

DESIRE TO DO GOD'S WILL

Psalm 40:1-3, 8

(Read Psalm 40:1-3). David was the beloved king of Israel who reigned powerfully and well for forty years. He was installed, blessed, and approved by God who called him “a man after his own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14).

David wrote almost half of the Psalms, and his psalms usually proclaimed the grace of God and praise of God.

In Psalm 40 David describes God pulling him out of the mud and mire of a slimy pit (v. 2). He doesn't tell us what it was, but he was unable to free himself from this dark period in his life and.

Most of us, at some time or other, can relate to him.

Some kinds of pits:

- **The pit of sin.**

You might be caught in the mud and mire of sin. Maybe the pit David is thinking about is when he stayed home from battle during a time when he should have been with his army at war.

While enjoying himself in Jerusalem he saw beautiful Bathsheba taking a bath on the roof of a home close to the palace. Her husband was the soldier, Uriah.

Though she was married, King David brought her to the palace, slept with her, and, when he learned she was pregnant, arranged to have Uriah abandoned in battle so that he was killed by enemy soldiers. (2 Sam. 11).

Maybe you are also caught in a pit of some kind of sin. Maybe one sin has led to another. You know it is happening but you can't get out of it.

That's what sin does. It gets a hold and pulls you down, and it seems like there is no way out. Well there is: 1 Cor. 10:13, God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear...he will provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

- **The pit of defeat.**

This is a different kind of pit—the pit of personal defeat. This could be at work or school or home or some kind of relationship. Some people feel like their entire lives have been one long and unending defeat. They've never succeeded at anything.

I don't know all your situations. And I certainly don't trivialize your discouragement, but I know this: God knows you and your situation.

He does have things He wants you to succeed at. He will enable you to succeed at those, even though they may be different from what you are doing now.

The place to begin is where David did. Lay your problems before the Lord. If you are defeated, bring your defeats to God. Wait patiently on God (see v. 1). God will give you victories in His time.

- **The pit of bad habits.**

This may be where you are at. Some bad habits are terribly destructive, like addictive drugs. Others are merely harmful, like uncontrolled temper, or self-pity, or laziness, or over eating.

Bad habits can be broken; new ones can take their place. But the best place to get the strength and guidance for these new ones is from God. He made you in His image, and wants to develop you into the character of Jesus Christ. Turn to Him for His help.

- **The pit of circumstances.**

These don't necessarily come from sin, or defeats, or even bad habits. It just might be the circumstances of life that you have been dealt. It might be the circumstances of being a Christian.

The Apostle Paul talked about the difficult circumstances he found himself in—beaten, stoned, ship wrecked, bandits, went without sleep, hunger and thirst, cold and naked—all circumstances from his service for the Lord.

When Paul sought help from the Lord, his circumstances did not change, God gave him strength through them. Paul wrote, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." (2 Cor. 4:8-9).

In patience David waited on the Lord and God responded.

Now look at v. 8. “I desire to do your will, O my God.” David’s prayer should be the prayer of every believer.

One of the great problems which every believer faces is, “Am I doing the will of God? What is God’s will for some crisis or difficulty or problem I’m facing? What is God’s will?”

All of us get into a pit of some kind from time to time. We get into a pit and think we can handle it ourselves. The Apostle Paul wrote:

Romans 12:2 (NIV) “Do not conform any longer 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.”

Different translations word it this way: “Do not conform yourself to this age.” “Do not model yourself on the behavior of the world around you.” “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of the world.” “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold.”

As Christians our thinking is not to be determined by the culture of the world around us, but rather, we are to have a distinctly different and growing Christian worldview.

We are to be transformed through the renewing of our mind. Circle the most important word in the verse, “Then.”

Then, and only then, will you be able to test and prove God’s perfect will. This world is preparation time for our heavenly home—don’t conform to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind—ready for heaven.

Before you became a Christian, you were in control of your mind. Now, you allow Jesus to control it. You are renewed and transformed when you...

1. Understand God’s revealed will.

Many of us are running around looking for God’s will, but it’s never been lost. It’s right here in God’s instruction book, the Bible. The Bible is the source of the known will of God.

