

Because of the Covenant I can Know God's Will

Hebrews 10:1-18

First, Christ said, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings or burnt offerings or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them" (though they are required by the law of Moses).⁹ Then he said, "Look, I have come to do your will." He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect.¹⁰ For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.¹¹ Under the old covenant, the priest stands and ministers before the altar day after day, offering the same sacrifices again and again, which can never take away sins.¹² But our High Priest (Christ) offered himself to God as a single sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down in the place of honor at God's right hand.¹³ There he waits until his enemies are humbled and made a footstool under his feet.¹⁴ For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy.¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says,¹⁶ "This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the LORD: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."¹⁷ Then he says, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds."¹⁸ And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices."

We are doing a study concerning our covenant relationship with Holy God. We have looked at how the covenant that God made with Abraham is a covenant that is still in effect today, and offers great opportunities even for the church. We have also seen that a covenant was more than just a treaty, it was a blood and life covenant that was carried out by the priest. I believe that a covenant relationship is the greatest concept ever given to man by God because it is not based on our abilities but on God's ability. And I am convinced that because of my covenant relationship with God I can know His will for my life.

Have you ever asked, "What exactly does God want from me?" The will of God can sometimes be challenging. Oftentimes, we have a hard time discerning what the will of God is for our lives. But I am convinced that most people are more concerned about knowing the will of God than they are about doing the will of God.

George Truett said, "To know the will of God is our greatest knowledge. To do the will of God is our greatest achievement."

Therefore, I am also convinced that the most exciting thing about being a Christian is not *knowing* the will of God, but *doing*. I mean it is a lot more exciting to me, to do what I am doing with the confident assurance that it is the will of God. I don't mean to sit down tonight and *pray*, and *read my Bible*, and *come to a decision*, that on Friday God wants me to do such and such. That is exciting! But the most exciting thing in the world is to be *living a life-style of normal existence*, and *knowing that you are doing the will of God*.

In fact, a careful study of the Word of God will reveal that God wants the same thing from me that He does from all the universe - He wants to bring glory to Himself. Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork." The same goes for the people He created, as seen in *Isaiah* 43:7, "I have created (you) for my glory'; I have formed (you), yes, I have made (you)."

Now please do not misunderstand what I am saying right here. I do not mean *coming to church on Sunday* and being aware that you are doing the will of God. There is no question about that. I do not mean that you study your Bible and being aware that you are doing the will of God. There is no question about that. I do not mean that you *regularly give of your tithe* and being aware that you are doing the will of God. There is no question about that. I mean just *doing the normal things of life*.

In fact, Paul put it this way in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." In other words, it is dangerous for us to isolate our understanding of our life, in relationship to the will of God, only on monumental occasions, which are usually of a critical or crises nature. But unfortunately, it is only during those *times of crises* that most of us ever really give any careful consideration to the will of God for our lives.

To better understand what I am trying to say to you tonight, we will look at an event in the life of the Apostle Paul. Acts

21:10-14 tells us that the Apostle Paul and a little band of missionaries had arrived at a place called Ptolemais (tol-e-ma-is), and “took Paul’s belt, and bound his own feet and hands with it. Then he said, “The Holy Spirit declares, ‘So shall the owner of this belt be bound by the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem and turned over to the Gentiles.’” When we heard this, we and the local believers all begged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But he said, “Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but even to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus.” When it was clear that we couldn’t persuade him, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.” God has told Paul to go Jerusalem, but a prophet by the name of Agabus has issued him this, “If you go to Jerusalem you are going to be arrested and given over to the Gentiles.” At that point all of Paul’s friends began to plead with him not to go on.

The thing that I want to say to you is this - there may be a time in your life when God has told you to do something and all of your friends and family are trying to talk you out of doing whatever it is. They might try to tell you that what you are doing is foolishness. They might even question your sanity. But if you know the will of God for your life, and it has been confirmed by the Word of God, and you have peace with God over it, don’t get angry with those who disagree with you, and don’t get upset with those who don’t agree with you.

Listen, every man has got to know the will of God for himself. But remember this, God’s will is never violates the Word of God. And when two people are in tuned with the Word of God, or however many, two or more, they are going to be in agreement. And they will walk side-by-side!

In verse 13-14 Paul says, “Then Paul answered, Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, The Lord’s will be done.” Listen, doing the will of God is more important than knowing the will of God! And I know a lot of people that are wasting all of their energy, both intellectually, emotionally, and physically; using up all their time, trying to discover the will of God, instead of just doing the will of God.

Child of God listen to me tonight - if you are ever to know God's will for your life you must first of all believe that God has a plan and a purpose for your life. You are not a mistake. The very fact that God created you in his image and loves you, that His Son, Jesus, died for your sins, ought to give you a great sense of self-worth. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that, "God planned for us to do good things and to live as he has always wanted us to live. That's why he sent Christ to make us what we are." And Psalm 37:23 says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord."

So how does one go about discovering the will of God? There are three simple ways by which we may know God's will for our lives.

First, we can know God's will through the Word of God. The Psalmist said this in Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to guide my feet, and a light for my path."

The plan of God, inaugurated in eternity past and brought into full operation by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit, now involves every believer, is spelled out for us in the Word of God. And it is divine truth that no man can know God's will for his life apart from knowledge of the Bible. Therefore, I am convinced that we waste too much time wondering about things that have already been revealed to us through the Word of God. Look with me at just a few of these.

First, God has revealed His will concerning salvation for the lost. The Bible says this in 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us,^[a] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." 1 Timothy 2:3-4 tells us "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, our Savior, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." If you are here tonight, and you have never invited Christ to come into your heart and save you, it is not God's fault!

