

“Understand What the Will of the Lord Is”

- I. Introduction –
 - a. How God Reveals His Will
 - i. Not by body language
 - 1. Charades – He’s trying to tell us something
 - 2. Pantomime the legal code?
 - 3. Fall back to verbal techniques
 - 4. Body language very expressive
 - 5. But God does not express His will for us in this way, thankfully!
 - ii. Not by direct leading of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. The inner urging of the Holy Spirit pushes a person in the way God wants them to go
 - 2. The belief that the direct leading of the Holy Spirit is necessary for the knowledge or motivation to do God’s will expresses a disbelief in the claim of the written word to provide those things to us (2 Tim 3:16-17)
 - iii. Not by “chastening” – (carrot and stick, mouse training)
 - 1. God does chasten His children
 - 2. We do not learn how to live right simply by trial and error
 - 3. The good and bad things that happen to us cannot give us knowledge of God’s mind
 - 4. He has chosen another way to give us knowledge and commandments
 - iv. Through human language
 - 1. First spoken, then written
 - 2. 1 Cor. 2:11-13
 - 3. Did God succeed or fail in communicating His will to us by human language?
 - b. We interpret the Bible to apply God’s will at it is revealed in His words to ourselves
 - i. Details of human language that influence that interpretation:
 - 1. Meaning of words
 - 2. Grammar
 - 3. Context
 - 4. Parallels
 - 5. Symbols and Figures
 - 6. Social and Historical circumstances
 - 7. Style of writing or speech
 - 8. others
 - ii. Example of Grammar influencing interpretation – Mt 22:23-33 – The argument of Jesus centers on the present tense of a verb in Ex. 3:6

- iii. Name for this process of interpreting verbal instructions and applying them – Hermeneutics
 - iv. We use the principles of interpretation all the time without thinking about it, in order to understand everything that goes on around us
 - v. With something as important as understanding what the will of God is, it is worthwhile to examine the details of how this interpretation is done
 - c. Pleasing God
 - i. God has authority to direct our lives as He chooses
 - ii. He has chosen to direct our lives through human language – The written word – The Bible
 - iii. Our job is to understand the meaning of God’s word and apply it to our lives
 - iv. If we succeed in this task, we are obedient to the authority of God
 - v. If we misunderstand His Word, or misapply it, or understand it and fail to apply it, we are disobedient to God’s authority
- II. We are responsible for obeying all of God’s will for us
 - a. The authority of God stands behind every command (James 2:10-11)
 - b. The consequences may vary for different violations
 - c. The same God made all commands, therefore, every violation is disobedience to God’s authority
- III. Truth and Error is Defined by the Revealed Word
 - a. All Spiritual Truth is Contained in the Revealed Word
 - i. Jn. 8:31-32; Jn 17:17
 - ii. Many references to word and truth
 - iii. (1 Th. 2:13)
 - iv. 2 Pet. 1:3
 - b. Deviation From the Revealed Word is Error
 - i. Error means a forsaking of the right path
 - ii. Jms 5:19-20
 - iii. Truth covers many areas of life
 - iv. Mt. 22:29
 - c. Distinguishing Truth from Error is Critical
 - i. Handle the word correctly (2 Tim 2:15)
 - ii. Obey the truth (Rom. 2:8; Gal. 5:7)
 - iii. We will be judged by the truth (Rom. 2:2; 2 Thess. 2:12; Heb. 10:26; Jms. 5:19-20)
 - iv. Discipleship depends on it (Jn. 8:31)
 - v. Love for Jesus is expressed by it (Jn. 14:21-24)
 - vi. Distinguishing Truth from Error = Understanding the Revealed Word
 - vii. **If understanding the word is so critical to obeying God’s will, and God is going to hold us accountable for obeying His will, then we must be able to understand the word. (ACCOUNT + ABLE)**
- IV. We Can (and Must) Understand God’s Word

