

Lesson # 4 -- The Encouragement Regarding the Will of God

Introduction

- A. There are many things about this life, and ourselves, that are a mystery to us. The familiar old saying, "The best laid plans . . ." often come to mind.
- B. The Christian has a way of coping with those things that are beyond his control. We know the One Who is in charge of all things -- He has invited us to call Him our Father.
- C. One aspect of true faith is a spiritual rest which grows out of trust. This is not passivity or mind-control but the acceptance of the truth that God is our Father and that He has our best interest in mind. We can rest in that.
- D. The more one knows about the will of God the more deeply we are encouraged to press on in living the Christian life. In this lesson I wish to present some facets of the will of God which will truly encourage us.

I. The Encouragement Related to God's Will in Redemption.

Then said he (the Lord Jesus), Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first (O.T. sacrifices), that he may establish the second (final redemption). By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heb. 10:9,10

A. The explanation.

1. The statement of the Lord Jesus, "Lo, I come to do thy will," was our Savior's goal in coming into the world to be our Redeemer.
2. All that the Old Testament sacrificial system symbolized and typified -- was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. He satisfied every demand (caused by sin) of the righteous law through being the Lamb of God (John 1:29).
3. Because His redeeming work was complete, the result for the believer, when that work is applied to us -- is that we are seen as "sanctified," that is -- set apart by God to be saints (holy ones).

"The words 'we are sanctified' are in the Greek text a perfect participle and a finite verb, showing in the strongest way the permanent and continuous state of salvation into which the believer is brought and in which he lives. (Hebrews in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest. P. 175)

B. The instruction.

1. An understanding of this passage will bring great encouragement to us. We are here told that we are "sanctified" through the work of Jesus Christ which was a "once for all" redemptive act.
2. The word "sanctified" does not here refer to how we live but to the relationship God has established with us through the work of our Savior. We are looked upon by God as forgiven, legally righteous, transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, given spiritual life, made holy, and united eternally to the Lord Jesus -- to name only a few of the benefits.
3. No one can understand what happened when the Lord Jesus suffered in our place on the Cross. When we look at the multitude of spiritual benefits that are heaped upon us solely by the mercy and grace of God -- we begin to realize that His sacrifice can only be measured by such a term as "infinite."

C. The application.

1. God caused the writer of the Hebrews to be inspired and to write this account so that we would be taught and encouraged -- through understanding these truths.
2. It is again obvious that salvation is a free gift from God and is totally unrelated to any merit that we could gain by good works. It is clear that good works follow salvation as its evidence (James 2:17,18; I John 2:3-5).
3. The content of God's will is here made known to us. It was His will that Jesus Christ suffer our penalty and fulfill every demand against us. It was also His will that this work of redemption be applied to us and that we be thus brought to a state of spiritual completeness. (Col. 2:10)
4. It is crucial that we accept what God has said about us in His Word. To see the will of God fulfilled in the work of Jesus Christ, and then in our own life, should be a tremendous encouragement to us.

II. The Encouragement Related to God's Will in Intercession.

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:26,27

A. The explanation.

1. These verses reveal to us the wonderful truth that the believer has two intercessors. The Lord Jesus is our Intercessor in Heaven (Hebrews 7:25; I John 2:1), and as these verses testify, the Holy Spirit is our Intercessor in our heart.
2. Many aspects of our salvation are due to the ministry of the Holy Spirit -- the new birth (John 3:3,5), baptism into the Body of Christ the Church (I Cor. 12:13), His indwelling (I Cor 3:16), bestowal of spiritual gifts (I Cor. 12:7), and anointing (I John 2:20,27). We now can add to the list -- His intercession.
3. The Holy Spirit has been given to every believer by the Father, through the work of the Lord Jesus (John 14:16; Acts 2:33). He has come to glorify the Savior in our life (John 16:13,14). This means that He is continually at work in the life of the Christian to deepen our walk with God -- to make us spiritual people. He leads us, in the inner man, so that we will thirst after God and the things of God. It is that longing, which we cannot utter, that He makes known to the Father.

