

The Doing of God's Will

*"Then said I, Lo, I
come: in the
volume of the book
it is written of me,
I delight to do thy
will, O my God:
yea, thy law is
within my heart."
—Psalm 40:7,8*

THE LOGOS WAS MADE

flesh and came to the earth as a major part of God's plan to purchase the human family from the inherited sentence of sin and death. He did this by giving his own perfect human life as a ransom price for fallen mankind, and this was the ultimate purpose of our Lord Jesus that was well expressed in this wonderful psalm.

A WILLING SACRIFICE

Many years after the Psalmist David penned these prophetic words the Apostle Paul, when writing to the Hebrew brethren concerning Jesus' sacrifice, quoted these words which had been fulfilled during his earthly ministry. He wrote, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst

pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”—Heb. 10:7-9

The faithfulness of our dear Lord Jesus in carrying out his Heavenly Father’s will, in accordance with the Divine program for the reconciliation of mankind back to God, has resulted in a special invitation being tendered during this age for believers to become associated with the Lord in bringing blessings to all the families of the earth during the future millennial kingdom.—Gen. 22:16-18

SHARING WITH HIM

In order to have the hope of participating in such a grand and glorious arrangement, the essential first step is to make a full and unreserved consecration of ourselves to do the will of God. After this consecration is accepted, as evidenced by receipt of the Holy Spirit, there is a lifetime of work to carry out this vow. The words of Jesus remind us that “Many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 22:14) This is in comparison to the vast number of individuals on earth who may hear about Jesus and love him, but cannot bring themselves to renounce their earthly wills in order to fully accept the will of the Heavenly Father. Those who will ultimately share in the future kingdom honors of Christ are described by the revelator who referred to our Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God. He wrote, “He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”—Rev. 17:14

SURRENDERING OUR WILL

When we have taken this step and have surrendered our wills to the will of God, it will thus dictate how we spend our time, our talents, what we will say, where we will go and what we will do. If we have truly given our all, then it will be true that we “are dead” with him and that our “life is hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3; Rom. 6:3,4) This burial by baptism into Christ’s death represents our renouncing of all earthly aims, hopes, and ambitions. If we are faithful in this endeavor, not only will we now walk in newness of life with him, but we will have a great future hope, as Paul explained to the brethren at Corinth. He said, “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (I Cor. 15:49,53) What an extraordinary promised reward is held out for us as followers of the Master, as well as the precious privilege of helping to reconcile mankind back to God.

GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit will direct the path of God’s children who are obedient. Paul wrote, “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Rom. 8:9) The energizing power of this Holy Spirit points us to do his will and perform in his service. After Spirit begetting has taken place, our actions should be vastly different from what they were previously, because formerly we were not led of God. A good test to see to what degree the Holy Spirit is working in our

consecrated lives is to evaluate whether our way of life and looking at our affairs has changed, and that our prime interest is in the doing of the Heavenly Father's will. The apostle said, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—Phil. 2:13

GOD'S WRITTEN WORD

The question may be asked as to what the will of God is for each consecrated Christian. This is a matter of personal study, and the best place to look would be in the Word of God which serves as our instruction manual. We read, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39) Finding from the Word of God what the Scriptures say on a particular subject, we should then pray that we might be led by the influence of his Holy Spirit. When we thus come to a decision—having exhausted all of our resources which may include conferring with others of like precious faith who might provide mature spiritual counsel, and if we have come to have peace with ourselves—then, regardless of the consequences, we may rest assured that the Lord will help to overrule all things for our highest spiritual welfare. We are to do God's will even if it brings difficulty to our fallen flesh, because he desires that we overcome the world, the flesh, and the Adversary and to put our total trust in him in all that we do.

BE YE HOLY

Another important aspect of God's will for us is illustrated by the Apostle Peter in his first epistle. He said, "As he which hath called you is holy, so be

ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” (I Pet. 1:15,16) Since we are sinners by nature, it is often difficult to understand how we could apply this scriptural requirement to ourselves. However, because God judges us not by actual performance according to the flesh but by the heart intentions of the New Creature, he can make allowances for our weaknesses as long as we are seriously striving to keep our body under, and to do those things which would be pleasing to him.

RENEWING OUR MIND

This attitude of heart was expressed by Paul when he exhorted, “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) One of the considerations that we need to reflect upon with regard to attaining holiness and purity of heart is the concept of Christian liberty. This liberty does not allow believers to make a certain set of rules for others to follow. We are not free to do anything we wish without concern for whether such actions would be pleasing to God. It is essential that we seek scriptural guidelines for every act that we commit, to help us determine the degree to which it agrees with the spirit of sacrifice, the spirit of consecrated living and the spirit of holiness.

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

The matter of doing God’s will is all important to us as believers because we are to imitate Christ and to walk as he walked if we are to be successful in our consecrated sojourn. In the case of the Master,

we note that immediately after his baptism into death he was driven into the wilderness where, for a period of forty days and forty nights, he was under the influence of the Father's Holy Spirit. Through prayer and meditation he was then absorbed in the Scriptures, delving deeply into what was recorded in the Law and the Prophets. He was thus assured what it was that the Heavenly Father wanted him to do during his earthly ministry. Armed with this understanding, this is what he did daily in laying down his life, and submitting his all in fulfilling every aspect of God's will for himself.

