

## THE GLORY OF GOD'S WILL

(Discourse below by Ted Smith, given in Ecclesias in the Northwest and as far south as Los Angeles in a small ecclesia.)

Our subject is The Glory of God's Will; i.e. how it appeals to us who view matters from God's standpoint. But first, let us take a little journey. It will take only a few minutes and we will be refreshed and more prepared to be interested in the subject. No, we are not going out into space to visit the moon or the planets; although this is mere child's play as compared with our change in the First Resurrection.

For a few minutes, think of the Narrow Way as a RIVER, and we are taking a ride upon it in our little boat of Consecration. Each one has his own little boat of Consecration. Every river is made up of innumerable streams. They rush down hillsides and empty into the river. Unitedly they form a flood which flows many miles down to the Sea.

Another interesting thought—all water which makes up these streams comes down from the sky in the form of rain or snow. If we think of water as Truth and if we think of all coming down from above—what does this bring to our minds?—Truth from above, from God! How inspiring is this thought—the waters of our River, the Narrow Way, are made up of all the various streams of truth and grace and righteousness that have FIRST come down from above, from God! As we think of these things, we are elevated to a higher plane of thought and endeavor. It enables us to think of illustrations from things around us that we can understand. We are privileged to live on a higher plane than the Natural Man.

It is inspiring too, to think of various truths and principles of righteousness as representing God—as revealing what God is like personally. In other words, these Truths are from a person, and should not be thought of as apart from God, but emanating from Him. It fills us with awe when we realize that as we navigate the Narrow Way in our little boats of Consecration, we are floating in the water of Truth from God and we are carried along by it! It is no wonder that Jesus and the Apostles placed such stress upon the pure Truth. No wonder Satan is intent upon confusing us so that the Truth might become unclear, that he, i.e. Satan, might substitute with deceiving error!

Every River courses its way down to the Sea. Our River is taking us down to the great Sea of the First Resurrection. This is the CHIEF resurrection, and when we enter that Sea we shall experience perfection and happiness and usefulness to a degree that we can only feebly approximate with our finite minds.

Now, in thought, we have taken our little journey. There are many different ways in which the Christian life can be illustrated profitably. We would like to touch upon one

more illustration, before we launch into our subject proper. We can think of ourselves as SOLDIERS and we are taking our orders from HEADQUARTERS. The various officers over a soldier may be thought of as the principles of Truth and righteousness which are from God, and which are to guide us and inspire us in the Christian life. How inspiring is the thought that the Truths and promises which inspire us are from HEADQUARTERS, FROM GOD!

We remember that we were influenced to become Christian soldiers because of the principles of Truth and Righteousness. Now, however, we think of doing God's wonderful will, rather than think of obeying certain principles of Truth.

While all of God's blessings are favors, unmerited favors to us, yet we are made with sentiments and judgments, and, in a sense, God PROVED himself to us first. It is not that God says OBEY ME AND DON'T ASK ANY QUESTIONS; but, "Come let us reason together," and "sit down and count the cost." And so we are volunteers, so to speak, and are delighted that we have been favored with understanding of what God is doing and have the privilege of enlisting under the banner of God's will. God has so thoroughly proved himself to us, that, like Joshua (24:15) we say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." We as Christians, feel that we have made no mistake, in giving ourselves FULLY over to the doing of God's will. Why? Because every feature of God's will is for the blessing of His creatures, in one way or another, NOW or ultimately IN THE FUTURE. This will be true during the Millennial Age when the world has its Judgment Day; and it is especially true NOW when the church is having its Judgment Day.

The blessings to the church in doing God's will for them now, are a thousand times greater than will be the blessings to mankind during the Millennial Age. God's will is such that the doing of that will does not merely mean blessing to the one who does that will, but blessing to ALL in some way, eventually. THIS IS PART OF THE GLORY OF GOD'S WILL!

