.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. A lamp to my feet, so the immediate, and a lamp, a light unto my path.

The way ahead. God leads us by his written word. And God leads us too by the convicting and prompting of his Spirit. He leads us through the counsel of wise, hopefully wise, godly, trustworthy people in our lives.

[6:26] They can help us to know something of what God's will is for us. God's will can be found in these things. In many other ways too. The word, in counsel, and in God's prompting and convicting power.

And God's will, the word says, is good, acceptable, and perfect. Romans 12, you might want to turn there.

So we would do well to find this. It is the perfect place to be. God's will is good, acceptable, and perfect. It is the perfect place to be, the safest place to be.

Romans 12.1-2, a familiar one again. I beseech you, therefore, brethren. By the mercies of God. That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.

Holy, acceptable unto God. Which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world. But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.

[7:26] That ye may prove what is that good. And acceptable. And perfect. Will of God. Paul writes, present your bodies.

A living sacrifice. A big thing is to come to a place of surrender. A place of surrender. Of surrendering your will. To God's will.

To present yourselves unto Him. As on an altar, as it were. To surrender yourself unto Him. Without reservation. That which is on an altar is...

It's without reservation. It's given. Over. And this is the best place to be. It's been said that the will of God will never lead you where the grace of God cannot keep you.

God's will is the perfect place for you to be. A writer Tozer said, outside of the will of God, there is nothing I want. Outside of the will of God, there is nothing I want.

[8:32] And in the will of God, there is nothing I fear. It's the perfect place to be. In His will. So present yourself to God. Present yourself, as it were, as an offering, as a living sacrifice.

Present yourself to Him. Learn to pray and submit to God. There's another skill to learn. In Psalm 37, verse 4, it says, Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Delight yourself in God. As we seek for God, as we long for God, as we want God's way for us, as we tune our hearts in His ways, His word, as we delight ourselves in Him, He will give us the desires of our heart.

Because the desires of our heart will be in tune with His will. Ask Him to teach you His will. To teach you, to shape you, to delight to do His will.

In Psalm 119 again, from verse 33, the psalmist says, Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.

[9:48] Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law. Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the way, in the path of thy commandments.

For therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. Teach me, Lord. Teach me, Lord, your way. Teach me, give me understanding.

Make me go in that pathway. In this I want to delight, to incline my heart in your direction, in your way, as your word would show me the pathway. This is the prayer we can pray, to have that deeper acquaintance, and that better understanding of God's will for us.

Keep praying. Pray and keep on praying. Ask God to work in your heart, that His plans become your plans. And we can commit to follow God's plan.

Another quote, The will of God will never take you, where the grace of God cannot keep you, where the arms of God cannot support you. God's will is that place, the perfect place to be, in the will of God.

[11:02] So, some thoughts now, about what does the Bible tell us is the will of God? And there's a number of them, they start with the letter S. What is God's will?

A bit like our preacher this morning. God's will is salvation. Number one. It starts with that. God's will at the cross is to save.

In Galatians 1 verse 4, Who gave Himself, the Lord Jesus, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.

The Lord Jesus gave Himself for our sins, to deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father. Salvation is God's will.

Salvation is universal in its appeal. God's will is that His message be broadcast. For this whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. Romans 10, 13.

[12:04] And God is not slack. Concerning His promises, some men count slackness, but He's long-suffering. In other words, persevering, patient towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God's will is that this message of salvation, be broadcast, and the invitation, the appeal, is to all. God's will is salvation. The ultimate.

God's will, secondly, is sanctification. Sanctification. 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 3. For this is the will of God concerning you. Sorry, I'll say that again.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. In part, it says, this is the will of God, even your sanctification. Sanctification, it means holiness, being set apart.

God's will is that we be holy. Holy. He says, be ye holy, as I am holy. Simply put, God's will is that we stop sinning.

[13:05] Stop sinning. Now, stay away from sin, from sexual immorality, from impurity. This is God's will for us. That's the context of 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 3.

True fulfilment is found there in holiness. It doesn't save us, but it is what the saved are called to, to be set apart, to seek to follow hard after God.

