

Lesson # 10 -- The Warnings Regarding the Will of God

Introduction

- A. In each lesson in this series we have been led to understand the meaning and the importance of the will of God. As a summary we can say God's will is living a Biblical Christian life.
 - B. To recognize this meaning of God's will forces us to realize that almost every area of our life is explained by His will. We are told of our identity, redemption, assurance, our relationship with the world, with one another, our goal in life, and how to achieve that goal.
 - C. These great truths are given the title of wisdom in the Bible. We are cautioned about living in such a way that we violate such truth.
 - D. Because God's will is so important the Scripture states a number of warnings that serve to caution us in how we live. In this final lesson it is these warning that I want to consider.
- I. The Will of God and the Warning Regarding Disobedience.

And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required, and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. Luke 12:47,48

A. The explanation.

- 1. The first principle in this passage has to do with the standard of our responsibility -- the will of God.
 - a. The parable from which our text is taken emphasizes the responsibility of the servant to obey his master. The second emphasis is on that which makes the servant responsible -- the master's directive.
 - b. These two emphases are important for the Christian.. We have received divine revelation and are responsible to obey it.
- 2. The second principle defines our twofold responsibility.
 - a. The servant was first of all responsible to "prepare himself" to do his master's will. We can understand how such preparation may have taken many forms. The servant, however, was under obligation to think that through and prepare himself.

b. Having made adequate preparation the servant was then to fulfill his master's bidding by obedience.

3. The third principle has to do with accountability.

a. The servant which knew his master's will and did not prepare himself nor obey -- was to receive many stripes by way of punishment.

b. The servant which did not obey because he did not know his master's will was to be beaten with few stripes.

B. The instruction.

1. These three principles are inseparably related to the meaning of the will of God in your life and mine. We must accept them and learn to respond to God correctly through them.

a. God has given His Word to each of us. In regard to the Christian life His will is basically the same. We may have slightly different obligations regarding service.

b. All of us have the twofold responsibility of preparation and obedience. We tend to emphasize the latter and overlook the former.

c. We must individually accept the responsibility to fulfill the will of God. We may not allow ourselves to justify disobedience by weakening the clear teaching of the Bible.

2. A good example for us is found in God's description of Ezra.

For Ezra has prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. Exra 7:10

3. It is a serious matter to have God reveal His will to us. When we have the privileges and invitations of the Bible presented to us, and then fail to respond, the result can only be profound loss -- as well as judgment.

And when he (the Lord Jesus) was come near, he beheld the city (Jerusalem), and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round . . . because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. Luke 19:41-44

C. The application.

1. This study of disobedience to the known will of God is not easy for the dedicated Christian. We are all embarrassed in that we know areas of our life which can stand a great deal of improvement. While we must recognize our disobedience in these areas, and know we have no excuse, there may be reasons why we are having such spiritual difficulties. Whatever the situation is -- we must accept the truth before God -- that we are responsible for our attitudes, thoughts, emotions, bodily desires, relationships in life, choices, priorities, goals, pleasures, work, home, children, and life-style.

We may have a good deal of pressure in our life -- but that does not mean we are not responsible. We must learn how to respond correctly to such pressures.

2. The three principles found in our text may help us to clarify this important area of our life.
 - a. Have we accepted the responsibility of divine revelation? God has given His Word to each of us individually. We must accept that truth and the obligation that attends it.
 - b. Have we accepted the responsibility to prepare ourselves to do God's will as well as its practice? For many of us the critical area is lack of preparation. We may not know how to read and study the Bible, or how to pray. We may not know the meaning of faith, love, and hope -- nor how to practice such virtues. We may not allow ourselves to live with such a lack of preparation.
 - c. Have we accepted the truth that we are accountable to God for how we live? When we stand in His presence we will be evaluated, not to enter Heaven, but for reward or loss (Rom. 14:11,12; II Cor. 5:10). Too often we live as though the quality of our daily life is meaningless and will not be brought up in eternity.
3. At this moment in our study we must make a decision. It is a decision to repent for all the forms of our disobedience. We must make a decision to do what we know is right -- to put into practice the will of God. Whatever this may cost us, is trifling, in the light of what we are forfeiting by our failure to walk in fellowship with Him.