The doing of God's will brings blessing to the one who does that will; and to those who come in contact with the one who is doing His will; and to God Himself. This fact is appreciated in the present time, only by those who are blessed in having God's spirit. To others this is not apparent. The HEAD of the New Creation said, (Psa. 40:8) "I DELIGHT to do thy will O my God!" The reason was that "he loved righteousness and hated iniquity." To see or appreciate the glory of God's will, we must have more and more of the Spirit of the Head of the New Creation—Christ Himself. This will mean, and increasingly so as time goes on, that we are so much in harmony with the various features of truth and righteousness and love, that the doing of God's will appeals to us as superior to the doing of our own will, or the will of any other human being or group of human

beings. This means that our heart wish is to be fully developed in character, and that this seems supremely desirable and highly advantageous.

The Christian sees that God's dealings are with a special purpose and are not haphazard. He sees that the trials of life and the conditions of the covenant of sacrifice are UNUSUAL and PURPOSELY SO! The end in view is a high development of love and faith and loyalty to God. And more than that, such characters are to be used for the blessing of others now and especially in the Millennial Age. This again is part of the GLORY of God's will.

In a sense God is offering a reward of merit to those he specially loves! God has NOT SAID—IF you will become Christlike and do my will, I will give you the reward of the Divine Nature; but he has said, that those who DELIGHT to do my will are to receive the reward of the Divine Nature. There is a vast difference between these two thoughts. This proposition of a reward is a good deal like rewards of merit offered to deserving students in school. A deserving student is one who is really interested in his studies and who is carefully planning for some definite profession in life.

Sometimes an individual, a society or a club will offer a scholarship or sum of money as a reward of merit to such students. Sometimes a father makes the same kind of offer to a son, and this fits our case more perfectly. How it increases the joy and love of the son as he tries to please his father and there is an intense mutual love between the father and the son! So in the High Calling—our Heavenly Father is offering a reward of merit, not IF we will love to do His will, but because we DO love to do his will. How we do rejoice in the prospect of the reward of merit, having the spirit of sonship.

How we do admire our Redeemer who has gone before us and we say AMEN to the grand reward of merit which he has already received. In the true sense, as far as we are concerned, we can never deserve such a generous reward; but the Father has offered it and we rejoice in the hope of reward! This hope fills our hearts with gratitude and affection for our Heavenly Father. It adds to our joy and zeal when we realize the Father's attitude in the matter—"Fear not, little flock, it is the Father's GOOD PLEASURE to give you the Kingdom."

Those who do not DELIGHT to do God's will, will never receive the reward. The tests will be so great and thorough along the line of heart appreciation of God's will, that any who are in the Narrow Way for selfish reasons will soon lose interest and be weeded out. The high reward comes because of the severe trials, and not because of character development alone. ALL of God's creatures will be required to develop character, even on the human plane of being. The reward is offered to the Christian because he is faithful and delights to do God's will under CRUCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Two things are linked up together in the Scriptures: 1. The doing of God's will under severe trial. 2. A reward of merit. And you cannot separate the two. If we find that we still continue to do God's will without murmuring, then we have the right to revel together in the joys set before us in the Scriptures. I may be mistaken, but it is my opinion that those who are not rejoicing in the JOYS of the Lord, and who are not comforted by the hopes set before us, are not doing all they can as overcomers. The reason I think this is because if one IS faithfully meeting the trials of the Narrow Way, the trials are so great that he will feel the NEED of the comfort and joys of the hopes set before him.

We may view the Christian life as a proposition offered us of giving up our own will in life and accepting instead the will of God. And we enter into the will of God because it is so much better and grander than our own. How are we permitted to do this? First, we admit we are sinners and turn our back to the ways of selfishness. Second, we accept the way of approach to God through our Beloved Saviour. Third, we make a full consecration to do the will of God in Christ Jesus. And we keep our robes unspotted by making daily application for forgiveness at the throne of Heavenly grace, through faith in the shed blood of the Redeemer. And God hears us because we are in the Beloved.

The reward of merit is a feature of God's dealings with us, because He is so kind and loving to those who have the spirit of sonship in spite of the opposition they have to endure. How thankful and humble it should keep us to realize that we are the objects of God's boundless grace, when we know that there is nothing in us to deserve such a wealth of favor!

