**Partnering together in God’s mission**  **18th May 2025**
**Doing God’s Will**

*Mark 3:31-35 (NIV) 31 Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.” 33 “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers**! 35 Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”*

*SERMON*

*Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.” 35*

When growing up, discovering God’s will for my life was a major issue. And even today,

it is appropriate that all of us who seek to follow Jesus want to be doing God’s Will.

But as a teenager we would agonise over wondering what God’s will is for our lives. Does God want me to marry this person, or that one! Does he want me to pursue being a teacher or lawyer, pastor or plumber? Should I be a missionary or become a pastor?

Motivated by a desire to do what was right, perhaps with a tinge of fear that if we didn’t know exactly what He wanted, then we would fail God, or worse, miss out on the life he has for us. Perhaps even eternal life!

I knew a woman once who was so fearful she would get it wrong, she refused to do anything until she heard God tell her. At times, she even wondered if she had been putting on her clothes wrong, because God hadn’t told her which sock to put on first!

But for any serious follower of Jesus – it IS an important question

What is God’s will?

What does he want for my life, for me to do?

And rightly so, because here in this passage Jesus says: to be considered part of God’s family – you need to do His will.

*“Whoever does my will is my mother, or brother or sister!”*

And in this series, as we consider what it means to become more like Jesus, we know that must include doing what he wants. Being in His Will. Surely that’s what our intercultural workers teach us as they follow God’s will overseas as “missionaries”!

The good news is there is no reason to doubt, or worry or be afraid God has made his will clear. At least the things he really wants us to do! Through His Word he has made it clear what God’s will is! Which may lead you to go overseas. Or it may cause you to be a missionary as a nurse, or in the street where you live in Grange! If we focus on doing what He has said – then doing his will, will be what you do!

I remember talking about these things with my Aunt when I was at Bible College. I was all full of big thoughts and new ideas, and very concerned I would miss important bits. Cutting me off mid sentence she said: “What do you think you are doing? You don’t need to worry about all the new fangled ideas or things in the Bible you don’t yet understand. There are some things God has made very clear, just focus on doing these! And this is certainly true when it comes to doing God’s will.

There is no need to panic about finding what his will is for my life, if I just focus on doing the things he has made clear!

I think it was Søren Kierkegaard who said: "The Bible is very easy to understand. But we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand, we are obliged to act accordingly." And it appears to me that is very true when talking about God’s Will for our lives! We worry so much about what His will might be for us in the future that we don’t do what he wants us to do now!

Now, to be fair, not all Scripture is easily understandable and clear in its meaning! BUT it is true of enough of it. There is plenty that is plain, quite enough to keep us occupied. That helps us know God’s will. If we focus on doing these things – I think we will have enough to do!

Of the many, many passages that can be found that tell us what God expects, what his will is for us, I want to take a moment to think about 3 things the Bible makes clear. 3 things God wills us to do. So what is God’s will for our lives?

**Firstly. And most importantly. It is where it all begins…**

We read in John 6: *Then they (the crowd) said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” (Joh 6:28-29)*

The **first** thing God wills for each and every human being alive. Including us. Is to believe in Jesus. Because the word “Believe” here is not past tense, or just a once off event. It is to be an ongoing continuous action. And it has 2 clear implications:

Firstly. God wants us to put our trust in Jesus. To believe what he says. To follow Him and become more like Him. To “believe”!

It’s not just a “say the sinner’s prayer and get on with the rest of your lives” type belief! But a “I will follow you and do all I can to get closer to you and become more like you” type belief. This is God’s will for your life.

Is it something that you are giving your life to do? Is your belief in Jesus evident in your priorities, in the way you spend your time, your time with him, or the words you say, or the things you do?

**Secondly** if God’s will is for all to believe in Jesus it will mean we will do what we can to help make that happen.

If that means going to SE Asia so that people there who have no other way of hearing about Jesus can do so – then we will do it.

If it means befriending my neighbour and sharing with them about my faith in Jesus, then I will do it.

If that means talking about Jesus on the golf course, or while watching my kids play soccer, or in my exercise class – then that is what I will do.

For this is God’s will for all, and therefore his will for me.

As Jesus went on to say: *For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (Joh 6:40)*

His will is that no one should perish, that all should believe! And therefore His will is that as well as believing in Him, we should live and speak and love in such a way that others will believe in Him too.

**Secondly, God’s will is that we reflect God’s Character**

*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic 6:8)*

This second thing God wants for us is to reflect God’s character. To be like Him. And what is God like? Well, when he revealed himself to Moses, we read in Ex.34: *The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.* And what is his name - That which describes his character? *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,* (Exo 34:5-6).

