

**Sermon: The will of God for your life**  
**Colossians 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37**  
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Life is tough, and making choices in life is often very hard. How do we choose to go left or right? What is the right path of our life? Every moment we have lots of choices to make. How do we act in every new situation that we encounter? Do we just follow our feelings? Or do we have a moral compass.

What does God want of us, in all of our circumstances? I think you all know many areas of your life where you wonder what God wants of you. Many Christians are very focused on this question: what is the will of God for me. Good question of course.

I think in general, our much bigger problem is that we usually know perfectly well what God wants of us, we know his will, and we also know that we do not live up to that.

St Paul wrote a letter to the church in Colossae, which is in what we now call Turkey. He wrote some very wise words about the will of God for their lives. Actually, he described what he was praying for those believers. We will look in some detail at what Paul wrote in Colossians 1:9-14 about the will of God.

**Knowing the will of God – Col 1:9-10**

The main thing that Paul prays for, when he thinks of that church in Colossae, is “that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will.” (1:9)

Those of us, who talk or think much about knowing the will of God, are fully right. If for St Paul this was the crucial matter for the believers, it should be crucial for us.

Paul prays that they will be filled with that knowledge. Knowing the will of God should not be an afterthought, something we consider sometimes; it is something that should occupy our hearts and our minds. “Be full of the knowledge of what God wants.”

And this is not important for the sake of knowledge only – it is important because with this knowledge – and we now go to 1:10, we are able to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, bearing fruit in every good work...”

Do you notice that for Paul, the knowledge of the will of God, is related to how we live. Not what job we take, not what partner we marry, not

what flat we buy... It is not related to what dress we put on in the morning. It is related to ethics. To our lifestyle. It has to do with good works.

And note, true knowledge of God and his will, is for the sake of living. I know many Christians who drown themselves in studying the Bible and they have no time left for actual life. God revealed himself and his will for our daily, normal, boring, everyday life. The Bible is not our goal. Living with God in our everyday lives, that is what our faith is about...

May I suggest that the story of the Good Samaritan, from Luke 10, tells us perfectly well what the will of God is for your life? Someone asks Jesus, “what shall I do to inherit eternal life.” Jesus asks him how he understands the law of God – that is, the will of God.

The answer is sublime in its simplicity. “Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus said: indeed, do this, and you will live...

That is the will of God. To love God with all of our being. That means the area of our will, our mind, our feelings, must be fully for God. And secondly, we should love all people with the same motivation and dedication. Fully.

Your heart... how much goes on there that has nothing to do with love for God? That opposes his will as you know it? Your mind, is that full of love for God, or do you allow mind games with sin, opposing God’s will? He wants all aspects of your life to be aligned with his will. So for us the question is, do we want the will of God. Do we actually embrace his will?

If we do this, Paul says, we will “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work.” (1:10)

You know what will also happen if we love God and our neighbors? In the last words of 1:10, Paul writes that we will also “increase in the knowledge of God.”

That is so interesting. Knowing the will of God, and doing it, makes us know God better. This seems like an upward spiral. We know him and his will, we do it, we know him better.

We love God, we love our neighbor, in practical deeds, and through this, we grow to know God more – and obviously, knowing him and his will more, makes us love him and our neighbors more.

I want to be part of this ongoing upward spiral!

### **Power for the will of God – Col 1:11**

Yes Paul, nice idea... surely we know that we have to love God, and all people. But listen man, this is too hard! Look at us, here, we are normal people!

We as Christians know quite well what God wants of us... but to actually do it, that is the real problem.

Because to put God first and to love all people is a tough matter. If it would be easy, Paul would not have to pray for those people in Colossae. If it would be easy, these commands of God would not have to be repeated in the Bible all the time.

We gravitate to doing our own thing, to seek our own wellbeing above all, to not care too much about our neighbor, especially not if they are not very nice people. We gravitate normally in a downward spiral. Our sinful nature draws us downward.