The will of God will be glorious during the Millennial Age when the Kingdom is set up; but how much more glorious it is now as it relates to the church! Every counsel of Truth and every opportunity of sacrifice means greater glory and blessing to us. Each step of obedience and each offering of sacrifice in response to the will of God means something for our GREATER GOOD and blessing; and the greater good and blessing to others and the greater glory to God. There isn't one single item in connection with our covenant of sacrifice but what is intended of God for our greater good in some manner; either of character development for ourselves or blessing some way to others.

As I speak of these things, I am not merely analyzing, but I am also extolling and praising God—for his lovingkindness and the glory of His will! The Psalmist says (119:171, 172; 63:3, 4): "My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. My tongue shall speak of thy Word; for all thy commandments are righteousness. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live; I will lift up my hands in thy name."

But let us see how glorious God's will is, when it is carried out, as it relates to the church. Let us see what obedience and sacrifice of the more than overcomers lead to. 1 John 5:3 reads, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." And 1 John 2:5 reads, "But whoso keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we are in him." And John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."

These three Scriptures inform us that the will of God for us, has to do with the keeping of his commandments and His word and sanctification by the truth. And as we do these things, how the GLORY of God's will stands out, and becomes increasingly apparent!

But if one is to delight in doing God's will, he must be willing to LEARN! He must be meek and lowly and come to learn of Jesus, who himself was meek and lowly of heart. As Matt. 11:29 says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." It is impossible for those to learn and wear the yoke if they are proud, haughty, self-willed, ambitious, world-wise. We must be meek, teachable, humble-minded—ready to know and to do the Lord's will at any cost. (R2625-5)

Humility and lowliness of mind are so necessary and becoming to us—what have we but what has been given to us? NOT A THING! The one who is most indebted to God is the one who receives the most blessing and is the highest developed because he is the one that has been blessed with that which God has been pleased to richly reward! How humble we should feel about ourselves—despite our best endeavors, we are very small and insignificant and imperfect as compared with our perfect Redeemer and Head. When we realize that we are the objects of such rich and unmerited favor, there isn't any room for pride of heart.

It is so becoming for us to be meek, teachable and willing to learn. And we must be willing to learn from ANY QUARTER—not only from those above us, but also from those who may be inferior to us in some ways. We can ALL learn from one another because, as the Apostle tells us in the 12th chapter of 1st Cor., "the eye cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee; and the foot cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee." This is why we are exhorted to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. If we are balanced in humility and love the Lord's law and will, we shall take learning from ANY quarter and be THANKFUL!

We can see additional evidence of the glory of God's will as it relates to the church if we institute a comparison. First, let us see what a man's life would be like if he didn't take up with the Gospel at all, but lived merely as a good, upright natural man. Second, let us see what a man's life would be like if he came up in the resurrection and restored to

human perfection here on the earth. And finally let us trace a man's life if he takes up with the Gospel Call and makes his calling and election sure as a more than overcomer.

A natural man, if he is to be successful in some line, must be fairly well educated and skilled. This necessitates spending considerable time in school in preparation for his profession. Then he is required to spend several years of practice before he feels qualified to be classed as a skilled specialist in his line. Like most natural men, he will want to have a wife, a home and a family. His work will be interesting to him and he will have worldly friends and a measure of respect by his associates and neighbors. And additionally he will have certain comforts and joys which pertain to his home and family life. BUT he will ALSO have business worries, family cares, sickness may invade his home, his children may not turn out as he wishes, in spite of everything he can do. But let us suppose everything turns out reasonably well—he enjoys a reasonable amount of business prosperity, and the respect of his business associates and neighbors, and tranquility and comfort of home; and that his children turn out to be respectable and dutiful.

And such a man will experience a certain kind of development and strength of character. And suppose further that this man is above the average in the enjoyment of all the things that pertain to the life of the natural man APART FROM GOD. And let us assume he is respected and honorable and loved and prosperous to the end, and his old age is free of the unpleasant experiences that are the lot of most old people. DOES NOT THE WHOLE THING END IN DEATH!? And does he not know this all through his life as a natural man? Will not the thought of the whole thing ending in death hang as an unpleasant shadow over his whole life? And is he not deprived entirely of that peace of God which passeth all understanding which comes from being in relationship with God, and all this means of being taught of God, character development and looking forward to eternal life? YES, HOW TRUE THIS ALL IS!