- a. Understanding Can Be Hindered
 - i. By Wrong Attitude (Jn 7:17)
 - 1. Bad Attitude
 - a. Men's doctrine (Mk. 7:5-13)
 - b. Deaf ears, closed mind (Mt 13:13-16)
 - c. Prejudged (Prov. 18:13)
 - 2. Good attitude
 - a. Meekness (Jms 2:21)
 - b. Good and honest heart (Lk. 8:15)
 - c. Love of the truth (2 Thess. 2:10-12)
 - ii. By Lack of Learning
 - 1. Understanding starts small and grows (Heb. 5:11-14; 1 Pet. 2:1-2)
- b. Jesus did not instantly give his apostles understanding (Lk 24:45-46; Acts 1:6-9)
- c. The Holy Spirit does not instantly give us understanding
 - i. The apostles
 - 1. As disciples during Jesus earthly ministry, the apostles of Jesus learned and understood (or misunderstood) just as we do
 - 2. As apostles, they were guided to perfectly reveal all truth (Jn. 14:26; 16:13)
 - ii. As disciples, we learn and understand just as the apostles did when they were functioning simply as disciples (Eph. 3:4-5)
- d. The listener is responsible for hearing and understanding
 - i. Eph. 5:17
 - ii. Mt. 13:14-15
- e. Scriptures are the source of understanding
 - i. 2 Tim. 3:14-17
- f. Misunderstanding – Paul's writings (2 Pet. 3:15-17)
 - i. All the things Paul wrote, and all the other Scriptures, are the writings inspired by God
 - ii. Some things are hard to understand –
 - 1. Not all things are hard, just some
 - 2. Not impossible, just hard
 - iii. All scriptures can be twisted
 - 1. not just the hard things
 - 2. Lack of knowledge and wrong attitudes are the source of the twisting
 - iv. We are warned to avoid error by a sound understanding of scripture
 - 1. No other prevention or remedy is offered or even contemplated
 - a. Not Holy Spirit leading
 - b. Not chastening from God to determine the correct path

- c. Certainly not body language!
 - 2. Just correct understanding of God's will as revealed in Scripture
 - g. IF TIME PERMITS Misunderstanding – Resurrection
 - i. Sadducees misunderstood (Mt. 22:23-33) denied resurrection
 - ii. So did some at Corinth (1 Cor. 15:12)
 - iii. Paul spoke of it (2 Tim. 2:17-18)
 - iv. Error is deviation from revealed truth
 - v. One error is sufficient to violate God's word (Jms 2:10-11) Murder not required
 - vi. We are not free to believe whatever we want
 - 1. The future resurrection is not a command we obey
 - 2. Our belief or disbelief in it does not involve any action on our part
 - 3. But even the belief of our heart is regulated by God's word where the truth has been revealed to us
 - 4. God expects us, not only to understand and obey His commands, but also to understand and believe all the teachings of Scripture.
 - vii. We not only cannot do as we please, we cannot even believe as we please
- V. Conclusion
 - a. Main Point
 - i. Since we must comply with God's will to please him**
 - ii. And since his will is revealed in the Bible**
 - iii. And since we must correctly understand and apply the Bible to comply with it**
 - iv. Then we would do well to examine how to interpret and apply the Bible to our lives.**
 - b. In the remainder of our series of lessons on Bible authority, we will examine the principles of understanding that enable us to apply God's will
 - 1. Commands
 - 2. Specific and Generic Authority
 - 3. Necessary Inferences
 - 4. Examples
 - 5. The interaction between these principles
 - 6. How the circumstances we are in may affect which parts of Scripture apply to our condition
 - c. Invitation
 - i. The greatest stumbling block to understanding God's word is unforgiven sin
 - ii. The time to delve into further details of applying God's truth to your life is when you are already compliant with the truth you know
 - iii. If you are not a Christian, or if you are a Christian and burdened with sin of which you have not repented or asked God for

forgiveness, your greatest need is not don't need additional revelation from God, or more spiritual knowledge

- iv. You need to get rid of the sin you have
- v. If you are a Christian, forgiveness comes by repenting of sin, and praying that the thought of your heart may be forgiven you
- vi. If you are not a Christian, you need to become one
 - 1. Come to Jesus, believing
 - 2. Repenting
 - 3. Confessing
 - 4. Being baptized