And sanctification, it's not our working force, our salvation, but it's our salvation being worked out in us. There's something to show, there's an evidence.

Sanctification comes from that fellowship, with our Lord, as we want to please Him, in our worship and service. Sanctification is His will. He wants us to be righteous.

He wants us to be right living. He wants us to be in His holy will, more like Him, as He has more of us, and He works in us.

[14:12] And that working is by His grace. It's by His empowerment. Because of ourselves, we know we lack the power of our own selves.

But God wants His people to be made holy, and made whole, made clean, constantly filled, with His holy Spirit. 2 Peter 3, it says, seeing then that all these things are going to be dissolved, all these things shall be dissolved, talking about the world, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?

So, salvation, trust Him, be saved, sanctification, go on, go forward, go deeper with God, in walking with Him, in sanctification.

The third one, God's will, God's will is service. Service. In Ephesians 6, Paul addresses servants.

He says that they should serve not with eye service, as it were, when they're just being supervised, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service as to the Lord, and not to men.

Now, when we do something for God, it's not doing it for people, but deep down, and the absolute motivation is that we're doing it unto Him.

[15:44] And that can apply to every kind of service that we do. We want to do the will of God from the heart, as we present ourselves, a living sacrifice, holy to God, holy with a W, in other words, the whole of you, as we place ourselves at His disposal.

He can use us in so many ways, doing His work in and through us, and every one of us has a work to do. Every one of us has something that God has designed us to be to do.

It says Ephesians 2 verse 10, For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in there.

We're created unto good works. Now, here's another aspect about the will of God. And it's possibly not a promise you'll want to write down and stick on your fridge this one.

But nevertheless, it's true. Something that really prompted me to put this together, that God's will is suffering. Well, what did he say then?

[16:58] I thought God's will was we drive around in Ferraris, and have a mansion on the hilltop, and have an easy life, you know, health, wealth and prosperity. That's what some preachers tell us.

No, God's will is suffering. Can include suffering. Let me explain. 2 Timothy 3 verse 12, it says, Yeh, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.

We're told to expect to suffer for Christ's sake. God's will includes we may be called on to suffer. It's kind of confronting, isn't it? Wow. Now, there's exceeding great and precious promises, and this is one.

God says that we will face, potentially, suffering for God's will. 1 Peter 4 verse 19, it says, Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the kicking of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.

1 Peter 4 says, It's kind of confronting, but it can be the will of God for us. They that suffer according to the will of God. Now, if we're in some countries around the world today, making a decision for Christ, making a commitment to follow Christ, is to be a living sacrifice.

[18:18] It's to actually be the one, the next one in line, to be martyred. That's what living for Christ is like in many countries in our world today. So, friends, don't shy away.

We're in certain countries, under certain regimes, this message is dynamite. And it will mean a death penalty for you. It will mean you'll actually have to take up your cross.

Literally. Christians literally take up their cross. If they follow Jesus in some places in our world today. So, God's will can mean suffering. Could mean suffering for you.

Don't think God's abandoned you if you're suffering. Think of Paul with a thorn in the flesh. He asked the Lord to take it. 2 Corinthians 12. God said, no, you're going to have it.

I'm not going to take it away. And it kept Paul humble. It kept him under God's management, if you like. It kept him humble.

[19:15] This thorn that Paul endured, we don't know what it was. It's not defined. Something, it was his eyesight. Or some other ailment. But, nevertheless, Paul had a thorn in his flesh.

And God allowed it. You know, sickness may be part of our life for different reasons. And some sicknesses are from God. There's some pictures that say, it's always God's will to heal.

It's always God's will to heal people. But no, the Bible doesn't teach that. Exodus 4.11, it says, The Lord said to him, Who hath made man's mouth?

Who maketh the dumb, or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord. God makes people blind. God makes people deaf and dumb. Sometimes.

In other words, we might be born with something. You might be born with a disability. It doesn't mean that you're any less spiritual, or God's any less working in your life, or in your family's life, when there's disability.

[20:19] Babies are born every day with defects. They grow up with congenital deformities. And sometimes we can't explain that. Why would God have such a thing happen?

