

THE WILL OF GOD REGARDING HIS CHILDREN

(Rom. 12:1-2)

Introduction:

1. After discussing the necessity of remaining faithful in order to remain saved as God's, Paul encourages the Christians in Rome to remember all of God's blessings and continue to give their lives to God as a living sacrifice (cp. 2 Cor. 5:14). Paul charges them not to fall back into the ways of the world, but to live according to the word of God. In that way, they will be able to "see for themselves", "show others" the perfectly good will of God.
2. Many times in studying or teaching the Bible it can appear that the lot of the Christian is one of want and persecution, but is that really God's will for His people? Does God want us to suffer so that He can then relieve us?
3. No, that is not God's will for His children and we need to understand that. Let us consider the truth of how God's will for His children is that they be saved, live faithfully, and prosper in all things.

Discussion:

I. God wills that His children be saved, not lost.

- A. God wants to be with His children but sin separated them from Him (Gen. 3:23; Is. 59:1, 2).
 1. God has provided the means of reconciliation after sin caused the separation (2 Cor. 5:14-21; Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Gal. 4:4; 1 John 2:1, 2).
 2. God's will is that all avail themselves of His grace and return to Him (1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Pet. 3:9).
- B. God wants His people to die to self and sin, not to Him (Rom. 6:3-11)!
- C. God wants your name in the Book of Life, not blotted out (Ex. 32:31-33; Rev. 20:15).

II. God wills that His children live faithfully, not be persecuted and killed.

- A. If this is true then how do we explain versus like Acts 14:22, 1 Thess. 3:3, and 1 Pet. 2:20, 21?
 1. Acts 14:22 is a statement of fact/reality not a declaration of God's will. Paul spoke this after being stoned for his faithful service.
 2. 1 Thess. 3:3 is a statement of fact/reality not a declaration of God's will. Paul wrote this concerning apostles after being chased by persecution out of Thessalonica.
 3. 1 Pet. 2:20, 21 is a statement of fact/reality not a declaration of God's will. Just as Jesus was persecuted so too those who strive to be like Him will suffer persecution.
- B. Why? Jesus told us Himself (John 15:18-21).
- C. What God wants is for His children to be saved, and this is predicated upon His children living faithfully; even if it means their physical suffering and death (Rev. 2:10; 3:21).

III. God wills that His children prosper in all things, not suffer in want.

- A. God does not want His children to live in dour poverty, nor unable to enjoy the fullness of this physical reality. But God does not want anything to get in the way of His children being saved.
- B. Many of God's most faithful followers were very wealthy; Abraham and his family most notably.
- C. So, how are we to understand passages such as Matt. 19:16-24 and 1 Tim. 6:9-11?
 1. In Matt. 19:16-24, Jesus said that it is difficult for a rich man to enter heaven; again a statement of fact not a declaration of God's will. Note that Jesus said it was difficult, not impossible (despite his illustration concerning how hard it can be). Notice that Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb fulfilling prophecy (Luke 23:50-53; Is. 53:9). Remember Job, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, etc. The ultimate answer to this seeming contradiction is in Luke 12:13-21. And do not forget Mal. 3:10!
 2. In 1 Tim. 6:9-11, the problems with wealth are laid out. They have increased temptations, can begin to love money over God, and become haughty (v17; cp. 1 Cor. 1:26-29).

Conclusion:

1. God blesses His children richly. Jesus came that we might have life and life abundantly (John 10:10; Ps. 23). He has not called us to be paupers or beggars, quite the contrary (Ps. 37:25; Prov. 11:25 = 2 Cor. 9:8).
2. God does not want His children to suffer, face persecution, or be killed. God wants to be reconciled with His children and that is via faith, and our living our faith attracts the oppression of darkness.
3. Fulfill God's will, be saved, and do not allow anything to prevent it. Invitation.

MORE ON "THE WILL OF GOD REGARDING HIS CHILDREN"

1. Let us review the different wills of God.
 - A. God's Intentional Will, that is, what God wants to occur (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:1).
 - B. God's Conditional Will, that is, the way that things can occur to fulfill God's intentional will (Rom. 8:29-30; Mark 16:16; Eph. 1).
 - C. God's Ultimate Will, that is, the things that God has decreed that cannot be changed (Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Pet. 3:10-18; Rev. 20:11-15).
2. Putting it all together we see that God's intentional will was that man never sin and that the fellowship enjoyed in the Garden of Eden continue forever. But, knowing that man would sin, God made provision (His conditional will) and put in place a way that man could be saved from his sin and reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:14ff). The way that God has established is the only way (John 14:6), and there is no other (His ultimate will).
3. Because man violated God's intentional will sin entered the world and death via sin. God created all that is good and man created all that is evil by way of sin.
4. God, by His loving grace, allowed a way for man to be free from sin and reconciled to Himself. Unfortunately, in a sin-filled world of darkness, this "way" brings those who pursue it in sharp contrast/conflict with those pursuing sin. This is the cause of most of the persecution that Christians face. It is not of God, but of the darkness.
5. Because God has provided one and only one way unto reconciliation (thankfully) the contrast is stark and the proper path clear. The difficulties along the way cannot stop our pursuit; the worst that can be done is to force us into our joy (paradise). That is why the difficulties along the way are not to surprise us, nor fill us with fear, but rather we are to consider them all joy.
6. Understanding God and His will can aid us in our pursuit. Knowing that God's desire is to be with us forever, and that He hates every encumbrance to our reconciliation helps us to see our loving Father as He truly is. That makes the goal even sweeter and the journey worth it all.