We often follow our feelings of the moment, or our continuous feelings, and we do not allow God to correct us, and we are not able to change ourselves. Instead of spiraling up, closer to God, we seem to move around in garbage and confusion – because our heart and mind can be such a mess.

Well, this is why Paul continues his prayer... “May you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might for all endurance and patience and joy.” (1:11)

Yes, it is so hard for us to live for God and for other people. It is not easy to do what you know you must do. Your feelings, your mind may fight it with much power... and we all know how easily we can justify for ourselves almost all behavior, even when we know deep down that it is really not good.

So Paul prays for his friends that God will give them power. This is, the presence of His Spirit in our life.

God offers power to endure. Even when temptations are hard – he can give you power if you pray. And also, if others pray for you. We need each other’s prayers. Doing the will of God is not something you do on your own. It is a group effort.

So if you fight a problem – some issues you really need to solve – do not do it alone. Together is better. Together we can pray for each other; together we can encourage each other.

Paul knows it is hard, so he prays that the believers will have endurance and patience. God calls us to endure in the race to serve him, and to be patient with the people we deal with. Even patience with ourselves is needed, as we may be so discouraged if the process of growth in obedience and knowing God is so slow. And if we end up in a downward spiral once again.

Do not be so easily upset with others; do not be so quickly upset with yourself either. No-one is perfect; we all need the endurance to love other people, even if they are not really nice to us, or when they behave badly.

If others behave without love to us, if we feel betrayed – we continue to ask God for patience, because we are called to love all people. And if we see how we have again not responded in love, be patient with yourself as well. God loves you as you are and he wants to draw you upward again.

### **Enjoying the will of God – Col 1:12-14**

Paul prays that this endurance and patience will be “with joy, giving thanks to the Father.” Life with our Lord is joyful, even when the price is high. But again, this does not come automatically. Paul prays for it, and that is what we have to do for ourselves and for each other.

Joy that is not rooted in the struggle to endure and to be patient with other people and yourself, is shallow. Joy that grows in the soil of the tough things of life, becomes strong – a strong joy because we know the reward for our perseverance.

Even the struggle against sin can be a struggle with joy – as we realize that we please God, our Father.

Our own fathers and mothers on earth, usually we like to please those. It is awful to do things that you know your parents really do not want. To do what they want is so pleasant and it is so good for the relationship.

Our heavenly Father knows all we do – we cannot hide anything. What a joy to please our God with our behavior that is in line with his will. How amazing to do what gives pleasure to our heavenly father. And this is more precious if it grows in pain, than when it goes easy.

So we have to examine our lives. Do away what is not good. Just stop with it. Stop with it. Experience the joy of doing the will of God, even

when the going is hard. Do ask others for prayer, Share your burdens with others. And pray, pray that God gives you the strength to persevere, pray for the patience to love others and yourself, pray for the joy of pleasing the Father.

We have every reason to be joyful. Look at what God has prepared for us. 1:12 says, "He has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light."

Our Father waits for us at the other side of this life – he waits for us with the great inheritance of eternal life in communion with him.

He has taken us out of the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his beloved son... In Christ we are redeemed. Our sins are forgiven. All that is rock solid. It is already done. He transferred us into his kingdom

And at the same time, the great transference is still to take place.

### **Conclusion**

We live today between what has been accomplished and what is to happen – and in this in-between-time, our vocation is to be filled with the knowledge of God's will – that is, with love for God and love for all people. May that be what motivates us, may that be what we really want in life.

We need to know this, we need the desire to do it, and we then need to actually do it.

He gives us power to win the battle against our natural feelings, our tendencies. Do not come with that lame excuse that it is too hard... God is not too weak to do what he promised you...

He will give you power, and joy to do his will.

Yes, we often fail, but God is a forgiving God. He draws us up out of our downward spiral again and again.

In order to move upward, toward God, we need each other. I invite you to pray for me; I need to better implement what I know I have to do. And I promise to pray for you. So that together we grow in our knowledge of God, in our life of love for Him and for one another.

**Amen**