You know, our logic can't at times grasp it. And yet, God is sovereign. In His will, He allows sickness across our path sometimes.

And brother, sister, don't feel condemned. You know, we've seen instances where people are prayed to be healed, and then the preacher condemns them because they're not healed.

Oh, you don't have enough faith. That is not of God. It is not of God. It is not always God's will to heal. Sometimes He allows us to be unwell.

There are some sicknesses from Satan, and God may allow Satan to inflict us. That's with Job, the most just man of all the earth, Job.

[21:19] Yet God allowed him to suffer. It was God's plan. It was God's will. And some sickness is God's chastisement for sin.

Now, some people wear things that they've done. God can chastise us. He gets our attention sometimes.

When we're on our sick bed, we might have more time to read our Bibles. You know, David said in Psalm 119, verse 67, Before I was afflicted, I went astray.

But now I keep thy word. God tormented the Egyptians with boils. King Jeroboam, he gave them leprosy. He struck Saul with blindness.

God sometimes disciplines the church through sickness, hardship, even death. You know, there were people slain by the Spirit in Acts 5. God struck them dead.

[22:18] He slew them, killed them. God sometimes does things we don't understand. But don't think that sickness means you're out of the will of God.

You could be right in the middle of God's will, being sick. You know, I just want to encourage you. I just included this because I want to encourage you because there's a lot of contrary messages out there about such an issue.

You know, Luke was a physician. He was a doctor, a medical doctor. Luke, he was still a doctor. He was still treating people. God encourages the use of medicine.

There's times when medicine is needful for us. You're not out of God's will to go to medicine or to go to doctors or to use common sense and hygiene and seek medication of different kinds.

Paul told godly Timothy to deal with his stomach through taking medication. Paul said he had often infirmities.

[23:25] When Paul got saved, God said to him in Acts 9, I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. So friends, there's many misled religious people today who mistakenly think it's God's will to heal every disease or illness or injury.

There's many examples that we could give. Paul left people sick at times. He wasn't able to heal them. Yet we know there is times to pray.

And someone asked me last week to go and visit them. They called for the elders of the church and I anointed him with oil. And I don't know whether it was the hospital it was in, but whatever it was, he got well.

The Bible says that we should pray for the sick and we should believe God. We can believe God. Believing prayer can minister to those that are unwell.

And so it is sometimes God's will to heal the sick. But we know that it's not always God's will.

[24:32] You know, whether you believe it or not, you know, this very fixed specimen of humanity will one day be lying in a coffin because it's the natural result of sin that we will die.

You'll get something that's going to kill you, possibly. So, a bit of a morbid message tonight. But these are things that we should understand and consider that, you know, faith can lead to death. It did for Stephen in Acts 7 and James in Acts 12. Now, sometimes sickness can be for the glory of God. John 11, verse 4. Jesus said this sickness is for the glory of God.

And so there's many considerations there. You know, there's some preachers, Benny here, he's been sued for making false promises of healing. Many people died in Oral Roberts' time because they didn't seek medications or a doctor.

But sometimes God uses the health profession. There's people that have learnt and got skilled in treating people. And God uses skilled medical people.

[25:38] Sometimes it's his will that you go to hospital and seek medication. So, just to cover where we've come from, God's will is salvation to save those who will trust him.

Sanctification, that we walk in his light and truth. Service, that we find something we can do to be used of God. Well, suffering might be God's will, not a popular one.

Now, here's another hard one. Another hard one for you now. God's will is submission. Submission. 1 Peter 2, verse 13. And we hopefully obey this one every time we step behind the steering wheel. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of men. For the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

For so is the will of God, that with well-doing he may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. So, there's a place that we should find submission. God's will is submission.

[26:45] In a community, there's need for submission to the government of the day. And this was written to Christians in times of persecution, where there was emperor worship, and they said still submit to the rules of the land.

There's need for submission. So, try to obey the law. In our families, we need to learn to submit. A godly submission amongst all the members of the family.

In our jobs, there's a need for submission. In our churches, to submit to the scriptures, to submit to the spirit of God. So, we develop that sweet, godly attitude to God's will.

