

Series Title: Truth Unashamed, Part 5

Sermon Title: Week 2: The Mystery? Of God's will

Date: 03-24-19

- **LAST WEEK we began part 5 of journey through Rom**
- **Romans 8:1... 12 and on... what it looks like to live- as one who is set free from Condemnation**
- **Paul begins by saying...**

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

- **WHEN WE CHOOSE for this to be the ongoing, continuous focus of lives... There is a promise that will naturally follow**

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- **And this brings us to one of the great questions of the Christian faith- one wrestled for generations, and one that for some is a source of great hope and confidence, and for many confusion and frustration... QUESTION OF GOD'S WILL.**
- **The concept that GOD- God of universe- has a WILL- (whatever this means, at a minimum it means an active, directing presence in our lives)- this is overwhelming- if true, it is miraculous.**
- **BECAUSE GODS WILL is such an amazing, and important concept, it also is the source of LOTS OF thoughts, ideas, teaching, that may or may not be biblically sound...**
- **SO, start with considering a few of these most prevalent... Are these...**

† God's will: Myth or Miracle?

- **Myth? God has a specific direction and choice regarding our specific life circumstances, direction, and decisions.**
- **This is probably the most common idea of God's will in regards to our lives- that it is a CHOICE between route a or route b. Is it God's will that I.. (job, relationship, where church, buy something)**
- **Idea that God has a plan laid out for our life, and at each juncture along the way we have decision we must make to keep us on the path of God's will for us- career, purpose, destiny...**
- **No question, there are plenty of examples in scripture where God called a person to specific purpose, with a specific plan for their lives.**
- **But is this primary picture of God's will?**
- **Consider--Majority of believers in history, idea of choices in life path is not even consideration. In fact, the idea that we need to discern the best of many options for what we do in life is a modern perspective, and one born out of relative affluence. If I am a person in generational poverty with no option for what I do, very few choices at all in life, does God still have a WILL- purpose- for my life?**
- **Reality is that apart from unique circumstances, the idea that knowing/doing God's will is discerning a predetermined path of how to proceed (blessed if I get it right)- this is not primarily what we see in scr**
- **Myth? It is God's will for us to be circumstantially blessed- we just need to figure out how.**
- **You've heard this... God wants you to be prosperous, healthy, successful, and if you just follow him correctly, make the right choices, it's HIS WILL to give you these things. OH, and I've got a book for 10.99 to tell you how to figure this out...**

– *This is just straight up prosperity Gospel- bad doctrine and distorts the true miracle of what it means to have God's blessings in our lives.*

• *Myth? God's will will be unlikely, and probably not what we want or would think.*

– *Idea that if something is God's will, it has to be the last thing we would have come up with ourselves, and probably not what we want to do. If we consider a path that makes sense to us, for which we are equipped, and we desire to do, then probably not God's will. FLIP- if something comes up that makes no sense, for which I'm not equipped, then that's evidence it's God's will.*

– *HEAR- Will God lead us into places we don't expect, where we have to trust him, and for which we have to lay down our own plan and predisposition? YES*

– *BUT, what this idea misses- CHRIST IS OUR LIFE! He is transforming us into HIS image. He calls us, by HIS WORD, for our minds to be renewed, he is changing the way we think. As increasingly live in RELATIONSHIP- our DESIRES reflect HIS desires. Where God leads us may be beyond us, may require surrender, but it will BE OUR HEART to follow him!*

– *To say "God's will requires that we lay down our will" ignores the reality that God is working to CHANGE OUR WILL as he changes who we are. (For mature...)*

• *Myth? If something doesn't happen the way we hoped, we should say "it wasn't God's will."*

– *Maybe it wasn't... or maybe I need to take responsibility rather than putting it off on God*

– *Didn't get accepted to school- maybe wasn't God's will, or maybe my grades were too low*

– *Didn't win game- maybe other team played harder*

– *OR- maybe it just didn't work out!*

– *HEAR! God can intervene anytime He desires, and at times He may do so. BUT, if we view every life disappointment as NOT being the 'will of God', that is a very LOW VIEW of the power of God in our lives*

– *ALSO- just because a situation works out favorably doesn't mean it was God's specific choice for us.*

– *THINK! If we view disappointments as NOT God's will, and our successes as being God's will... self centered view... mere validation of what we want to happen*

• *Myth: God's will is a mystery, spiritually difficult to discern, and even harder to do.*

– *Idea that to know God's will is very difficult, and IF we are able to figure it out, the path ahead will be difficult. PATH AHEAD may indeed be difficult, but to view God's will as a mystery, hard to tell, is to ignore two great NT truths- FIRST, already said, is that we are in UNION with Christ- he is IN US, increasingly his desire is our desire- 1 COR 2, "Mind of Christ. SECOND is reality that God is a self-revealing God.*

Ephesians 1:8-9 *With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ*

– *Simply put, nothing in the NT indicates that God has some interest in keeping his Will for us secret, or difficult for us to understand. Rather, one of the great NT realities of God's Grace is that in relationship with Christ, God is actively working to make his will KNOWN to us.*