This is God’s will for our lives. Do justice, love, kindness, be merciful and gracious and abound in steadfast love and faithfulness. I love the way this shapes our partners in SE Asia. Motivated by the character of God they have established ministries for the down trodden and overlooked creating training and employment pathways. They have established “Creation Care”, an incredible ministry that cares for the environment, as they mobilise thousands of volunteers in cleaning up rubbish, recycling when they can and improving the area where people live. Making it safer, more hygienic and a much better place to live, work and play. But in doing so they are reflecting God’s character.

What would it mean for you to reflect God’s character where he has sent you? At school – it could be seen in how you love, care for and include the loner, the left out, the bullied. At work – it might be evident in your work ethic, your attitude to your boss, or the way you love your colleagues. In our communities – it will be seen in the way we take special care of those on the margins, those who are doing it tough, those who don’t have the same privileges and opportunities we have. This is God’s will for all who want to become more like Jesus.

Listen to what God says to His people in Deuteronomy:

*For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving them food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name alone you shall make promises. He is your praise. He is your God, (Deu 10:17-21)*

**Thirdly, God’s will is that our relationship with Him will change us**

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1Th 5:16-18)*

I love these verses. What is God’s will for you? That you spend time with Him – after all that is what Prayer is. And that you gratefully celebrate at all times. Rejoicing always, giving thanks in all circumstances!

I have become convinced that gratitude, and joy are a choice. And your mood reflects what you focus on. It’s been a while since I had a golf story, so time for another. I play golf with a large number of different people. There are 2 types: grateful and grumpy. There are those who complain about every shot, who grumble if the ball lands in the rough, or moan terribly if it bounces the wrong way off a tree, or throw down their putter if they leave it short. They get stressed, don’t seem to be enjoying the game and are not much fun to play with!

Then, there are the others. Those who are just happy to be out there. If a storm comes through, rain blowing sideways, they are grateful the grass is getting a soaking. If the ball hits the flagstick and ricochets into the water, they marvel that they hit it so close, and laugh at their miss-fortune. And if they get beaten on the last, because I hole my bunker shot, they celebrate my good shot and congratulate my win. They are great to play with, obviously appreciate being out on the course and seem to be enjoying themselves – whatever happens.

The difference between the two is what they focus on. One, on the things that go wrong, the challenges they face, the difficulties. The other, the positives, the good things. They are people of gratitude, they practice giving thanks in all circumstances. It is very clear who is having a better time. And who is better to have as company. It is no wonder Paul tells us to rejoice always and give thanks in all circumstances!

However, what Paul says here is different than just encouraging us to be positive. He is reminding us it comes from a deep relationship with God. Being well connected to Jesus.

Because we become more like Jesus – when we spend time with Him. When our relationship deepens. When we pray.

So pray always!

* When driving to work
* When the kids are frustrating you
* When the boss is driving you crazy
* When sitting in the doctor’s room, worrying over what she will tell you
* When watching the news
* When waking in the middle of the night
* When you get that phone call from your daughter…

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1Th 5:16-18)*

Did you know, doing God’s will is the most important thing in your life. Not because it will get you to heaven. Not because it will change what God thinks of you. He will always love you, cherish you, delight in you. And did you know – you don’t have to worry about what it is. Terrified, that somehow you have got it wrong and so make a decision that will ruin your life!

No, God has made crystal clear what His will is. He has spelt it out clearly in his Word.

It begins with Believing in Jesus. It includes reflecting His character. And it will be evident in a life filled with gratitude and joy.

So what’s stopping you? Why not decide today to become more like Jesus, partner with God in His work in His World and take every moment to deepen your relationship with him. In this way you will be doing his Will. His good pleasing and perfect Will. And you will increasingly become more like Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. How important is it for you to “Do God’s Will”? Do you know what it is?
2. How do you feel about this statement of Jesus: *Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.” 35*
3. How would you feel if you were told God’s will is very clear in the Bible. Do you think you would be willing to do it, whatever it was? Why or why not?
4. God’s will is for us to “Believe in Jesus”. What do you think “Believing in Jesus” means? Who should “Believe in Jesus” and what is our role in this?
5. God’s will is for us to reflect His character. How does the Bible describe God? What is He like? How are these evident in your life? What could you work on so that you could say you are doing God’s will?
6. God’s will is for us to deepen our relationship with Him. What are you doing to achieve this? How is it evident in how much time and effort you put into reading the Bible, praying and spending time with Him?
7. Give yourself a score out of 10 for how grateful and joyful you are. What can you do to improve this?
8. Given you now know what God’s will is, how will your behaviour change this week because you are doing God’s Will?