

For so is Will of God – I Peter 2:13-15

I. Introduction:

- A. Peter reminds us that it is the will of God we submit ourselves to the ordinances of men.
1. And as we have seen in earlier lessons, the purpose of this submission is for the glory of the Lord and the evangelism of the lost.
 2. He also adds a couple of qualifications and clarifications, one of which is: *"this is the will of God."*
 3. Paul refers to some of these same subjects in his letter to the **Ephesians, chapter 5**.
 - a. *"See then that he ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*
 - b. *Redeeming the time because the days are evil.*
 - c. *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."*
 4. Notice here that Paul's definition of wisdom is the knowledge and application of God's will.
 5. And remember Peter has been contrasting the life of the Christian with those who are fools.
- B. Paul says that Christians should be living with an *"understanding the will of the Lord."*
1. It is the right and duty of every Christian to know the will of God.
 2. The Lord is not pleased or glorified by our ignorance.
 3. If we are living in darkness about the will of the Lord, then we are living below our privileges.
 4. We are eating moldy bread, when we could be feasting on heavenly manna.
 5. Someone once said, *"To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge; and to DO will of God is greatest achievement."*
- C. This knowledge is not only a **privilege**, it is a **command**: *"Be ye understanding what will of the Lord is."*
1. Since this is a command, it is sin not to comply, and there is no sin which can be classified as unimportant.
 - a. So many lives are a mess because we think of sin as a teddy bear when it is actually a grisly bear.
 - b. We are somewhat heathen if we are not earnestly seeking – and finding – God's will.
 2. *"Be ye not unwise."* The Greek word means a lot more than simply being unlearned or uneducated.
 - a. For every time the word is translated *"unwise"* it is twice translated *"foolish."*
 - b. The fool is someone who refuses God a place in his life.
 3. Peter says it is God's will that you obey the law of civil government. Fools live in disobedience.
 4. How can we know what God's will is?

II. You might be amazed what some people do in order to find God's will.

- A. Then again you may not be amazed, because you might have tried some of these..
1. There is the old flip of the coin plan.
 2. *"God, if the quarter comes up heads, I'll do such-and-such; if it is tails, I'll do the other."*
- B. Then there is the similar plan of flipping the Bible.
1. Have you ever had a question and prayed for an answer, telling God that you will open the Bible and let the Holy Spirit lead you to a Biblical quotation for the answer? Be very careful with that.
 2. Do you know the story about the man who was wanting to know God's will so he tried the Bible roulette method?
 - a. The first time he opened his Bible, putting his finger down, the verse read, *"Judas went out and hanged himself."* On his second attempt **Luke 11:3** came up *"let him do likewise."* He didn't try a third time.
 3. That is superstitious heathenism made respectable by tying it to the Bible.
 - a. It is akin to the witch doctor cutting open the sacred chicken to read the entrails.
 - b. The Bible should be more sacred to you than the chicken is sacred to the heathen.
- C. Some people simply trust the Lord to direct their desires – *"God can change my mind if I'm wrong."*
1. Yes, and so can Satan, if you are right.
 2. Remember that *"the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."*
 3. We can't rely on the feelings of our heart alone, even when we are praying for God's leadership.

III. The Word of God is the most important thing in learning God's will.

- A. People ask – *“Is it the will of the Lord that I do such and such?”*
1. Most of the time that question can be reduced to – *“Is this in accord with the Word of the Lord?”*
 2. Obviously, if Scripture condemns something then that definitely is not God's will.
 3. And if, as Peter says, *“submit”* then submission is God's will. The Word of God is often crystal clear.
- B. The Christian young lady asks, *“Lord, should I marry what's-his-name?”*
1. *I know he's not a Christian, but he says he'll be going to church once we are married.”*
 2. The scripture says, *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”*
 3. Since that man is not a Christian, there is no question about will of the Lord in this case.
 4. Don't try to rationalize away the clear command of God.
- C. *“Lord, should I take that second job, even though it means I won't be able to attend Sunday evening services?”*
1. The Bible says, *“Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.”*
 2. It is sinful to even pray about such things as these, when the answer is already clearly revealed.
 3. *“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.”*
 4. If the Bible condemns something, then that thing is condemned.
 5. And if the Bible commands something then it is commanded.
 - a. *“Lord, should I tithe?”* Why are you praying about it – just obey God.
 - b. *“Lord, should I risk my job, by telling my boss that I am a Christian?” “Lord, should I pray in public?”*
 6. If the Lord gave you a watch, are you honoring Him when you keep asking Him for the time?
- D. The Word of God is our number one means of determining the will of God.
1. It has been given to us because the Lord does not want us to be ignorant.
 2. **Psalm 111:10** – *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.”*
 3. God's word *“is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”*
 4. There is little reason that we should be stumbling around in the dark.
- E. As Christians we sometimes point our finger toward our neighbors because of their neglect of the Bible.
1. But how often do we neglect to listen to God through His word?
 2. We forget that the Word of God has been designed for practical use – not just theological instruction.
 3. I once owned 1964 Dodge Dart. Those were days when average person could easily fix his car – even me.
 - a. I bought one of those books that explains all about 1964 Dodge with the slant six engine.
 - b. Years after I sold the car I realized that I had still had that book.
 - c. It was a big handsome tome on my shelf, but at that point it had no purpose in my life.
 4. The Bible is the owner's manual for the Christian life.
 - a. It has no practical purpose except for practical purposes.
 - b. It does no one any good at all sitting on your shelf, while you pray for God to give you wisdom.
 - c. If you want to pray for guidance, do it with the Bible open before you.
 5. The Holy Spirit didn't inspire His word, just to gratify our curiosity or satisfy our emotions.
 6. *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”*
- F. There was once an egotistical preacher who was always boasting about his theological education.
1. One day he approached an uneducated Christian cobbler who sincerely loved the Lord.
 2. The preacher didn't think the man showed him sufficient respect, so took steps to put him in his place.
 3. *“Brother Smilth, tell me, what are the Urim and Thummim?”*
 4. *“I don't know for sure, sir. I know they mean lights and perfections, and the Old Testament priests used them to find mind of God.”*

