

**Journey With Hope Series**

**Knowing And Doing The Will Of God Part III**

**1 Peter 4:1-19**

Wednesday, May 21, 2003 • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message *Knowing And Doing The Will Of God III* ] < 330 >

Thank you! Amen. How thankful we are for beautiful music but even more for the Savior we sing about and for the wonderful love of Jesus Christ and the privilege of gathering in His name tonight and a..., putting all of our focus and our attention on Him. All of the Christian life is looking unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith and a..., tonight we just have come together to a..., put our attention on the wonder of Christ and it is my prayer tonight that as we open His Word, as we look at it together that really what will happen in you and in your heart is that the weight of the things that you're bearing and carrying and dealing with in life will be shifted to Jesus and that you will leave here tonight, not worried and burdened, but that you will leave here tonight worshipping Him, knowing that He is such a wonderful Savior. If you have a Bible tonight take it and open it to the book of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 4. We a..., have had a wonderful time together in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 4, a..., starting 2 weeks ago I started a message called *Knowing And Doing The Will Of God*, and a... it simply has been a subject of such interest and importance that we've tried to slow the pace just a little bit and instead of just rushing through all of these verses, we've been trying to look at them, to examine them and to really embrace together what it means to know and to do the will of God in life. So we've slowed the pace, but tonight we're gonna pick it up and we're gonna take it one a..., as we move through here and bring all of this a..., discussion that we've had the last 3 weeks to a conclusion.

But as I was thinking about the slow pace that we've been going I was remembering a story I heard a number of years ago a..., about a police officer who was sitting on the side of the road and he was there, of course, a..., doing what fine police officers do and that was making sure that everybody was driving within the speed limit and there was a car that a..., was coming down the road and when he looked up and, and saw the car he immediately recognized that the car was not speeding, it was just poking along and so the police officer thought to himself for just a moment and said, you know, this is as dangerous on this highway as it is to have to have someone who's speeding. I need to stop this car and encourage them to pick it up a little bit. So he put on his lights and he pulled the car over and as he got out of his patrol car to approach the car he noticed that there were 5 little ladies in that car. All of them were well up in

years and frankly every one of them just had a blank stare on their face. He looked up at the car and he stuck his head in the window and he spoke to the little lady who was driving and as he did she said, "Officer what's the matter, what's the matter? I know that I was not speeding." He said, "No, no, you weren't speeding." He said, "The fact of the matter is you were going under the speed limit." And he said a..., "I wanted you to encourage you to pick it up just a little bit." He said, "Because I've afraid it's a little dangerous to be driving that slow out on this highway." She said, "Well, officer, I am going the speed limit, 22 miles an hour." Well he smiled and he said, "Mamma" he said, "No" he said, "Your on route 22. This is route 22. The speed limit is 50 miles an hour." And she said, "Oh, oh, I'm sorry." But he noticed that all the other passengers just never moved, never smiled, just blank stares and he said, "Let me just ask you a question before I let you go?" He said, "Are all of you all alright?" And he looked in the car. And the driver said, "Oh officer their find." She said, "We just got off of route 119." Ha, ha [pause for congregation laughter] Well, we've been going on about route 22 pace, it's time for us to pick up and get to 119 tonight and so that's exactly what we're gonna do and I wanna ask you to focus your attention with me as we begin reading 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 4, verse 1, one more time.

*<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup>that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but...*

Say it with me.

*...for the will of God.*

Peter frames this passage of Scripture by stating that we are to live our lives for the will of God. And so from that introduction beginning in verses 1 and 2 and actually continuing all the way through the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter, we've been examining together what it means to know and to do the will of God. Someone has said that;

*"To know God's will is man's greatest treasure and to do God's will is lives greatest privilege."*

And so we've been embracing together, knowing and doing the will of God and we've said that the will of God implies several things from this passage. In verses 1 thru 6 we've said that living in the will of God means that I recognize the realm of God's will as life in a new dimension. It's not living according to the same energy, the same power, the same strength that I lived before. I have to have a new power source to live this life called the will of God and I do that through the work and the power of the Holy Spirit and verses 1 thru 6 talk to us about living according to God in the spirit, spiritual power for a spiritual life. Then we said, beginning last week in verse 7, that not only are we to recognize the re...will of God as life in a new dimension, but that we are to

personalize God's will in the activities of our daily life, that's God's will's not so much something I've gotta go find out there, though the will of God may have some points on the horizon for me, it's an arena that I live in every day. The will of God finds me as I walk with God, day by day. And we talked about the specific steps of walking in the will of God and we simply said, based on verses 7 thru verses 11, that the will of God in my life is exposed in the priority of my prayer. Prayer expresses dependency and so when I'm living and praying, day by day, I'm demonstrating my trust in the Lord and then it is evidenced in the intensity of my love. The Bible tells us we are to fervently love one another and then we said that walking in the will of God is expressed through the ministry of my gifts. And God has gifted me and equipped me and designed me to be a part of the ministry of His body and that's exactly what He's told me to do. So...