And now let us consider the case of a man who comes up and is perfected in the resurrection by judgments in the Millennial Age. But first, he must live out his natural life under the sinful and unhappy conditions in this world which is without God and without hope of eternal life. His experiences with sin may be indeed unpleasant and possibly bitter. And finally, after more or less of struggle, his whole experience ends in the wages of sin—DEATH. Then what?—he is awakened from the dead with the rest of mankind.

And let us suppose he is not the kind that resists instructions under the kingdom, but is one who is glad of changed conditions. Then he begins his schooling when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. And entering into the spirit of the law of God then in force, he will be blessed with gradual restoration to human perfection lost by Father Adam. All this will be glorious indeed!

Such a man will experience a development of character that will bring him up to the image of God as a son of God on the human plane. He will enjoy God's favor and all this means of peace and eventually eternal life. As his human brothers and sisters are brought from the tomb, this man will be tested as to his development in unselfish love—will he be willing to do good to and for those who are being returned from death? If so, he will be accounted worthy of more blessings on earth. All this will take place under favorable conditions when nothing shall hurt or destroy; and when righteousness and love and the spirit of a sound mind will be popular and in force. All this will be glorious of course!

And finally the whole human creation will be found perfected and love will be welling up in every heart, and stamped upon the countenance—love, worship, praise and gratitude to God and to their Redeemer and Mediator-King and loving words and acts to fellowmen! Truly this will be glorious, **BUT ON THE HUMAN PLANE, AND LIMITED TO HUMAN BODIES AND CONDITIONS.** God and the entire New Creation will be invisible, possibly never to be seen by perfected human beings. And not until the end of the Millennial Age will life be granted for a surety—not until pronounced perfect by God after the test following the end of the Millennial Age, when the Mediator will be withdrawn between God and man.

Now, finally, let us consider the glory of the will of God as it relates to the man or woman in Christ who is faithful as a more than overcomer. It is a different picture in every respect, and a thousand times greater than the glory of the will of God as pertaining to restitution times.

Let us consider Paul, as he is such an outstanding example. Paul sacrificed the good things of this life; listened intently for the will of God; did not hold back on a single thing. He said (Phil. 3:7-11), “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffering, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Question: what was the glory that attended the doing of the will of God by Paul?

Answer: It was a glory of character development in Christ-likeness, of bearing the fruits of the spirit, of blessing others with a knowledge of the gospel, and ministering to their spiritual needs and assisting them to a closer walk with God, filling their hearts with joy and hope and sympathy.

And what a glory this is!—under UNFAVORABLE circumstances, ministering to others the knowledge of God, and comforting them with the comfort whereof we ourselves are comforted of God. What a DIGNIFIED profession—a ministry of love in behalf of the heirs of salvation! What an HONOR to be used in bringing others into close relationship with the Father through the Redeemer, and helping them to grow in the love of God!

And FURTHER—it is a glory of comfort and sympathy and brotherly affection, of the highest of ideals, deepest affection and tenderest watchcare, of sonship—of being in heart relationship with the Father, and viewing things from His standpoint, of cooperating in his loving designs and experiencing personal communion with heaven, of humility and meekness—looking unto Jesus for guidance and for forgiveness when coming short, of the life of prayer and trust—in God’s providences while walking through the valley of the shadow of death; of the life of faith—rejoicing in hope of the glory of God which proceeds from a heart-belief of the Truth, the knowledge of God and living by every word which proceeds out of the mouth of God; of striving against sin, casting out the filth of the flesh, of moral courage, of sacrificing some of the things which the natural man considers his very life; some of the good things, the legitimate things of this life.

In Paul’s case this meant the sacrifice of EVERY good thing in this life—family life, every earthly hope, aim, ambition. He, gave himself over entirely to the Gospel and the service of God as it related to the loving ministry of the tried and suffering saints. What wonderful fruits of glory proceeded from delight in doing the will of God by Paul! These were fruits of character development, of comfort and upbuilding of the brethren, of affection between Paul and the faithful brethren, of blessed and loving communion with the Father and with our dear Redeemer, of joy and hope as Paul looked forward to his change, when his Redeemer would return at his second advent!