5. *But for me I just have the Bible to find God's mind, so I just keep thumbin' and usin'.*"

- G. It is our duty to regulate our lives by God's Word.
1. And if we refuse to do that then all the prayer in world for God's direction will be wasted.
 2. We are responsible to treasure up the doctrines, precepts, promises, examples & exhortations of the Word.
 3. We must learn to daily compare ourselves with the revelation God has given to us.
 4. And if we daily consecrate ourselves to seek the Lord in His word in all the details of our lives, He will not leave us ignorant.
 5. Christ Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall NOT walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*
- H. And this is the context of Peter's instructions about submitting to civil authorities.
1. *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."*
 2. I am aware that the Peter is referring to Jesus' suffering for us, but Christ is also an example in His obedience to the ordinances of men.
 3. If someone wants to know God's will look to Jesus and the Word.

IV. In Ephesians Paul adds another thought to the equation.

- A. *"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."*
1. When a person is filled with the spirit, it means that he is under the Spirit's control.
 2. Control by Spirit is like the control of a good horse by simply laying the reins on his neck.
 3. The Spirit-filled Christian, will never be in doubt about God's will for his next step.
 4. Oh, he might not know God's will for next week – yet – but his next step will be Spirit-directed.
 5. **Romans 8:14** says, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God."*
 6. Or we can turn that around, *"They that are the sons of God, are led by the Spirit of God."*
- B. How does the Spirit do this guiding?
1. Deliberately contradicting one of my early points this evening...
 2. The Holy Spirit regulates people's thoughts, affections and conduct, when those people are fully surrendered to Him.
 3. When someone is filled with the Spirit, he can trust what the Spirit says to his heart.
 - a. *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."*
 - b. *In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths."*
 4. This involves an undivided confidence with child-like simplicity.
 5. But it has to be entirely and exclusively in Christ – with all thine heart.
 6. Lean not unto thine own understanding.
 - a. You, very simply, do not know what is best for you.
 - b. You don't know your own heart let alone what future events lay before you.
- C. Our duty is to thoroughly acknowledge the Lord in our lives.
1. When the Word of God isn't clear, ask God's permission about things that you'd like to do.
 - a. And then of course, wait until He gives His answer. Don't run ahead of the Lord.
 - b. And then be prepared to give Him His glory whatever the answer might be.
 2. Isn't this all pretty simple? No, it is not necessarily simple.
 3. If you think so, then you've not sought the will of the Lord very often.

V. What do we do when we have two or more clear-cut duties?

- A. What if some other scriptural church should ask me to become their pastor?
1. It would not be sin on my part to pastor either this church or that one.
 - a. There is no command or condemnation in the Bible either way that I turn.
 - b. Therefore these things cannot help me to determine the Lord's will.

2. There are literally thousands of situations like that when we must seek the Lord's direction.
 3. Are there any principles of action in these kinds of cases?
 4. Once again we turn to the Word of God.
- B. If we think that God will direct us while we ignore Him and His Word all rest time, we are insane.
1. It all comes down to the Word of the Lord and surrender to Christ.
 2. We must, must, must be a lover and user of God's Word to have the blessing of God's additional guidance.
- C. When the Bible is in its proper place, ask the Lord to empty your heart of any decisions of your own design.
1. *"Thy will be done, Lord."*
 2. Christian, put your personal will into neutral, so that God can move the stick shift.
 3. We must be like a piece of film – willingly blank.
 4. And it wouldn't hurt to confess your ignorance to the Lord in prayer.
 5. Then promise, and keep your promise, to follow however He directs you.
 6. *"What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that He shall choose."*
- D. Then watch for signs of God's providence.
1. F.B.Meyer said there were three things which always concur when seeking God's direction.
 2. They are: Word, the moving of the Holy Spirit in the heart, and the trend of circumstances – providence.
 3. That same preacher told of a trip he was taking by night from Northern Ireland back to England.
 - a. He knew that the harbor which they were nearing was dangerous, and many ships had gone down approaching it.
 - b. So he asked the captain how he could have such confidence guiding his ship into port.
 - c. The captain pointed out three very bright lights in to the port that the harbor master maintained.
 - d. He said, *"When we line up the ship's direction to those three lights, we are in perfect safety."*
- E. So it is with the will of the Lord: line those three up right – and we will be safe.
1. Once again - they are knowledge of and complete surrender to the Word of God.
 2. Then a complete surrender to and filling of the Holy Spirit.
 3. Both of which must be constantly sought, not just in days of crisis and turmoil.
 4. And then a careful examination of the way God is working out the circumstances of your life.
- F. And remember: God wants us to know His will for our lives; He truly wants that for us. So trust Him.
1. It is sin on our part that will hide His will from us.
 2. *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."*
 3. *"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake..."*
 4. *"For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."*