

4-18-21
KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD

SCRIPTURE TEXT:

James 4:13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

James 4:14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

James 4:15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

James 4:16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Intro: All of life is a vapor.

Tuesday morning at 4:23 A.M., I got a text message from Ken Knapp asking about a business matter we were dealing with. Then about 8:45 I got a phone call from Ruth Ann that Ken was having stroke like symptoms. They rushed him to the hospital and then took him to the intensive care unit. They sedated him and put him on a ventilator and was unconscious till yesterday afternoon, when they took the ventilator out. I talked to him on the phone Friday early evening, and prayed with him over the phone. He was hoarse and not able to talk very well.

Yesterday, Saturday afternoon, I went to the hospital to visit him and to pray with him again. When I went in to see him I said, what do you remember? He said the last thing he remembered was sending me a text message and the next thing he remembered was waking up in the hospital.

So it was just that quick. In the morning he gets up and sends me a text message and then 4 days latter he wakes up with a bunch of tubes and IV's all over him. That is how quickly something can happen to you.

I read some Scripture to brother Ken, and one of the verses that I read was from John 14 the comfort passage. In that passage we also read:

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

I John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Here is the crux of the whole matter. The most important thing in your spiritual life is to know and do the will of God. Some aspects of the will of God are a mystery to us, and in that case we need to submit to the will of God.

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James 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

James says, we should say, "If the Lord will we shall live and do this or that.."

The truth is our brother Ken texted me at 4:30 in the morning about some business that we need to transact, and God had other plans. What a lesson to learn. We set up our plans, but every plan we have is tentative depending on God's plan. We know not what is on tomorrow. What is our life? It is but a vapour that appeareth for a little while.

Could you imagine, waking up in the morning, passing out and then 4 days later waking up in the hospital. For some they pass out and wake up at the throne of God or others in hell. So our lives are like that. A vapour, a passing mist.

We are now coming into the middle of the New Year 2021.

There are four bench marks in the year in our church calendar.

Four benchmarks of the year..

New Years	(Winter)
Easter	(Spring)
Tabernacle DVBS meetings	(Summer)
Thanksgiving Christmas	(Fall)

Hard to believe we just finished our Easter Holiday meetings. Again life is like a vapor. How quickly these 4 months passed!

As I meditated on what to share for my sermon this morning, I just couldn't help but be reminded of the verse that says.

OUR LIFE IS A VAPOR.

James' advice for making the most of this life which comes and goes as a vapor is to seek to know and to do and submit to the will of the Lord.

We ought to say if the Lord will, we shall live and do this and that.

Obviously, it is not as easy as all that to know and do the Lord's will or more of us would be doing it with consistency.

We will soon have half of the year behind us, so we should be seeking to know the Lord's will and living our lives in submission to that will.

Remember even our Lord Jesus had to pray, "not my will but thine be done..."

Knowing the will of the Lord is the most powerful knowledge you can have for your prayer life. Remember the Lord says in his Word, if you ask anything according to His will He will both hear your prayer and answer your prayer. This is a great promise.

So as we soon enter the middle of this New Year let me suggest that we each try to learn and discern how to come and know the will of the Lord in our lives.

First of all it is obvious a lot of people don't know the will of the Lord. Obviously there are hinderances to knowing the will of the Lord. What are they?

I. FIRST, RECOGNIZE THE HINDERANCES IN KNOWING THE LORD'S WILL.

Why is the the Lord's will such a hard thing for men to know?

1. Recognize that some do not even care to know God's will.

Matthew 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

One of the reasons a lot of people don't care about coming to church is because most people do not care to know the will of the Lord. They are too busy doing their own will.

A dog has no capacity or appreciation for learning and noble things. Give a dog a book and it will chew it apart. Give him a piece of art and he will use trample it under foot. So the Bible means nothing to a carnal unregenerate man.

Some people I don't even give this matter of the will of God any thought at all. To them it does not matter. In fact, maybe they don't even think it is part of the equation concerning anything in their lives.

2. Understand that God Himself will withhold the knowledge of His will from some because He knows they would not do His will even if they knew it, so He withholds knowledge from them so that they will be less accountable for it.

It may sound strange but in His mercy He withholds that knowledge.

There was a reason the Lord spent most of His time with only the 12 Apostles. He knew he wasn't wasting his time with them. One of the great frustrations of the ministry is spending time teaching people who never pan out to do anything for the Lord. If a person does not have a heart to want to do the will of God teaching them is a waste of time. In fact in many respects you are not doing them a favor at all.

To some people the will of God is a great mystery that no one can know. Because they have no heart for doing the will of God, therefore God withholds that knowledge from them. He says this in Matt. 13.

