

Sunday, August 9, 2015

Theme: THY WILL BE DONE, part 4: Seeking God's Will

Scripture: Matthew 6:9-10; 7:13-27; John 15:1-8

"How Can I Discover God's Will?" is a common question as we pray, "Thy Will Be Done."

- For all of us as a congregation within God's church
- Personal and family decisions

Charles R. Swindoll suggests four steps in *The Mystery of God's Will*, (1999, pp. 44-50):

1. God leads us through His written word (i.e., the Bible)
 - a. See 2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:1055
 - b. Asking "What Does the Bible Say?" is the first step in discerning God's will
2. God leads us through the inner prompting of the Holy Spirit
 - a. King David: "I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken" (Psalm 16:7-8)
 - b. Jesus: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26)
 - c. Quiet voice from within saying, "this is the way..." (Isaiah 30:19-21)
 - d. Story of God affirming Elijah at Horeb (1 Kings 19:11-13, cf., vv. 1-18)
3. God leads us through the counsel of wise, qualified, trustworthy people (Proverbs 15:22; 11:14)
4. God leads us into His will by giving us an inner assurance of peace (John 14:27; Colossians 3:15)

Next week: God's directions for selecting a pastor (Ephesians 4:11-16)

This week: A message from Jesus about the importance of seeking and doing God's will (Matthew 7:13-27)

I. Jesus is the gate into the Kingdom of God (13-14)

- The highway to destruction is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way.
- The gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it (14).
- There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved (Peter, Acts 4:12, NLT)

II. True followers of Jesus will produce fruit of righteousness (15-20)

- You can identify false prophets and teachers by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? (15-16).
- A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit (17-18).
 - Fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)

- Jesus taught: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit” (John 15:5)
- Jesus: “This is to my Father’s glory that you bear much fruit showing yourselves to be my disciples” (15:8)
- Every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire (19; cf., John 15:6).
- Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions (20).
- What kind of fruit are you producing?

III. Final Judgment: “Did you seek and do God’s will?” (21-23)

- Not everyone who calls out to me, “Lord! Lord!” will enter the Kingdom of Heaven... Many will say to me, “Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.” But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws’” (21-23)
 - If anyone would come after me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me (Mark 8:34; cf. vv. 31-37)
 - From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him” (John 6:66; cf., vv. 35-70)
- Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter Heaven (21b).
 - We will all stand before the judgment seat of God (Romans 14:11)
 - We are destined to face the judgment of God (Hebrews 9:27)
 - Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14, NIV)

IV. Life will reveal true faith in Christ (24-27)

Ultimate Question as we stand before God: “Did you seek and do my will?”

QUOTE re “THY WILL BE DONE” by Elisabeth Elliot

I realized that the deepest spiritual lessons are not learned by His letting us have our way in the end, but by His making us wait, bearing with us in love and patience until we are able to honestly to pray what He taught His disciples to pray: Thy will be done.

(a Christian author and speaker. Her first husband, Jim Elliot, was killed in 1956 while attempting to make missionary contact with the Auca of eastern Ecuador. Elisabeth died June 15, 2015)

“Thy Will Be Done” is a prayer that starts with belief in God and a desire to Honor Him as God:

- Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him (Hebrews 11:6, NRSV)
- Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14, NRSV)