



Beyond belief

SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 2:16; Matthew 17:1-20: **knowing God's will.**

Then there are others on the opposite side of the spectrum who believe that God set up the system we all live in, but then He walked away.

This view of life and God is called "Deism." And it is what some of the founding father's of the United States believed. Men like Ben Franklin and George Washington believed that God set everything into motion, but was not involved day to day.

Deism is likened to a watchmaker. There is an obvious creator who made the timepiece, but once it is wound the watchmaker walks away and just lets it run.

There are days when I think, "Where is God in all this?"

Typically, in those moments it is not God who is lacking, but rather my own faith. And always over time I can look back and see where God has brought me from.

I'm not sure I would go so far to say that God is involved in which parking spot I get, but I definitely believe that He is here and involved.

And that leads us to the question for us to tackle today...

If God is here and working in this world... **How do I know God's will for my life?**

To answer this question, let's think about God's will in two categories...

First, there is God's **GENERAL WILL**.

What is it that God wants for everyone? A simple word search and study through the Bible helps us here. What does the Bible say about "God's will?"

2 Peter 3:9

⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

First and foremost, God wants everyone to be saved. It is not his will for us to fail, but he wants us all to repent and come back to Him.

He also wants us to live healthy and holy lives...

1 Thessalonians 4:3

³It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality

Sexual purity is just one example; God longs for your good in every area.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray continually, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Not only does God want good for you, but also for you to do good so that others would be drawn to God...

1 Peter 2:15

¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.

In a nutshell, God's GENERAL WILL is that everyone comes to the realization that He is real and if we listen to Him our lives will be full of joy and we can draw others to Him.

But for lots of decisions, as well as major life choices, we just don't know what God wants us to do:

For instance...

What do I tell a friend who is struggling?

What career should I get into?

Which job should I take?

Who should I marry?

If I believe that God is involved in this world and more personally in my life,
How do I know His **SPECIFIC WILL** for me?

You see God's GENERAL WILL is pretty straight forward. Seek God. Live for Him.

God's SPECIFIC WILL is much more tricky.

How can we know what God wants us to do in specific situations that the Bible doesn't address?

I like what Mark Moore says in the essay from our study guide this week...

If we do God's will that we *do* know, we can then discover his will for what we *do not* know yet.

Jesus said...

John 7:16-17

¹⁶Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me. ¹⁷Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

The religious leaders of the day were questioning Jesus and the authority by which he taught. You see, most rabbis or teachers would come up under some other known teacher. They were questioning his pedigree and accusing him of being self-taught.

Jesus says, "I'm not self-taught, my teaching comes from God who sent me." Then he says in verse 17, "Test my teaching. See if it doesn't work in real life!"

If we do God's will that we *do* know, we can then discover his will for what we *do not* know yet.

And that's how life can be sometimes. We are sure of the route we are on... until we're not. You see I think we have to stay on the route we know, God's GENERAL WILL until He reveals more details about His SPECIFIC WILL for our lives.

Over the last few weeks we have been thinking about a few things that are simply BEYOND BELIEF.

There are some things that even Christians have a hard time believing. That we can be free from guilt, free to change, and today I want us to think about the freedom to know God's thoughts.

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 2...

1 Corinthians 2:1-2

¹And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. ²For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

The first thing I think we have to lean in on as we think about knowing God's will for our lives is this...

IT ISN'T ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE CALLED TO DO, **RATHER WHO IT IS THAT CALLED YOU.**

I told you last week that we have been watching the TV series called, The Chosen. It's the story of Jesus call to some of the disciples. Peter & Andrew. Mary Magdalene. James & John. Matthew.

Each of these disciples were called by Jesus, simply to follow him.

Paul says...

²For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

IT ISN'T ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE CALLED TO DO, **RATHER WHO IT IS THAT CALLED YOU.**

"We are not primarily called to do something or go somewhere; we are called to Someone. We are not called first to special work but to God. The key to answering the call is to be devoted to no one and to nothing above God himself." –Os Guinness

1 Corinthians 2:3-13

³I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. ⁴My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive

words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

⁶We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. ⁷No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹However, as it is written:

"What no eye has seen,

what no ear has heard,

and what no human mind has conceived"—the things God has prepared for those who love him—

¹⁰these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

¹¹For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

We all understand a couple basic things that Paul says here... First, we cannot know what someone else is thinking.

Bonnie and I have been married 24 years. And I know her pretty well. But more often than I would like to admit, she surprises me. I think I know her, but she will tell me how she feels and I had no idea.

¹¹For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them?

WE CANNOT KNOW SOMEONE ELSE'S MIND,
BUT WE CAN KNOW THE MIND OF GOD.

In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

We can know the mind of God because we have the Spirit of God living in us through the Holy Spirit.

The more we live in God's general will, the more the fog lifts and we can see where God is leading us.

There are a couple things that block this from happening in our lives.

The first is sin and the second is not knowing God's word. Both are avoidable.

If you want to know God's specific will for your life, keep working on living more by the Spirit and less by the flesh.

And secondly, study and know God's word. Makes sense doesn't it? Those who are spiritual can know the mind of God.

Don't worry about the direction. Just keep your eyes on Him.

Keep reading...

1 Corinthians 2:14-16

¹⁴The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,

1 Corinthians 2:16

¹⁶for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

NOT ONLY CAN WE KNOW THE MIND OF GOD,
WE CAN DEVELOP THE MIND OF CHRIST.

Obedience to God's commands results in the revealing of God's will. If we want to discover more of God's will, we must not only know God's word, but also align our lives with his will which we learn from his word.

Here's my prayer for you... that the Son (God's son S-O-N) would shine on your life and the fog of uncertainty would lift on the route that God has laid out before you.

Small group questions

1. How do you see God working in this world, in your family, or in your life?
2. 2 Peter 3:9 - what does this tell us about God's plan?
3. 1 Thes. 4:3 - what does Sanctification mean? What does it look like to live a sanctified life?
4. 1 Thes. 5:16-18 - what does this look like in daily practice?
5. What is God's general will?
6. Have you ever thought about God's specific will for your life? What are some answers you have come up with?
7. Sometimes the familiar roads of life can become foggy, and foreign to us. What causes this to happen?

8. "It isn't about what your called to, RATHER WHO IT IS THAT CALLED YOU". Does this statement give you comfort when the unknown is ahead? Why or why not.

9. 1 Cor. 2:16 - what does it mean to have the mind of Christ? How does one go about having the mind of Christ?