Matthew 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Matthew 13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Matthew 13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Matthew 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

Matthew 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Matthew 13:16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

When a person has knowledge of God's will they become more responsible to obey Him and do His will: To whom much is given much is required. Luke 12:48

Luke 12:47 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.

Luke 12:48 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.

With the knowledge of God's Word and will comes more blessing and responsibility. To whom much is given much is required. So God sometimes purposely withholds knowledge from some people because He knows they would have no heart to obey His word and His will.

Another problem we have is that we have an enemy keeping many people blinded to the will of God.

3. We need to recognize that we have an enemy, even Satan, who is constantly doing mischief and sowing confusion concerning God's will.

Sometimes he uses his false prophets to do this: We have a lot of people who just point blank lie about God's will. These are called the lying prophets in the Bible. We have an account of an old lying prophet in I Kings 13:18. There are many lying prophets in Bible colleges today dishing out poison to young men studying for the ministries. Seminaries have many times become spiritual cemeteries.

In I Kings 13:18 we read these sad words, "But he lied unto him..."

Here we have the sad story about the lying prophet.

I Kings 13:11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

I Kings 13:12 And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah.

I Kings 13:13 And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon,

I Kings 13:14 And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am.

I Kings 13:15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

I Kings 13:16 And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:

I Kings 13:17 For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

I Kings 13:18 He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. **But he lied unto him.**

I Kings 13:19 So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

I Kings 13:20 And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:

I Kings 13:21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee,

I Kings 13:22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

I Kings 13:23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

I Kings 13:24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.

I Kings 13:25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

I Kings 13:26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him.

I Kings 13:27 And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him.

I Kings 13:28 And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass.

Here we have the sad sad story of how an older prophet deceiving a younger prophet into thinking God changed his mind about what his command and will was for his life. He just point blank lied. God said this, and this lying prophet said God said something he did not say. So it is that sometimes religious leaders are actually spreading lies about the will of the Lord. These are hirelings, men who are just seeking their own glory and fame. They are involved in religious work like so many are involved in making it big, or seeking out fame and renown. They are opportunists. They are employed in the art of telling people what they want to hear.

Now not only do you have to deal with the deceitful teachers, but you also have to deal with your own deceitful heart.

4. WE NEED TO RECOGNIZE OUR OWN DECEITFUL HEARTS IN KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD.

Why did the younger prophet believe the lying prophet? The reason was he wanted to believe the older prophet. All it would take was a little prayer over a matter to save ourselves from a lot of heartache. We are deceived because we do not seek the mind of the Lord in a matter and we then lack discernment.

For instance, God told Saul to exact vengeance on the Amalekites for their treachery towards Israel. Notice how he violated God's command and then justified himself in I Samuel chapter 15.

I Samuel 15:7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.

I Samuel 15:8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

I Samuel 15:9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and

would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

I Samuel 15:10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

I Samuel 15:13 And Samuel came to Saul: and **Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.**

I Samuel 15:14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

I Samuel 15:15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

Notice how he said, I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

He actually deceived himself into thinking he was doing the will of the Lord.

I have seen this so often through the years. People actually convince themselves that they are doing the will of God. How is this?

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Jeremiah 17:10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

Samuel had to rebuke Saul and expose his wicked heart.

I Samuel 15:19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

I Samuel 15:20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

I Samuel 15:21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

I Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

I Samuel 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Our heart will deceive us into thinking that what we want is the will of God but in essence we do the opposite. Again there is a battle of the wills. The greatest hindrance in knowing the will of God is our own deceitful hearts.

Things got so bad in the life of Saul that the Lord ceased to speak to him.

I Samuel 28:5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

I Samuel 28:6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

I Samuel 28:7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

I Samuel 28:8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.

II. THE BEST WAY TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD IS TO GET RID OF THE HINDRANCES:

1. Must start with a desire:

Proverbs 3:13 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.

Proverbs 3:14 For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

Proverbs 3:15 She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Proverbs 3:16 Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour.

Psalms 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

Psalms 19:10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Psalms 19:11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

2. Must be a person of character that will show the character to do the will of God when you learn it:

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: We need to ask ourselves this question: DO WE REALLY WANT TO KNOW AND DO THE WILL OF GOD IN OUR LIVES? I DIDN'T WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. I WANTED A GOD WHO WAS LIKE A GENIE IN A JAR. Until I surrendered to the Christ as my Lord and Savior I was in not position to know the will of God in my life.

