

TRUTH B-P CHURCH
Adult Sunday School

THE SEVENFOLD WILL OF GOD

LESSON FIVE: THE DESIDERATIVE WILL

I. INTRODUCTION

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

From the word “desiderative” connects us immediately to the word “desire.” It refers to God’s desire. The classic verse for God’s desiderative will is 2 Peter 3:9. This verse is one of the most comforting and yet one of the most sobering verses in all of Scripture. It reveals to us God’s heart that relates to man’s responsibility.

This verse has often been quoted to explain why Christ has not yet returned. The answer Apostle Peter gave is profound. The delay is not because God is negligent, nor because He is powerless or had forgotten His Word. No, the delay is because God is longsuffering. From what He did not desire reveals what He actually desires. He desires repentance, not destruction. He desires life, not death. He desires that none should perish, but all to come to repentance. This is the whole point of the desiderative will of God.

II. UNDERSTANDING GOD’S DESIDERATIVE WILL

A. Resisted By Sinful Man

We know that the will of God will always come to pass. However, there is this aspect of God’s will which can be resisted. And that is God’s desiderative will. There are things that God, in His goodness, delights in and longs for, which nevertheless are resisted by sinful men.

For example, God desired that Israel obey His commandments. He said, **“Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them”** (Deuteronomy 5:29). That tells us of God’s desire — and yet Israel often disobeyed Him throughout many generations in biblical history.

B. Evidenced by God’s Longsuffering

The context of 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that Apostle Peter is writing to believers who are troubled by this group of people called by him to be the scoffers. **“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?”** (2 Peter 3:3). The early Christians longed for the Lord to return soon. However, decades had passed, and Christ had not returned. This group of scoffers arose and began to mock the Christians: “Your gospel is false. Your Lord’s promise is empty. When is this so-called return of the Lord?”

Apostle Peter answers these scoffers in two ways: First, he reminds the believers that God’s time is not our time. He replied in verse 8, **“One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”** God is not bound to human calendars and timetables. He works out everything beautifully in His time, not our time.

Second, Apostle Peter explains that the “delay” is purposeful. It is because God is longsuffering. He waits, not because He is slack, but because He is merciful. This is not only a verse about God’s desiderative will but also about His timing, longsuffering, and heart. Note that the word “slack” means to delay, slow, hesitate. It carries the idea of negligence, as if someone promised something but has chosen to drag his feet, and therefore failed to deliver, or even lost interest. But Apostle Peter says, “No, this is not so with God.”

In other words, what looks like a delay from man’s perspective, and what looks like negligence to a scoffer, is actually something different entirely. It is not slackness or forgetfulness; it is mercy. Instead of negligence, it is longsuffering. The word “longsuffering” means literally long-tempered, slow to anger, and patient over a period of time. It is the same word Apostle Paul used in Romans 2:4, “... **despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**”

C. Revealed the Heart of God

God’s desire reveals His heart of grace and merciful longing, not for the perishing but for repentance of sinners. Not for their everlasting destruction, but for everlasting life. Not for their condemnation, but for their salvation.

The will of decree is irresistible. However, the will of desire is resistible. The decree always comes to pass. The desire may be resisted by sinful man. Yet both are genuine expressions of God’s will. The text here is clearly speaking of God’s heart desire. God desires that none should perish. He delights in repentance. He longs for their salvation. And this longing explains His longsuffering.

2 Peter 3:9 clearly illustrates the desiderative will. It is not decretive because it does not say that God decrees that every single human being will be saved. In fact, we have read in Scripture that how many had perished and will perish, **for broad is the way that leads to destruction** (see Matthew 7:13). It is about the desire of God’s heart. It is His heart’s longing that none should perish. It reveals His sincere heart toward sinners who are on their way to hell.

III. OTHER BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF GOD’S DESIDERATIVE WILL

- A. Deuteronomy 5:29, “**Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!**”
- B. Psalm 81:13-14, “**Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.**”
- C. Isaiah 48:18, “**O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.**”
- D. Ezekiel 33:11, “**As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?**”
- E. Matthew 23:37, “**O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!**”

IV. APPLICATION OF GOD'S DESIDERATIVE WILL

A. If this is the heart of God, what does it mean for us?

1. It means we should preach the gospel to all people with sincerity. We can look at any man, woman, or child in the eye and say: "God desires your salvation. God longs for your repentance. God has no pleasure in your perishing."
2. It means no sinner is beyond hope. Perhaps we think of someone who is hardened, resistant, a prodigal far away. But remember: God desires their repentance. His longsuffering continues. There is still hope.
3. It means urgency for us. For though God is longsuffering, the day of the Lord will come (verse 10). His longsuffering is not forever. The window of mercy will close one day.