OVERCOMING

Although the Scriptures do not detail what the Master endured in the wilderness, it is probable that throughout this entire period the Adversary was most active in bringing temptations of all kinds before his mind. Three specific assaults against Jesus by Satan have been recorded in the Word of God. This took place when he was in a weakened condition after not having eaten for forty days and nights. One suggestion Satan made to him was to command that stones be turned into bread for him to eat. Another was to cast himself from the top of the temple without suffering injury because the angels would protect him. In such an act, he could prove to the nation of Israel that he truly was the long-foretold Messiah. Satan's final suggestion was to acknowledge and cooperate with him, as he was the "god of this world." (II Cor. 4:4) By so doing, Jesus would be able to convert and rule the world in concert with the Adversary, and no sacrifice or humiliation on the Master's part would be required.—Matt. 4:3-10

Each of these subtle suggestions was rebuffed by Christ, however, with the words “It is written.” It was thus that he showed that God’s will, as revealed in the Scriptures was the only standard that he would follow. Since he understood clearly that the giving of his life and becoming an offering for sin was God’s will for him, he absolutely refused to consider any other course that violated what God’s Word indicated his will to be for him.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

Another of the many scriptural exhortations to guide believers into doing the will of God is pointed out by the apostle. He said, “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:5-8, *American Standard Version, 1901*) The matter of subjugating our own personal wills to that of the Father’s is an important accomplishment because each of us has his own ideas about many things that are not necessarily supported by scripture. This was not the case of our Lord who could always say concerning his expressions, ‘It is written.’

HUMBLING OURSELVES

Part of God’s will for the Lord and for ourselves is to submit to certain circumstances that we may not especially like, as part of our crystallization of character. We read, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt

you in due time.” (I Pet. 5:6) Have we ever had a difficult experience and said, or thought, “How dare they say or do that to me?” As followers of our Lord Jesus we are to put on the mind of Christ. The question may be asked whether the Master would have ever manifested resentment towards those who attacked his righteous character? Did he still love those individuals enough to die for them despite their hatred towards him?

The Prophet Isaiah spoke concerning this when he wrote, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”—Isa. 53:5,7

OBEDIENCE NECESSARY

Jesus understood that he was going to fulfill the words of Isaiah’s prophecy, and he did yield to these experiences, willingly and fully. If he had not done so he would not have fulfilled the Heavenly Father’s will fully. He had to maintain perfect obedience to demonstrate his worthiness of ultimately being exalted. A fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy has been recorded in the New Testament. We read, “Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their

hands, Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" (Matt. 26:65-68) Jesus humbly and faithfully submitted to these indignities without a word, because he understood that it was God's will for him to accept this kind of treatment from members of the fallen human family.

SUBMISSION

Paul's example of submission to God's will was also most remarkable concerning someone who was imperfect according to the flesh. The Bible's record includes many beatings, shipwrecks, and various persecutions that the apostle endured. (II Cor. 11:23-28) We may read from the account of Paul testifying to the Sanhedrin. "The high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." (Acts 23:2-5) Would we have thus responded after having been slapped as did Paul? Would Jesus have responded in that manner? Paul probably responded instinctively as he did after being struck, but caught himself afterwards when he said he did not realize he was insulting the high priest.

FAITHFULNESS

Further, we read, "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them

that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6) This scripture tells us that no matter what experience may be permitted to come into our lives, we cannot be pleasing to God without faith. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) Thus it is necessary for us to study the Scriptures as a first step towards our faith development in that we will know what God’s Word teaches. We must then demonstrate our belief in the Father’s purposes by obeying what the Scriptures indicate we should do. A hearing, or understanding, as well as a doing of God’s will, are necessary on our part if we are to please the Creator. Conversely, even if we hear God’s word and understand it but do not do it in our lives, we cannot be pleasing or acceptable because to that extent we would still be doing our own will.

FAITHFUL MEN OF OLD

When we read of the experiences of the many faithful believers who lived before Christ as recorded in Hebrews, chapter 11, we are encouraged by the fact that they were instructed by God as to what to do in their lives, and they faithfully endeavored to carry out his will and purpose to the best of their ability. How simple, we might say, and yet would we have been as obedient ourselves? In the case of Abraham, for example, how many seventy-five-year-old husbands, in obedience to God’s instructions, would take their sixty-five-year-old wives on a sojourn to a new land, have faith that their wife would finally become a mother at the age of ninety and, some several years later, take their son of promise to a mountaintop with the intention

of offering him as a sacrifice? That experience demonstrated complete faith in, and obedience to, the will of God.

YIELDING OURSELVES

As footstep followers of Christ, one of our greatest battles in life is the need to overcome our self-will and yield ourselves to whatever God's Word indicates for us. The study of doctrine thus becomes very important in our Christian walk and we should obey what the Scriptures teach and practice.

These precepts in our lives are designed as an aid to developing sanctification, since our sanctification is also the will of God. In following the Master, let us remember that his battle was not related to simply learning doctrine. He understood clearly all that there was for him to know after the Scriptures were opened up to him as he studied for forty days and nights in the wilderness. However, his task was to endure patiently and faithfully the opposition of evildoers as he humbly submitted himself to God's eternal purpose concerning his earthly ministry. Let us also strive more diligently to do the Heavenly Father's will in our lives as we seek to walk even as Christ also walked. ■