



Doing God's Will

Sunday 24th March 2024

MATTHEW 26:36-46

A question which I hear time and time again from both established believers and those believers who are very young in their faith is this – how do I know what God's will is for my life? But there is another question that we rarely ask, how do I follow God's will for my life?

Satan, your enemy, knows if he can keep you stuck on the first question, there is little chance of you actually doing God's will, and for your enemy, making sure no Christian actually DOES the will of God, is hell's victory.

1 In John 6:38 Jesus says,

For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Jesus did not come to do what He chose to do or what He preferred to do but to do the will of God. That's the pattern we are called to follow. Not to follow His heart or His feelings, but to do God's will.

2 And what is that will? What did God want of Jesus? In John 6:40, Jesus says,

“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

God's will is that you would see Jesus and believe on Him for salvation and for Him to raise you up to new life with Him forever when this life is over.

Which means everything we do, or say, is to bear witness to this so others can see Jesus in your words and choices so they too can believe in Him and have everlasting life. Jesus' life and ministry showed the simplicity of this and in today's passage from Matthew we will see (1) how to DO God's will and (2) the challenges we WILL face in the process.

3

In the garden, Jesus interaction with His disciples highlights the tension in which we must choose to live if we are going to be able to follow God's will.

4 Listen to the distress Jesus was feeling in Matthew 26:37-38,

and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. 38 Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

5 Then Jesus brings us face to face with why God’s will must be done in verse 39,

He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

6 His face was in the dirt of this earth, the very ground which God had cursed in Genesis 3:17,

Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

And then we come to part most of us find deeply challenging in prayer – praying God’s will. He makes His request known and then submits that to the will of God. In Philippians 4:6 the Bible says,

7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God

8 And the Jesus taught us how to pray saying in Matthew 6:10,

Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In prayer we are taught through the Scriptures to bring our petitions to God.

9 We are equally taught to acknowledge God's will in all things and in prayer itself to accept that God's will may not be the ways that we have imagined or even planned.

10 So why is it so hard to do the will of God? Let’s read on in Matthew 26:40-41

Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? ⁴¹Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

He reminds us that there is a tension between the body and the spirit. The tension is caused by the weakness of the body and the desires of the spirit

The cause of this tension is actually the fall of mankind into sin. Back in the book of Genesis we see how the impact of sin touched everything from the body and mind of mankind to the very ground on which Jesus would fall on his knees in prayer.

11 Your flesh craves comfort and ease. It wants the shortest path to the place of greatest blessing. I believe our desire to understand God's will for our lives is hampered by our refusal to accept the discomfort of pursuing that through our actions.

In the next two verses Jesus returns again, having prayed the same prayer again,

12 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."
⁴³And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

I need Jesus, tempted as he was, did not fail to walk in this tension where the very weakness of his human body would be exposed to the point of death. And his desire in his spirit as we know from countless conversations recorded between him and his father, was always to do the will of him who sent him.

Do not despair, thinking only Jesus could have struggled and not given in. Listen to the words of Hebrews 4:15,

13 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

In other words, Jesus fully understands what it is to feeling overwhelmed, to feel stressed, to feel deeply distressed, to know painful sorrow. He was tempted every way you are tempted, and that is why He has compassion on you

14 The call of Christ is to live IN this tension to step away from the comfort that we crave; the comforts we have created based on the weakness of our bodies the skewed thirsts and relentless appetites that we feel within our spirit.

So how do we resolve this tension? How do we walk in God's will in this lifetime?

We must follow in the footsteps of the master. In the garden Jesus could not sleep as the disciples did. He could not give way to the comfort that his body

craved. He held onto God's ultimate purpose and carefully stepped away, and lead others away, from the lure of power, violence, and betrayal.

Jesus walked steadfastly towards the will of God, knowing that without the cross, without His burial in a borrowed tomb, unless He was Himself resurrected by His Father, these very disciples of His would never see the kingdom of God.

15 Listen to His focused resolve in verses 44-46,

So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

16 So what shall we do? How shall we follow God's will for our lives?

- RISE! Get up from your comfort
- GO! Leave the place you are in
- LOOK! See the truth with confidence (knowing God's will WILL be done above the will of any other person)
- Be encouraged God will use you despite your illness, disease, condition, difficulties, anxieties, worries, fears, limitations
- Look to Jesus as your Great Sympathizer – He knows, He gets it, He still calls you onwards
- Stand on the truth – death and the grave have no victory. Satan's got nothing on you!