

Second Sunday in Lent

February 25, 2018

Matthew Ude

**Mark 8:27-38** <sup>27</sup> Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?" <sup>28</sup> So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." <sup>29</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." <sup>30</sup> Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him. <sup>31</sup> And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. <sup>32</sup> He spoke this word openly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. <sup>33</sup> But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." <sup>34</sup> When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>35</sup> "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. <sup>36</sup> "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? <sup>37</sup> "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? <sup>38</sup> "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

### Thy Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven

What is God's will? Peter thought he knew, he was so certain that he knew that he took Christ aside and rebuked Him.

I hope you have all been taught, God answers prayers through the Word. We don't need divine revelation. We don't need visions or prophets, because we have the complete Word of God, and God has told us everything we need to know here in this book.

But, someone will object. The bible doesn't tell me, for example, what to major in college or which girl is the right one for me to marry, or should I take that job in Denver or should I stay. In other words life is filled with choices which scripture doesn't address. In such cases what are we going to do? How can we know God's will?

A typical response to such a situation by an earnest Christian will often go something like this, pray, pray, pray, pray, pray and then over analyze every single thing that happens to us looking for supposed signs from God.

Should I take the job in Colorado, oh hey look this quarter I pulled out of my pocket is the state quarter from Georgia, so that means I need to look for a job in Georgia.

But actually God has provided us with a much simpler way of dealing with questions like these, so I'm going to show you how to properly use your bibles to answer such a question? You take your bible, you close your eyes, bow your head, then move your bible upwards in a swift sharp motion. You can also chant while you do this? Dumb, dumb, dumb, dumb or stupid, stupid, stupid . . .

Ok these are serious questions, and I know they are, to us. But to God they are the least important things. In such cases we are most of the time making the same mistake as Peter, setting our thoughts on the things of men instead of the things of God. It as if we are trying to choose a wife and basing the decision on the color of her hair. Of course you are never going to make the right decision if the thing you are focused on is the right shade of a particular hair color.

But the truth is we know God's will: Put God first in all things – honor His word – respect your parents – do not harm or hate – love your spouse

When we are mindful of the things of God rather than the things of men such questions are usually not that hard. Let's take the example of a spouse again:

Mindful of the things of men: is he/she the best looking, the smartest, someone who is going to make lots of money, someone who is going to make me happy.

Mindful of the things of God: does he/she, love the Lord, put God first in his/her life, honor his/her parents, put others first in their life, put family first, etc.

If you find someone who does even half these things and can stand to be around you for an extended length of time then yes you should marry them and quickly before someone else does. When we keep the things of God in mind the rest has a tendency to fall into place.

But even more importantly as much as we think these are the big important decisions in our life, that this is where we really need to know God's will, God says no. The real important things is the everyday little decisions, choosing to start our day with prayer and God's word, choosing to help others and put them first in our life.

When it comes to the question of God's will for our life, God says, "Why are you so worried about the little things, like what job you do and whom you marry, when you still so bad at the important things, like loving your neighbor and putting God first. "

We are like kids who practice making 3-points shots all day, when they can't dribble, or pass, or even make a layup.

If Peter were mindful of the things of God, he would not have made this same mistake, but he is looking only at the question of cross or glory, suffering or riches. When you look only at the immediate context from a human perspective, it becomes why would a loving God want me to suffer?

He knew Jesus was the Christ but Peter was looking for honor glory power and riches from the Messiah.

Jesus however knows the will of God, put an end to the devil and his works, stop evil, and rescue men from their own sin. And knowing the end result that needs to be accomplished the path is very clear.

This is the will of God that Jesus would save us from our sins through suffering and death.

And to follow Christ often means following Him through suffering.

What does this mean? **“deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me?”**

Does it mean that we go out and look for suffering? No. It means that when we have a choice, we look down the path. We don't ask which path is sunny and rosy and fun, we ask which path is showing love to my spouse, which path is putting my family first etc. And we choose that one, even though we have to wade through a bog.

This doesn't mean we all have to be pastors or teachers. It means that whether we are a farmer, or a firemen, or a builder, we every day value the things of God more than the things of men

However here is the good news:

Even in our suffering, especially in our suffering, “God remembers us.” That is the point of OT and epistle reading.

We are saved through suffering, the suffering of the death of Christ. Therefore we don't suffer as those who might make it through to something better. Like those who undergo great difficulty to make it to Europe or America hoping they will find a better life.

**But when we suffer, we know that God is with us, we know that Christ has already suffer and died for us, we know the end is heaven and eternity with God. Amen**