And when we all can submit, it says submit to one another. You know, we can have that godly submission. We can learn from one another, and help each other to grow.

And develop that thankful, sweet spirit. In everything, give thanks. This is the will of God. In 1 Thessalonians 5.

[27:51] Having that sweet spirit of submission. And lastly, God's will is that we be spirit-filled. Spirit-filled. It's the scripture we started with in Ephesians 5.

Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.

God wants to fill us. To fill us. To fill us up. 100%. 100%. With His Holy Spirit.

If we're filled with His Holy Spirit, should have an influence on our life, shouldn't it? When we're filled with His Holy Spirit, and that we want to come under His influence.

You know, the context there, not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. We want to be living under the influence. Amen? Not the influence of excess and drunkenness, but that fullness of God.

[29:01] The fullness of God. To be under His control. When we're filled with Him. When His Word dwells in us richly. When the Spirit has control of our lives.

When God's Holy Spirit has control of our lives. Then we're in His will. And He wants to fill us up. To fill us up. With His Word.

With His presence. With His joy. With Himself. So friends, just to come to a close here. Let's consider these things today.

And find God's will. And rest in it for your life. How? The will of God is the Word of God. The Word of God.

It says study. 2 Timothy 2 verse 15. Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.

[29:57] The Word of God is your absolute authority. I have a Word from God for you. And it's right here. And you've got it in your hand too. It's the Word of God from you. Not some latter-day extra-biblical revelation.

But the Word of God. The more sure Word of prophecy. The absolute authority for every detail of your life is right here. God's will is here. It's here for you.

As we've covered just some aspects of it. There's much more we could say really. But God's will is revealed clearly in the Bible. That is why we ought to be students of the Bible.

We ought to study the Bible. Take opportunity to study the Bible where it's offered, where it's available. Study with one another. Discern God's will. Find it and do it. Why? Because God's will is good and acceptable and perfect. It's the perfect place to be. It might be a place of suffering for you.

[30:55] That might be the place. Don't think because you're suffering, you're outside of God's will. You might be going through a storm right now. But it could be that it's the very centre of God's will for you.

God's refining you. He's growing you. He's strengthening you for greater things. So present your bodies. A living sacrifice.

God's will is salvation. Trust Him. Know Him. Be saved. It's sanctification. It's that growing in holiness, in godly living.

It's service. Finding that work that He wants you to do. His workmanship. Design, created for good works. God's will is suffering. Don't shy away.

When persecution faces you. When people will mock you and scorn and deride and backstab and kick you in the guts. God's will might be suffering for you.

[31:51] He says it can be. If you're going to live godly, you're going to get some. Don't let it put you off. So many people, they get a little bit of trouble and, oh, I'm going to pack my bags.

I'm going to take my bat and go home. And they're like a little dog with their tail behind them, between their legs. And, oh, so-and-so offended me. I'm blah, blah. And so easily offended. What if we were in a real persecution?

What if it meant the state? What if it meant being burnt at the stake to be a Christian? Would those petty things disturb you as much as they do today?

God's will is suffering sometimes. Don't give up. When the hard yards come your way, dig deep. Dig deeper. And God's will is submission.

Get together and learn from one another. Grow together. And God's will is that we be spirit-filled. Filled with God. Filled with God. Filled with His Spirit.

[32:53] Finding God's will and doing it. Let us pray. Dear Lord, we praise and adore You. We love You. Our Lord and God, our Saviour and Master, we pray.

Help us to be those living sacrifices. Presenting our bodies to You. Use us. Fill us. Free us. Lead us.

Guide us. Help us, Lord, to study Your Word. Fill us with Your Spirit that we might be filled and overflowing. That Your Holy Spirit might have His way in our hearts and lives.

That our delight will be to do Your will. As our desires are in tune with Your will. Your desires, Lord. Help us. Help us to discern Your will. As we go about our day by day.

And not to be deterred. Whether it be suffering or sickness. Lord, help us to carry the cross. If it be Your will. That we might be more led by You.

[33:50] More in tune with You. Dear Lord, touch each life now, we pray. Help us to live that life that You've called us to.

For Your glory and praise. Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen. Thank you.