Second, God has revealed His will concerning church attendance. Hebrews 10:25 says, "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another,

especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” **The will of God is clear when it comes to church attendance.**

Third, God has revealed His will concerning tithing. Listen to this warning found in Malachi 3:7-9, “Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. “But you ask, ‘How can we return when we have never gone away?’ “Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! “But you ask, ‘What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?’ “You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me.” **The will of God is clear when it comes to this matter of tithing.**

Fourth, God has revealed His will concerning our forgiving others. Jesus said this about forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-22, “Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” **The will of God is clear when it comes to this matter of forgiveness - there are no excuses.**

Fifth, God has revealed His will concerning soul winning. Matthew 28:19-20 says this, “Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” **The will of God is clear when it comes to sharing our faith with others.**

Sixth, God has revealed His will concerning personal Bible study. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” **God will not tell you anything different today than He has already told you in His Word.** If the Bible is clear on a particular matter there is no need for you to pray about it. **Every believer is to follow, obey, and know the written Word of God.** **And folks, it is for all of us. It does not exclude anyone. Just do it!**

Second, we can know God's will through direct circumstances. Remember, God never waste time and He never wastes experiences. In other words, if there is nothing in the Bible to specifically direct us, we can ask God to show us His will, and this is often done through circumstances.

Sometimes He reveals His will by opening a door where He would have us enter, or by closing a door where we might not enter. But there are some provisions that we must consider if we are going to find God's will in circumstances.

The first of these is meekness. Psalm 25:9 says, "He will guide the meek in justice; and teach the meek his way." The word "meekness" means "the ability to be controlled." In other words, the meek life is the controlled life! And the problem with most of us is not that we cannot find God's will, but that we are not allowing God to control us in the littler matters that we already know! Psalm 37:5 says, "Commit your ways to the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." The Hebrew wording here means to "roll it on God." In other words, trust Him to guide of your life, and you will have peace of soul and mind!

When I look through the pages of history, it is strewn with failure that has come in the lives of men and women, when they were called on to make a decision that would change their entire future. And I am convinced that to all of us there comes at least one occasion when the success or failure of the future depends on our making a choice decision based on God's will for our life! Whether it involves some pre-marital or extra-marital affair, or the decision to steal from those who trust us the most.

Great events grow out of a series of smaller events. And until you and I can come to the place of allowing God to control the

little things in our lives, then we will never allow Him to control the big things! Why should God guide you in a multi-million dollar deal when you will not even follow His will when it comes to your tithes on Sunday?

The second is willingness. Paul says this in 2 Corinthians 8:11-12, “Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.” The truth of the matter is that many of us simply are not willing to do what we know is God’s will for our lives.

Mankind has a fatal illness, and that is our desire to anticipate God! We develop preconceived ideas about how God is going to do something in our lives, or in our church, and we wait for it to happen just that way. And if it does not happen that way we are frustrated, and sometimes even angry.

Have you ever - sure you have! Have you ever planned a vacation to somewhere you have never been, and drew a mental picture of what it was going to be like? And you were so sure of what it was going to be like you could just see it in your mind! But when you got there it was nothing like you thought it was going to be, and it took you three days to get over the shock of what you found in reality!

In the same manner, we are also guilty of creating preconceived pictures of what we think God’s will for our life is. And many times we are unwilling to change our minds to conform to reality. And a great many times we miss God, because He didn’t work the way we anticipated that He would in our lives!

This happened with the Jews concerning the first coming of Jesus! They were looking for a King to lead them in a revolution to overthrow Rome. **Someone born in a palace between satin sheets.** But He came born in a stable with a mission of death and redemption for the whole of mankind, and the Jews missed Him!

In other words, there must be a willingness to allow God to do things His way instead of according to our preconceived ideas. It is a sad truth, but there are people who had rather remain in darkness concerning God's will than to change their minds about what they should do!

There are people who had rather stay headed for Hell than to be saved God's way. There are married couples having problems in their marriage, but would rather remain in the sorry mess they are in than to clean up their homes God's way. **There are people having financial problems, but would rather remain under the burden of indebtedness than be delivered God's way.** There are members of churches all over America who are willing to do nothing than to make the changes that are necessary to go on with God.

What am I saying? Simply this - ***If we are ever going to know God's will for our lives, we must have a willingness to do it His way!***

Lastly, we can know God's will through the use of our mind. Romans 12:1-2 says, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice - the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect."

How can I find God's will for my life? The answer is to use your common sense. **There are some things that you can figure out for yourself.**

You might be thinking, “That doesn’t sound very spiritual.” **Who do you think gave you those brains to figure with? Who gave you the ability to reason, to discern, or to think? James 1:5 says,** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” **The word “wisdom” means,** “sanctified common sense” **and God gives it.** “Wisdom” means “a judicious use of our minds.”

Proverbs 3:1-6 says this, "My child, remember my teachings and instructions and obey them completely. They will help you live a long and prosperous life. Let love and loyalty always show like a necklace and write them in your mind. God and people will like you and consider you a success. With all your heart, you must trust the Lord and not your own judgment. Always let Him lead you, and He will clear the road for you to follow." **In other words, there are some things in which God has no preference. It's not like God is very nervously saying,** “Boy, I just hope they don't miss that parking lot." There are many things that God isn't losing any sleep over. **For example, I don't think God was concerned about what tie I wore this morning.** God wasn't concerned; *however, Linda was very concerned.* **In fact, I don't need to pray about what to wear, she takes care of that.**

Listen, where there is no clear direction in the Scriptures, ask God to give you some “wisdom” in the matter and use your common sense. Isaiah 26:3 says, “You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!”