II. The Will of God and the Warning Regarding Hypocrisy.

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law . . . Thou that teachest another . . . dost thou steal? . . . dost thou commit adultery? . . . dost thou commit sacrilege (idolatry)? . . . dost thou through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?
Romans 2:17-23

A. The explanation.

1. To know the will of God through divine revelation is not only one of life's greatest privileges -- it also brings a profound responsibility.
2. In writing to the Jewish people of his day, the Apostle Paul reminded them of this twofold truth. God had revealed Himself to them but they were not obedient to the message of that revelation.
3. The Jewish people had fallen into a common religious trap. They professed to know God and obey Him -- when in reality their profession was only empty words, a form of religion, devoid of truth and life.

B. The instruction.

1. The passage before us reminds us of the great value that God places upon honesty, and truthfulness. To profess to honor and obey Him -- when we are not -- involves us in a serious sin. It makes us a hypocrite.
2. Some of the most solemn condemnations spoken by the Lord Jesus, when He was here upon earth, were against the leaders in Israel who were religious hypocrites. (Matt. 23)
3. The dangers of hypocrisy are often stressed in the Bible.

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:5).

Purify your hearts, ye double minded (James 4:8).

Speaking lies in hypocrisy (I Timothy 4:2).

Hypocrites . . . honourest me with their lips but their heart is far from me (Mark 7:6).

An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour (Prov. 11:9).

C. The application.

1. Because of our sinfulness, the ease with which we become hypocritical, and our tendency to solve problems only with words -- we must work to be honest and truthful.
2. Each of us recognizes certain areas of our life where we are double minded. This is where we must begin with our repentance and prayers for truthfulness. We must look upon the threat of hypocrisy as the terrible sin that it is.

III. The Will of God and the Warning Regarding Impatience.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.
Hebrews 10:35,36

A. The explanation.

1. Before the Lord Jesus was born many of the Jewish people believed that their Messiah would deliver them from the Roman rule. After He came Jewish believers, therefore, had a tendency to think of His will in political terms. When the kingdom of God did not appear, but persecution began, they were confused and became vulnerable to doubt.
2. In our text the Christians were exhorted to be patient and learn to live by faith (Vs 37-39).

B. The instruction.

1. With these Jewish believers we too are prone to seek evidences of our faith in the externals of our daily life. When things go poorly for us, and we seem to make little headway in the Christian life, we have a tendency to doubt and question.
2. The writer of the Hebrews exhorts us to connect the will of God with patience. We must give heed to this counsel because the most valuable area of our life is faith. Our Heavenly Father will often allow us to go through a difficult time because He wants us to grow in faith.
3. We must resist the temptation to look for evidences of God's approval and our spirituality in external benefits. When we have such blessings we need to be grateful and when we lack them -- then we must live by patience and faith.

IV. The Will of God and the Warning Regarding Worldliness.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And 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. Romans 12:1,2

A. The explanation.

1. In our discussion of this text a few lessons ago we reminded ourselves that worldliness is living according to the way of life, standards, attitudes, goals, priorities, methods, and pleasures of the non-Christian. In all simplicity it is simply a self-centered way of life.
2. This warning is necessary because our sinfulness makes us extremely vulnerable to worldliness. And because we live in a non-Christian world it is very difficult to know where to draw the line between what is worldly and what is not.
3. Our text reminds us that worldliness will act as a barrier to keep us from the knowledge and experience of the will of God

B. The instruction.

1. The Lord Jesus also warned of the terrible effects of being a worldly person. He said,

He also that received seed (the Scripture) among the thorns is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. Matt. 13:22

2. In order to seek out those areas of worldliness in our life we must choose to be honest and compare our attitudes, standards, priorities, goals, pleasures, and relationships with the clear teaching of Scripture.
3. Our text states that we must "renew our mind." Paul meant we were to revise our thinking to harmonize with the Word of God so we could understand and practice the will of God.
4. The reason we have this warning in the Bible is because God loves us and seeks to pour out of His blessings into our life. Too often we think of the Bible as depriving us of our joy and freedom -- when the truth is the very opposite.