Deuteronomy 5:29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

Consider the power we can have in prayer if we really knew how to pray in the will of God.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

I John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

But the Bible says,

James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Do you know I sent pictures of our Pavilion to our insurance company, and I told them that we needed to add it to our policy. We set aside \$50,000 to build the pavilion I checked this morning and as of today we have a balance of \$35,164.21 in the pavilion account. Now when I suggested to Evie that we set aside the money for a future pavilion project I believed that we would need \$200,000 in that account to do the project. But Ray Taylor came to me and said to me a little over a year ago that he believed we needed to get going on the project because that money was doing us no good in that account and besides he wanted to see the project done before he died! I said Ray let us pray about and if you think we could put up the frame with the funds at hand let us do it. So the insurance broker verified what I originally thought when he said, we need \$200,000 insurance on the building that we only had \$50,000 to build. What God can do if we pray in His will. Because it was not my will, nor was it my work, but it was the will and work of God for His glory.

As we pray in every need for this building can you not see how God has worked. We got a commercial sink for \$250.00 Tom Johnson just got a hot water heater donated, Bryan McDonald donated a Washer and A dryer, Brother Ray Taylor had kitchen cabinets donated. Who is doing all this but God Himself.

A. God knew and warned Joshua that the Children of Israel had no heart to do the will of the Lord:

Joshua 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Joshua 24:16 And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;

Joshua 24:19 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

Joshua 24:20 If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good.

Joshua 24:21 And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.

Joshua 24:22 And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses.

B. God knew Abraham Had A Heart To Serve Him:

Genesis 18:17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

Genesis 18:18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

Genesis 18:19 **For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD,** to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

God blessed Abraham because God knew Abraham had a heart to serve and obey Him!

C. WE NEED TO ASK GOD TO CLEANSE OUR HEARTS SO WE WILL DESIRE TO DO HIS WILL.

Psalms 19:12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Psalms 19:13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Psalms 119:9 {Beth.} Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

3. We need to avoid the influence of those who would hurt us in our spiritual growth and life:

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Ephesians 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Galatians 5:7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

III. ONCE WE HAVE PREPARED OUR HEARTS TO KNOW AND DO THE WILL OF GOD WE CAN BE ASSURED THAT HE WILL BLESS US.

James 1:4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

James 1:7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

James 1:8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

CONCLUSION: HERE IS HOW IT WORKS.

For most people the mind, heart, and will of God is a great mystery. In fact when the disciples asked the Lord to teach them how to pray, our Lord said, the first thing we ought to pray about is for His Kingdom to come and His will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Do we really seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? He said if we did, all other things we need will be added to us.

His ways are not our ways and our ways are not His ways. His concerns transcend our concerns and our concerns are so often amiss from His heart mind and concerns.

My kids used to say my youngest daughter Jessica was Daddy's favorite. When the kids wanted to do something, they would always go to little Jessica and say Jessie BO BO, they called her BO BO because she was always running around the church and hitting her head on one of the pews and got Bo Bo's, so from then on she earned the nick name Bo Bo. The would say Jessie Bo Bo ask daddy if we could go to the park.

Jessie Bo Bo ask daddy if we could go get ice cream. Bo Bo ask daddy, etc. In fact today she is in her thirties and mother of three and her siblings still call her Jessie Bo bo.

When we went on vacation together as a family we used to get two rooms side by side with the door that would open between them. Often when we went on vacation, it was always a treat to be able to watch cable TV in the motel room where we were staying. Back then all we had was antenna TV and we got 3 stations clearly. So I liked watching the cable news stations so I could get caught up on what was happening in the world. So one time we were all gathered around the TV in the motel room and I was watching the news and little Jessica was sitting on my lap. Now little Jessica had earned the position of being the clans advocate to daddy. So the clan wanted to watch cartoons. So they said to me daddy we don't want to watch the news can you turn on some cartoons. Then they turned to Jessica and said, Jessie, tell daddy to change the channel, and little Jessica turns around in her toddler voice and points a finger at them all and says, "Me and daddy want to watch the news!" Did she? You see she wanted to want what he daddy wanted to please her daddy.

So we can start wanting to know the will of God by loving God and wanting to please Him, and even if we don't have the heart to understand His will and appreciate His will, if we love Him and get close to Him, we will want to do what He wants. In fact we read this:

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

And further we can say if we love Him and are close to God,

I Thessalonians 5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Then if we love Him and get close to Him every now and then God will smile down upon us and open up the windows of heaven and take us out for some spiritual ice cream!!!

I could hear the apostle John preaching and saying, Little children, love God, seek to know and do His will.

I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

I John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

May the Lord give us wisdom in both knowing and doing His will in our lives.