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. The way your mind is renewed is in combination of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

When we become a Christian we become a new person because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He renews every part of our humanness, which was tainted and twisted by sin.

But we also need the Holy Scriptures to guide our minds as we read the Bible. God's will is learned either by direct statements or commands, or you deduce His will from the stories, parables, principles, and the lessons of the Bible.

If you really want to know God's will, the first place you look is the instruction book. Check it out in the Bible. It's His gift to us.

You cannot know God's will apart from the Word of God. In your mind is stored all sorts of information from your life's experiences.

From all this you draw conclusions, and have opinions. But then what happens? You begin to listen to your friend's opinions, and radio talk shows, and screwy TV programs.

Pretty soon you are out of touch with God. Let me say this again—you need the Bible to help you filter all this stuff. You cannot know God's will if you refuse to read the Bible.

2. Be willing to do God's will.

If you really care about knowing God's will, you must be willing to obey it. I know people who have Bible head knowledge. They read the Bible but they've not taken it to heart. It doesn't seem to apply to them.

Here's an important question to ask: Am I obedient to the will of God I do know? If you insist on doing things your own way, then, really, you are not serious about God's will.

I had a friend who was having some serious marital and family problems. She came to me, her pastor, and told me, "I'm praying to God to take care of these things for me." She expected God to clean up her mess.

She said she was a Christian, but her life didn't show it. She didn't need God in her life until she needed bailed out. Her failing marriage was a symptom, to some degree, of her preference for the golf course over her church.

She didn't know what the Bible says about husbands and wives, love and respect and submission and relationships.

You must be in touch with God through His Word, and you must want to be obedient to Him. God is not the great bailer-outer in the sky.

3. Love the church.

Do you agree or disagree that you can be a good Christian and not go to church? If you agree, you belong to the majority of American church members. And, you obviously do not know God's will concerning Christ's church.

Because, according to the Bible, the majority of American church members are wrong. God's Word says: (1 Cor 12:27) "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

When you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, that's your doorway into the church, you become part of the Body of Christ. There is no such thing as a solitary Christian.

You are not a Christian just for your own sake. You need the church and the church needs you. There cannot be churchless Christianity. You cannot know God's will outside of the church.

Your salvation is not a fire escape. You are left in this world for the sake of others. The author of Hebrews was quite clear about this.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV) 24Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Bible is full of "one another's." In the church we care for one another; we watch out for one another; we encourage one another to better and more noble living; we pray for one another.

The church provides us with a continuous incentive for brotherly love and right conduct for one another. We hold one another accountable for Christian living and witness.

Christians who are not active in a church are already disobeying much of God's will. You cannot know God's will apart from the church. You cannot know God's will if not willing to obey it.

When you are not under the influence of the preaching, teaching, fellowship, praise and worship of the church, your spiritual life plunges downward.

It becomes easy to make excuses for sin and even blame God for all your problems. You want to know God's will? You must love His church.

4. Desire to grow spiritually.

Growing in Christ is all part of being in God's will. 2 Pet 3:18 (NIV) "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Growing spiritually is by not conforming any longer to the pattern of this world. It is desiring to grow in Christ, and then doing the necessary things to do so—reading your Bible, be active in church, praying, and serving him.

Not growing spiritually is conforming to this world by getting your standards, your attitudes, and your world-view from your neighbors, friends, co-workers, the media, music or whatever.

The sad thing is because we are so much a part of the world and so little like Jesus Christ, even Christians have a hard time with God's way.

Only a strong desire to learn more about God and His ways, and how He works in this world, what His purpose is for His church, and your place in the church, will result in knowing God's will and your spiritual growth.

Application:

God's Word is always personal. It always speaks to us individually and personally. It is personal because God knows everything about you. Like it or not, His will is always right, it is always best, and it is always good.

My prayer for you is that you are being transformed by the renewing of your mind—that Jesus Christ is in control of all you are and do. That you are being obedient to God's will, and if not, you will confess your sin to God, and get on with the business of being a