B. The instruction.

1. As we survey this work of the Holy Spirit in our life each of us is touched with embarrassment. We immediately realize how thoughtful and loving God has been in making such a complete provision for every facet of our life -- and yet how often we have neglected to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.
2. It is significant that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us "according to the will of God." These words point out the truth that such a work is God's daily provision for us -- but they also indicate that which the Holy Spirit is constantly attempting to lead us into and give us a thirst for -- namely, the will of God.

C. The application.

1. We must now ask ourselves as to how well we are following in the leading of the Holy Spirit? How He seeks to lead us is clearly stated in the Bible. In fact it is largely what we have been discussing as "the will of God." He has come to teach us the Bible (John 16:13), glorify the Lord Jesus in our life (John 16:14), make us a good witness (Acts 1:8), make us a spiritual person (Rom. 8:13), and characterize us with His fruit (Gal. 5:22,23).
2. Is it possible that we may limit the intercession of the Holy Spirit -- by not cooperating with Him? It would seem that such a conclusion cannot be denied. No wonder we are confused, frustrated, weakened, disappointed and find it hard to live the Christian life -- when we do not read and obey the Bible, when we live a self-centered life, when we do not witness for the Lord Jesus, and do not seek to be a spiritual person.

III. The Encouragement Related to God's Will in Equipment.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect (equipped) in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20,21

A. The explanation.

1. This passage simply states that God has made the provision so the believer can be equipped or enabled to do the will of God. This provision is inseparably related to the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus.
2. Every believer, at some time in life, has been overwhelmed by the weakness and sinfulness that is so very apparent in each of us. These verses have been designed to encourage us to turn away from ourselves and trust God to develop the equipment that has been given us.
3. It is interesting to see the close relationship between the will of God and what it means to please the Lord. While I wish to develop that truth later it is an additional aspect of comfort to know that we can please God.

B. The instruction.

1. The focus of this divine enablement or equipment which we have been given in salvation -- is the will of God. The Holy Spirit is constantly working with us to lead us into a deeper understanding as well as a deeper desire to use our abilities to fulfill God's will.

2. Two examples may help clarify the issue before us.

a. It is God's will that we be delivered from the world.

Who (the Lord Jesus) gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.
Gal. 1:4

Our equipment is as follows:

- 1). In our salvation we were separated from the world (John 15:19).
- 2). We have been shown what the "world" means and how we get involved in it (I John 2:15,16).
- 3). As saved people we have every need met in Christ and are not dependent on the world (James 4:3,4).
- 4). We have the ability to resist temptation (I Cor. 10:13).
- 5). The issue now is -- we must use our equipment.

b. It is God's will that we grow spiritually.

For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. I Thess. 4:3

Our equipment is as follows:

- 1). We were identified in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Romans 6:1-6).
- 2). In the new birth the power of His redemption was applied to us and we became new creatures (I Cor. 5:17).
- 3). The Holy Spirit dwells in us to conform us to the person of the Lord Jesus (Rom. 8:13,14,28,29).
- 4). We are holy people and can live a holy life (I Cor. 6:19,20).
- 5). The issue now is -- we must use our equipment.

C. The application

1. We must now face ourselves with the truth that we have no excuse for living a lazy and passive kind of life. Every provision is ours in Christ.
2. We must also understand that there will be very little manifestation of our equipment, perhaps none at all, until we put it into practice.
3. There are two areas where we must make a spiritual choice and follow through with practice.
 - a. We must learn to choose and to do the will of God.
 - 1). We live in a sinful world. It is important that we recognize the pleasures, the methods, the priorities, and the goals of that world. As we do so we can and must make a choice of faith not to be involved.
 - 2). This does not mean that we do not have --
 - a). Pleasures -- but not those of lust and error.
 - b). Methods -- but not those selfish and illegal.
 - c). Priorities -- but not those self-centered.
 - d). Goals -- but not those for personal glory.
 - b. We must learn to use our equipment constantly.
 - 1). This means to assume the responsibility for discernment -- identifying the will of God.
 - 2). This means to practice the abilities of grace which God has given us -- to say "No" to sin and "Yes" to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
 - 3). This means fulfilling the obligation we have been given to use the means of grace -- read and obey the Bible, participate in prayer, bear witness to Jesus Christ, and become involved in the work of the Church.
 - 4). As we use our equipment we will be constantly encouraged as we see the manifestation of the grace and power of God.