And then what about the glory of God’s will as it relates to the HOPE of reward of merit for the doing of that will? Paul loved to do God’s will and God’s love is such that every step of obedience and every sacrifice were to add to the glory of the reward of merit for Paul. And is it not reasonable to believe that the joy of such a hope of reward of merit ADDED to Paul’s delight in doing God’s will?! And Paul’s joy was not only an anticipation of reward, but also and SPECIALLY the happiness of the love which Paul felt for God and his Redeemer and the happiness of the love which Paul knew God and the Redeemer had for him! While it is true that there is an enjoyment of a hope of a reward of merit, yet I believe the greater happiness is in the AFFECTION which is created by GENEROUS GIVING AND RESPONSIVE GRATITUDE!

And now let us consider the glory of the will of God as it relates to the reward of merit WHEN IT IS FINALLY REALIZED. In Paul’s case this no doubt meant a VERY HIGH STATION beyond the veil, a VERY BRILLIANT star position, and being very close to the one Paul served and loved—both the Father and the Son, his Elder Brother.

In being exalted to the Divine nature, Paul has been granted a body of PERFECTION, and considering how hard Paul fought against his body of imperfection, we can imagine how Paul delighted in having a perfect body adapted to his new mind, and also in having this body with the infinite capacities of the Divine Nature!

Paul will occupy a very prominent “Star” place in the work of blessing mankind when the Redeemer begins his mediatorial work. Paul will be the object of God’s special lovingkindness as a joint-heir with Jesus throughout eternity. How the love and fellowship will increase between God and the Redeemer and the glorified saints. WHAT A HOPE IS SET BEFORE US! Is it any wonder that Paul, in delighting to do God’s will, considered all things AS LOSS as compared with the blessedness of the Christian life?! Is it any wonder that Paul spoke of the high calling as a GREAT SALVATION!?

If one loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and if he delights to do God’s will, is not the Christian life ALL desirable, ALL gain?! Does not every step of obedience and every offering in sacrifice, mean a greater glory and blessing, either in character development, or in blessing others, or increased reward of merit?!

AND THEN THINK of being face to face with God and personally witness the formation of his plans and cooperate WITH God and UNDER God in the execution of these plans! It seems almost too wonderful to believe! What wonderful favors these will be. What wonderful favors are granted to the heirs of God and JOINT-heirs with Jesus!

Considering all these desirable things, considering that every step of obedience and every sacrifice offered really means all gain to us—is it any wonder that the trials and testings of the Narrow Way are searching and severe—but not TOO severe, because God has promised grace to help in every time of need.

We study and assemble ourselves to KEEP THE GLORY OF GOD’S WILL fresh and strong before our minds! The time of testing is drawn out to perfect us in patient endurance. And speaking of time—this reminds us that we will not have to wait for the thousand years of the Millennial Age to end to be granted life for sure, as is the case of those restored to human perfection, but our trial lasts just our short lifetime—and this is ANOTHER GLORY of God’s will as it relates to the church.

And so let us use these thoughts in our Christian life and use them to good advantage. When we come to little opportunities of sacrifice and requirements of obedience—let us not bemoan our lot, but let us realize that we are the most favored beings in the whole universe. And so let us sum up what the glory of God’s will is as it relates to the church:

1. A glory of character development in righteousness and love—Christ-likeness.

2. A glory of blessing others with words and acts which proceed from this Christ-likeness.
3. A glory of a wonderful reward of merit, a reward of grace and favor.
4. A glory of fellowship of mind and heart between God and the members of the New Creation based upon the highest of ideals.
5. A glory of rich generosity on God's part, and a responsive filial love on the part of the New Creation.
6. A glory of being granted the favor of laboring together with God in his works of love.
7. A glory of love on our part for all the holy and good on all planes of existence.
8. A glory of love FOR US on the part of all these good and holy ones on every plane of existence.
9. A glory of representing God's truth and light in a sin-darkened world.

AND OH HOW MUCH MORE COULD BE SAID!

And let us remember that we are under the banner of GOD'S WILL and not under the banner of some one principle or set of principles. Being in touch with the Truth we are in touch with that which has emanated from God. How thankful, how humble, how loving this should make us!