

LD 49; Mark 3:31-35; Psalm 103:15-22; The Will of God I. Recognizing God's Will II. Responding to God's Will

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the joys and challenges of marriage is figuring out what your spouse wants. The fact is, what brings joy to your spouse may not always be what brings you joy. But we can be thankful that our God does not leave us in the dark- He does not make us guess; rather our God clearly tells us what He wants us to do and how He wants us to live. The way of life that God reveals He delights in is called the will of God. We will consider what kind of life brings our God joy! Continuing in our prayers, we have considered God's name and how it is hallowed, God's kingdom and how it comes- and this week we consider God's will and how it is done. Now to be clear, when we submit to God's will we are not simply resigning to what will be. We do not submit to God's will when we say- what will be, will be, so why resist. No, as we will see, submitting to God's will is an active desire and pursuit of what God delights in. So we consider this theme: Jesus Christ teaches us to pursue God's will for our lives. Thy will be done.

I. Recognizing God's Will

In our first point we will start by recognizing God's will. If we are to submit to it, it stands that we have to know it first. Here we distinguish between the revealed and the secret will of God. Dt. 29 says that the secret things belong to God but the revealed things belong to us and our children. So it is clear that there are certain things that are hidden- things we cannot and need not know. These are the things of God sometimes called His mysterious works or providential workings. These things are revealed to us in time as they happen. For example, Job did not know what was going on behind the scenes when great loss was experienced. However, this ignorance did not stop him from submitting to and obeying God. He continued to bless the name of the LORD! But the revealed things do belong to us. These revealed things are what God commands- the will of God for our life is that these actions are what He wants us to carry out. This will of God is what God tells us in His Word. The application of what He tells us and how to live. His desire for you- where His word is a lamp to our feet and a light upon our path. This revealed will of God is clearly

revealed and does not contain contradictions. His will is also sufficiently revealed. What we need to know in order to live in a way that pleases Him is clearly marked out. This will of God is all-encompassing without being minutely specific. In other words, God's word gives us direction without going into every specific situation we may face. For example, we are commanded to marry in the Lord- but the specific name of the person you are to marry is not revealed in this word. God's revealed will covers every area of life. What we need to know is contained here. And His will is to be applied to every aspect of our lives. The perfections of Scripture means that God's Word is sufficient and clear. This will of God for our lives is summarized in the 10 Commandments- the Royal Rule of Love. These 10 Commandments are then explained and applied by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. It is this revealed will of God that Jesus Himself perfectly kept- He came to do God's will. He came down from heaven not to do his own will but the will of Him who sent Him as Jesus said in John 6. It is by the Spirit's work and power within us that we can rightly know, apply and obey God's will as well. We could say that obedience to the will of God is what defines a Christian. Jesus made this point in Mark 3. Whoever does the will of God is known as the brother or mother of Jesus. In other words, obedience to God's will is what marks a person as belonging to the family of God! And to push on a little further in this point- we can even summarize what the Father will is for you in one command. Specifically, the Father desires for you and all men to believe in and obey His Son Jesus. So what does the Father want you to do? To trust in His Son and have eternal life! This is what He said in John 6:40 which reads; this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life! We will bring this point up again in the next point, but I hope it is clear that God's will for you is indeed for your good! He desires good for you- blessings- even life forevermore! That is why He wants you to believe in His Son- because He wants you to have everlasting life!

II. Responding to God's Will

Knowing that God's will is for your good brings us to the second point, how are we to respond to God's will? Knowing the will of God is not enough, you have to rejoice in it and obey it! So this is

our prayer- help me to know your will, to love your will and obey your will! So we are not only to know what God's will is, but how God wants us to obey. So in QA 124 we find that obeying God's will starts with rejecting my own will. Not what I want- not my will- but your will be done. So we are to reject our own will- to renounce it. Why must we reject, deny and renounce our own will? Well, because our own desires are often wicked, selfish, ungodly and worldly! We want temporary pleasures and our own praise! But here again we confess- help me to reject my own will because I know that my own will is bad! It is bad for me and bad for others! If everyone in this world got what they wanted- what their heart's desired- can you imagine what this world would be like? If God took away the hedge and removed the restraint- if everyone did what they desired- what death and destruction we would see! So we pray- help me and all men to reject our own wills! Any desire or want that is contrary to God's Word must be given up! Rather, help us to obey and rejoice in Your will! To delight in and obey your word. Now why should we delight in- rejoicing in God's will? Well, we should delight in God's will for us because that will is good! Good for us and good for our fellow man! Loving God and loving our neighbor leads to a life of blessing- for us and others! As we saw in John 6- obeying God's will leads to everlasting life! The problem is that most people think that they are wiser than God! God is withholding what is good- I know what is best for me. Like a child that sneaks all their candy into their room- only to suffer a terrible stomach ache and cavities as a result- mankind must learn that God's will is ultimately for our good! So in obeying God's will we avoid many of the painful consequences of sin and also enjoy the blessings of everlasting life.

Before we close, we note that at the end of this petition in prayer we say- as it is in heaven. Your will be done, as it is done in heaven. By this we note both the manner of obedience and the example of obedience. First of all- what is the manner of obedience? How should we obey? As we note in QA 124, we are to obey God's will without any backtalk. Without grumbling and complaining as Phil. 2 puts it. And again, QA 124 says willingly and faithfully. In heaven, God's will is obeyed with all diligence and joy. That is how we are to obey! There is a world of difference

between obeying and obeying with the right attitude. We all know of a child who may have obeyed their parents externally while rebelling in their hearts. Who delights to obey? What child smiles when their parents remind them to make their bed, take out the trash or do the dishes? Well, that is the goal here- isn't it! Help me to obey you, God, with a happy and cheerful heart! Unlike the Israelites who grumbled in the wilderness, make me to be a child who actively seeks and delights in your word!

We also note, as in heaven brings to mind examples of this obedience. The specific example of the angelic host is set before us as they obey perfectly. As we read in Psalm 103; Bless the LORD, all His hosts; his ministers who do his will. Here the heavenly angels are identified as those who obey the Lord's will- specifically in their blessing and praising the name of the Lord. If the servants of God are so quick and steadfast in their obedience of God's will, how much more we as children should be joyful and consistent in obeying our Father's will?! But we can also see this obedience to the will of the Father in the actions of the Son. Psalm 40- I desire to do your will, O God; your Law is written in my heart. And again in Luke 22:42 where Jesus prayed, nevertheless, not my will but yours be done. Jesus Himself was obedient in all things- for it was the will of God that Jesus came to do an obey! So we have these examples set before us as well- your will be done on earth as it is in heaven! So we pray- may your will be obeyed by all mankind as it is obeyed by the angels.

As we close, we note that words are cheap. It is easy to say that you are a child of God, but the proof is in the act. By your fruit, you will know them as Jesus says. Bringing last week and this week together, consider what Jesus said in Mt. 7. Not everyone who says- Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of God. No, only those who do the will of the Father will be brought into God's kingdom. So obedience to God's will is the mark of a kingdom citizen. As our theme stated: Jesus Christ teaches us to pursue God's will for our lives. So may we all pray for and pursue the life of obedience to our Father's will.