– *IN CONTRAST TO THESE IS THE MIRACLE...*

MIRACLE: *The God of the Universe, who loves me and knows me, has given His life to me, is in union with me, and is actively working in me, that I may experience His presence, provision, and purpose through me... RIGHT NOW.*

– *SO, what is the message of the New Testament regarding this Miracle, that God's Will is at work in our lives? BACK TO ROMANS.. First thing we see....*

† God's will as a **RESULT**

Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. **Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

- **This is heart of message- what can't miss! Look closely at text, several different translations, for this again, in Greek, is highly nuanced words packed with meaning that is challenging to directly translate into English.**
- **MY GO TO is NIV- here it both misses and does best job of capturing essence of this text. Lets read the statement again...**

Then (directly connected result of presenting/renewing- when we are living this way, here is what necessarily will follow)

you will be able to (what does this sound like? We 'can', but we may or may not. That isn't the meaning of the text- word 'able' is not in the greek. ESV 'that by'... NASB 'so that you will'- again, the emphasis of the text is something that will naturally, necessarily happen because...)
test and approve what God's will is

- **HERE NIV probably has best translation. ESB 'testing you may discern', NASB 'may prove or approve'. Greek word has strong sense of both 'testing' and 'approving'**
- **How do you test something? DOING IT!**
- **SEE!! Picture here is NOT MAKING A CHOICE BETWEEN A & B. RATHER- picture is BECAUSE WE ARE LIVING as a sacrifice, presenting, being transformed... WE WILL, AS A RESULT, NATURALLY LIVE OUT GOD'S WILL- put it into practice, and as we do, we will SEE/PROVE/EXPERIENCE that it is GOOD. Proved not just to us, but demonstrated through us- actually happening**
- **AGAIN! For the believer who is increasingly living by the Spirit, God's will is not an agonizing choice difficult to determine, but a natural result that leads us into the experience of his active work in our lives.**
- **NIV ends with..**

his good, pleasing and perfect will.

- **this is SUBTLE, but important. Good, pleasing, perfect are not adjectives describing God's will (as NIV) Rather, they are NOUNS- realities that make up, result from, God's will.**

(NASB) so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable/PLEASING and perfect

- **Not asking "is this choice" Good, acceptable to God, and the perfect decision. TRAP Rather- as God's nature, character, fruit of his spirit, his wisdom- is being lived out, we come to know (it is proved to us), that God's will- loving him, living in obedience to Him- THIS is true GOODNESS, this is what is pleasing to God, and HE is the ONLY thing that is perfect and complete.**
- **LAST THOUGHT HERE- the CHOICE of God's will is not first a choice of direction. It is the CHOICE to present ourselves to God as a living sacrifice, to worship him with how we live, and to renew our minds through his word, so that HE is daily, increasingly, transforming us into his image... When THIS IS HAPPENING, his will for us will naturally follow, won't be a mystery.**

† God's will and the perspective of His **KINGDOM**

† God's will and a perspective of **TRUST**

† God's will and His **PURPOSE** in our lives.

IN SUPPLEMENTAL

- **Purpose- this brings back the big question- what is God's purpose for me! The big picture of the NT is that God's greatest purpose for us is not first and foremost WHAT WE DO (career), but...**

† God's will and how we LIVE as an expression of who we ARE.

Ephesians 6:5-8 *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. ⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.*

- **what choice does a slave have in what he does? NONE- but I have a choice in how I do it- and that is God's will- Respect, integrity, sincerity, living with Christ as our audience...**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3-6 *It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; ⁶ and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister.*

- **What is God's will? That I allow God to CHANGE HOW I LIVE. See this body, and others, as a gift that is set apart to God, that I honor, love, don't dishonor or take advantage of another person, because I see them as Christ sees them.**

Colossians 4:12 *Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.*

- **Stand firm in ALL the will of God- not a specific choice or circumstance, but life journey of becoming MATURE, FULLY assured- HIS NATURE, HIS CHARACTER, His peace, hope, joy, freedom, contentment, courage, kindness, fruit of his spirit... that whatever I am doing, wherever I am, whatever choice or decision is in front of me... I ENGAGE THIS FULLY as a person who is BEING TRANSFORMED as I daily make the choice to renew my mind in his word, living in dependent relationship with Christ ... this – in all things- is God's will!**
- **MY TESTIMONY- was it God's will for me to become a pastor...**
- **Was God leading me into this new path? YES. BUT FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN me becoming Trinity's pastor, in that time, it was God's will that**
 - **My identity was in CHRIST, not in my vocation**
 - **My marriage was more important than my ministry**
 - **My heart was at peace, my contentment, my integrity, joy... how I lived... flowed from my relationship with Christ, be it as a landscape architect or as a pastor.**
- **This is still God's will for me- to live by his spirit. Only then can I experience HIS WORK and PURPOSE in what I do. For me, this happens in the context of being a husband, dad, pastor...**
- **Same is true in context of who you are, whatever you may be doing now.... God's will is that you KNOW HIM, TRUST HIM, EXPERIENCE HIM, being transformed by the renewing of your mind...**

† God's will, God's WISDOM, and God's word.

In supplemental