Number 1, the will of God is expressed, or, or rather is, is **LIVED OUT IN THE NEW REALM IN LIFE.**

Number 2, it's **PERSONALIZED IN THE ACTIVITIES OF MY DAILY LIFE.**

But tonight we come to the third thing that I want you to look at with me and that is to begin our reading in verse 12 and following. The Bible says:

*<sup>12</sup>But beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; <sup>13</sup>but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. <sup>14</sup>If you are reproached for His name, that is the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. <sup>15</sup>But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matter. <sup>16</sup>Yet if anyone suffers as a...*

What?

*...Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. <sup>17</sup>For the time has come for judgment to begin with the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" <sup>19</sup>Therefore let those who suffer according to...*

What?

*...the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*

There's a third major concept about the will of God that we need to understand tonight and I wanna be sure that you write this down. I wanna be sure that somewhere it gets inside of you, because this is what it is.

***“Knowing and doing the will of God is realizing that the presence of suffering is not the evidence of missing God’s will.”***

Realize that the presence of suffering in your life and in my life is not evidence of missing God’s will. We somehow have this idea in our minds and our lives, especially in our American culture, that to live in the will of God is to ultimately be successful, it’s to ultimately be, a..., as though it were, head and shoulders above everyone else. There’s a sense in our spiritual psyche in America that says, that to know and to do the will of God is to always be affirmed, applauded and ultimately to be, as though it were, accolade by other people. But the reality is, the Bible says, the will of God may in fact mean that you face some hard things in life. This isn’t a popular teaching, but it’s true and it’s honest and it’s important. I love the words of Warren Weirsby, who said:

*“Bad things not only happen to good people, but they happen to a select group of good people, God’s people.”*

That’s powerful isn’t it?

*“Bad things not only happen to good people, they happen to a select group of good people, God’s people.”*

And while for many the idea of knowing and doing the will of God is living with favorable winds in your life where everything is zip-pe-de-do-da, everything is goin my way. That is not the will of God. The will of God often means that we will go through trial and struggle and suffering. And when we think about the will of God it is so important that we qualify it according to the Scripture. I believe that if Matthew 14:22 thru 33, the events of Jesus sending the disciples across the Sea of Galilee and then walking to meet them on the water teaches us anything, it teaches us that it is possible for the will of God to take you through the storm and not simply to deliver you from the storm. And while many of us wanna se the will of God as always a means of deliverance, it’s often the means of sustaining and surviving and strengthening us. Now Peter identifies **2 WAYS IN WHICH WE SUFFER**. He says here in verse 12:

*...do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you...*

Does that ring a bell at all for those of you who’ve been here through this study? Because if you’ll think about it just a minute, that’s really where we started back over in chapter 1, if you go back to chapter 1, beginning in verse 6 you read this:

*‘In this you greatly rejoice, that though now for a little while , if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ’that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to the praise, honor, and glory of Jesus Christ.*

Peter simply says, one of the ways that we suffer in life is by going **THROUGH THE TRIALS OF LIFE**, and the trials of life, financial struggles, marital, family, relational struggles, work pressures and problems, physical afflictions; all of the things that come in that category of things that we don't like to deal with but that are so real and so evident around us. Those are a part of the test of faith and because we live in a imperfect world and because we live in a fallen world, every person in this room is going to face pain and frustration and pressure and the evidence of evil; we're going to see disease and sin and death and we're gonna walk through the mysteries of suffering and all of those are a part of the trials of life that test us. And the Bible says, be sure that you don't start trying to figure out whether or not God is with you when you get in the trials, because the will of God, the will of God is not absent just because of the presence of suffering in your life. You haven't necessarily missed the will of God, you can be in the midst of hardship and be right in the middle of the will of God and that's exactly what Peter is trying to help us to embrace tonight. And so if you're havin a hard time tonight and you're hearing a message on knowing and doing the will of God, the first thought is, I must be out of the will of God. No! You might be right in the middle of the will of God in your life. So the question becomes God what do You want to do through this hardship in my life? What do You want to do through this pressure in my life? What do You want to do through this struggle in my life? Lord Jesus, burn away everything that is unlike you and Lord let my life be shaped to Your image. Realize that the presence of suffering is not the evidence of missing God's will.

But not only does he say that we suffer through the trials of life, he says that we suffer **WITH THE TESTIMONY THAT WE HAVE FOR CHRIST**. My testimony for Christ can become a basis of my suffering. If this world crucified Jesus, why do you think they're going to applaud you? If at any point you ever mention the name of Jesus and someone turns on you, someone puts you down, someone scoffs at you, someone mocks you; why would you be surprised, the world crucified Jesus? Jesus made it very clear in *The Sermon On The Mount*, in Matthew chapter 5 as our pastor's been preaching through that portion of Scripture:

*<sup>11</sup>"Blessed are you when men persecute you and revile you and say all manner of evil against you falsely."*

You see it's going to happen. In John 17, in His prayer for the saints Jesus prayer that we would not be taken out of the world but that we would be protected in the world, but that the world would hate us because we love Jesus. So ladies and gentlemen, the Bible tells us that the testimony of Christ becomes the very issue by which we are tried and pressed in life. Here he says in, in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter chapter 4 in verse 16:

*...if anyone suffers as a...*

What?