B. How do we reconcile the fact that not all are saved despite God's desire for their salvation?

1. God's desire is real and genuine. When Apostle Peter testified God is "not willing that any should perish," he is revealing the genuine longing of God's merciful heart.
2. At the same time, man's rebellion is also real. Men always resist the will of God. The Lord Jesus Himself wept over Jerusalem and said, **"How often would I have gathered thy children together...but ye would not!"** (Matthew 23:37). God willed; they would not. That is the tragic tension.
3. This tension explains both the longsuffering of God and the perishing of man. God patiently waits, and desires repentance. But many resist, and would rather choose to rebel. But this is clear: Man can never resist God's decretive will. What God ordains will surely come to pass. But man does resist God's desiderative will — His will of desire.

C. God Desires But Man Must Respond

1. Repentance is not automatic. It must be embraced. It must be chosen. It must be received. God longs for it, but He will not force it. Here we find the dignity of man's responsibility. God calls. God draws. God convicts. God desires. But man must respond accordingly.
2. There remains a stern warning. Yes, it is a good thing that God "delays," yet it does not mean therefore we take for granted and assume judgment will not come any sooner. Judgment will eventually come and could come sooner than we think. His longsuffering is not slackness. His delay is not cancellation of judgment. **"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up"** (2 Peter 3:10).
3. Do you see the contrast? God delays judgment out of longsuffering. Yet the day of judgment will surely come. Mercy does not cancel judgment; it postpones it. Illustration: A storm is approaching as seen on the horizon. There are dark clouds and thunder. The storm is surely coming. However, there is a shifting wind, and for a time the rain holds back the storm. That holding back is God's longsuffering. But it does not mean the storm is no more. It is still coming. And when it comes, it will be sudden and overwhelming. So too with God's judgment.

4. The longsuffering of God is both a blessing and a warning. A blessing because it gives us time. Every breath we take outside of hell is mercy. Every day we live is a day to repent, a day to believe, a day to obey. It is a warning because we may presume upon it. We may think, "God has waited this long; perhaps He will wait forever." We may despise His longsuffering and use it as an excuse to sin more. But we will pay a high price if we do not take heed of the warning to repent. Are we hearing the warning? If we despise God's longsuffering, we are not escaping judgment; we are piling up wrath for the day of judgment.

V. SUMMARY

The desiderative will of God is proven by Jesus Christ who died on the cross for our sins. Christ stretched out His arms to a world that resisted Him. He wept for Jerusalem. He prayed for His enemies. He bore the wrath that we deserved. Why? Because it is not God's desire that any should perish. And yet, tragically, many do perish. Why? Because they resist. They harden their hearts. They refuse to repent. They reject the gift.

Let us not take God's longsuffering for granted. Let us not presume upon His mercy. Let us repent while there is time. Let us heed His desire before His decree of judgment falls. If God desires that none should perish, then surely we, His people, must share that desire. If God longs for repentance, then surely we must be passionate for the gospel. Evangelism goes beyond a mere duty. We are joining our heart to the heart of God for those who are outside His kingdom. When we share Christ with a neighbor, when we pray for a lost child, when we support a missionary, we are aligning our heart with God's heart. We are reflecting His desire that none should perish.

Think of a firefighter who longs to rescue those trapped in a burning building. That longing compels him to run into danger, to risk everything, because he cannot bear the thought of their perishing. That is the heart of God, and that must be ours too. Who in our life right now is perishing without Christ? Have we prayed for them? Have we shared the gospel with them? Are we weeping over their perishing soul? God desires their repentance, how about us?

Sometimes we grow weary. We wonder why Christ delays His coming. We wonder why evil seems to prosper, why scoffers multiply, why suffering continues. And in those moments, we may be tempted to despair. But Apostle Peter reminds us: The delay is not slackness. It is God's longsuffering that is at work. Every day Christ tarries is another day of mercy. Every delay is purposeful. And this perspective helps us be thankful. It helps us trust God's timing. It helps us remain faithful. Just as the farmer waits patiently for the harvest, so we must wait patiently for the Lord's return. His delay is purposeful. His longsuffering is needful. His timing is perfect. So, let us not grow weary. Let us endure, trusting the longsuffering of God.

"For the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Amen.