*...a **Christian**...*

You know that word only appears 3 times in the Bible, did you know that? We use it all the time. I'm a Christian. You're a Christian. We're a Christian Church. We have Christian Ministry, Christian Fellowship. But the word was not a real prominent word in the, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century. It's found here in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4, it's found back in the book of Acts chapter 11 and verse 26; there it talks about the believers;

*...were first called **Christians** at Antioch.*

And then it's found in the end of the book of Acts, Acts chapter 26 and verse 28 when Paul stood before Agrippa and;

*Agrippa said, "Paul, almost you persuade me to become a **Christian**."*

But the word Christian means that my life is identified with His name and His nature and a part of the conflict of walking in the will of God is to be despised, is to be rejected, is to be scoffed and at times to be put down because of the name of Jesus. But may it be true of every one of us as it was of the apostles who in the book of Acts, chapter 5 and verse 41 said that when they had taken them and had spoken against them and had beaten them, that they walked out of the prison and they glorified God that they were worthy to bear the shame of His name. Bear the name of Jesus. Bear it in shame if it be in this world. Bear it to proclaim the truth of who He is. Bear the name of Jesus.

This summer, our student choir is going to New York. As a theme of that choir tour, on every t-shirt is gonna be, Bear The Name! Bear The Name! Bear The Name! Because as a Christian I live to bear the name of Jesus and that's what it means to be a Christian. So what have we said tonight we have said that we realize that the presence of suffering is not the evidence of missing God's will, instead I am in the middle of God's will. I may suffer by the trials of life and I may suffer because of my testimony for Christ, but I go through life in the will of God, under pressure, with pain but the promise of His presence with me. And that's where I want us to really just focus our attention, is verse 19:

*Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God...*

Go through a test? Someone putting you down because of your testimony?

...let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

The 4<sup>th</sup> dimension of living in the will of God...will of God, is **ENERGIZE YOUR HOPE BY LIVING IN THE WILL OF GOD DAY BY DAY**. That means trusting God with your life everyday. The biggest question that you have to answer, sitting in this building tonight, for yourself and no one else can answer it...

< **turn tape** > ...can God be trusted? Can I trust Him? Can I trust Him with everything in my life? And yet that's exactly what Peter is saying

the will of God is for every one of us, is that we entrust our souls to a faithful Creator, God is faithful. Life can be the pits. Life is unstable. Life is ever changing. I am weak. I am needy, but God is faithful. And it is in the faithful hand of the Creator that I put my life day after day. Do you remember what it was that God revealed to Job when Job went through His hardship? He showed up and had a conversation with Job and Job wanted to ask Him all these questions, but God said, where were you when I framed the world and where were you when I created? And when they got to the created issue he just finally said, You're in charge! And that's where every one of us live our lives. We energize hope. All of Peter's been about hope. But we energize the hope of life by living in the will of God day by day, trusting my life in His hands.

F. B. Meir said:

*"Safe and strong, tender and true, are the hands of our faithful God. Drop down into them, they will catch you and sustain your burdens and yourselves. They can hold the oceans in their hollows, but they are scared with Calvary's nails. Weary, tired, sufferings, once lie still. None shall pluck you out of the Father's hands. Without anxiety or alarm you may look out from them on the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds. Those hands shall ultimately bear you, as they did your Lord, through all the heavens and sit you down at the right hand in His glory.*

Put it all in His hands. That's why Peter goes on to say in verse 7 of chapter 5:

*Cast all of your care upon Him because He cares for you.*

It's the will of God ladies and gentlemen that when we come together a part of worship is casting our care upon Him and that's what's made this service a precious time for us. It is that week in and week out we seek to cast our cares on the Lord together. And while there're many things we don't understand and can't explain about life, we are able to put our life in His hands to a faithful Creator and to trust Him and to prove Him and to demonstrate His faithfulness in life. And so tonight I want us to take time to do that. I want us just to take time to put our hands...to put our lives in the hands of the faithful Creator. And I want this just to be a time of trust. And we're simply going to just enter into a season of prayer and I'm going to invite you, as many of you as would want to come, to just come and use this altar as a place to kneel and to cast cares on the Lord. Now, may I be honest to tell you there're a lot of cares already on this altar tonight, people who have had burdens and needs, the yellow cards, those who are hospitalized, who have job needs, family needs, they're all identified here. The blue cards represent a..., those who are serving in the armed forces and names that been given to us with prayer...with our...with desire that we would pray for them and, and uphold them and their families as they go through these days of the battle in Iraq and, and family distance and all those issues and so we wanna bear those burdens together, that's a part of our ministry as the church. But tonight I want you to be able to bear your burdens to the Lord.