

Is It Well With Thee?

Bringing our Brokenness and our Bad Habits to Christ

IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL? (THE WILL - PART 4)

This is part 45 of the Is It Well With Thee Sermon Series

SUMMARY

We live in a world of facades, false fronts, and covered realities. We want to be happy all the time and we want others to think that we are, but underneath the harsh reality is that the bad days, the difficult things, and the high level of stress are all weighing us down. Oftentimes, they leave us feeling discouraged, depressed, and like there is simply no hope, but **THAT ISN'T TRUE AT ALL**. While our enemy wants to use the realities of life against us, God wants us to bring our brokenness and our bad habits to Him so that in the midst of life's very real struggles we can still answer, "It is well."

REVIEW

We are currently considering the third element of our soul – the will.

1) The **DESIGNING** of the will

God has given us the ability, the opportunity, the responsibility to make our own decisions, but we will be held accountable for whatever we choose.

Our *will* is where our **DESIRES** and **DETERMINATION** reside, and they are **STUBBORN** (which is a good thing when they are directed by truth, but that's a bad thing when they're dictated by anything other than truth).

We found that **DELIGHT** is the soul's **OBJECTIVE** and choosing and refusing is the soul's **OPERATION**.

We found a formula that we need to understand: **DESIRE** produces a **DETERMINATION** which will take us in the **DIRECTION** of what we are **DELIGHTING** in.

We were created to delight in two things (1) the **LORD**, and (2) the **LAW OF THE LORD**.

2) The **DIVERTING** of the will

We found that we are drawn to something that we are convinced, or we have been persuaded will lead to greater delight.

We found that we make the choice as to whether we are going to be led by **TRUST** or by **LUST**. We either choose to trust God and His Word or we choose to trust ourselves – our thoughts, our feelings, our desires.

As a child of God, we have a **DUTY** to live our life in a way that pleases God, but we still struggle with a **DESIRE** to do that which pleases me.

We found that our **CHOICES** have **CONSEQUENCES**. Sin will take you further than you want to go, sin will keep you longer than you want to stay, and sin will cost you more than you want to pay.

Our will takes us in the direction of our delight, however, because of sin, our delight isn't always good or right, but our will doesn't understand that.

When we yield to our sinful delights, three things begin to take place:

A) We are **HELD CAPTIVE** by whatever "it" is.

Sin will literally take control of your life. Sin will take everything that you want away from you, it will put everyone that you love through misery, and it will slowly eat away at your potential.

B) We are **HARDENED** by and for whatever "it" is.

Sin is still sin whether people know about it or not or whether it still bothers you or not.

C) We **HASTEN** the consequences for whatever "it" is.

Sin has the ability to shorten the timespan of our life on earth.

And that's really where we pick back up.

MESSAGE

1 Thessalonians 5:14-24 says, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

If you're in the habit of marking things in the word of God, I want to draw your attention back to verse 23 where the Bible says, “And the very God of peace sanctify...your whole spirit...”

For a few moments, I'd like to begin to consider this thought: **IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL? (THE WILL – PART 4)**

Disclaimer - I am not a doctor, and I am not approaching these topics from the standpoint of one. I am simply attempting to help us gain an understanding of what the Bible has to say about our mental, emotional, and physical health.

1) The **DESIGNING** of the will

Everyone has the ability to choose what they believe, say, and do.

2) The **DIVERTING** of the will

3) The **DISCIPLINING** of the will

We have established the fact that we all have a will and that our will was designed to **DESIRE** to please God and to **DO** that which pleases God.

It's something that we hear perfectly described in the Words of Jesus, in John 4:34, when He said, “...My meat is to do the will of him that sent me...” Jesus had a will, but His will was to do the will of His Father. Nothing more and nothing less.

Jesus wasn't **SELFISH** in any area of His life; Jesus was perfectly **SURRENDERED** in every area of His life. And that is how we are supposed to live. Our will was designed by God to desire to please God and to do that which pleases God, but sin has shifted that desire away from pleasing God and to pleasing our self. We have become a very “...selfwilled...” people (Titus 1:7)(2 Peter 2:10). We desire and we do that which we think will bring us the greatest delight. The problem with being a self-willed person isn't just found in the fact that our will is naturally **BENT** away from that which pleases God, but it is also found in the fact that we become **BOLDER** and **BRAVER** in that which displeases God that we stop being afraid of displeasing God, we stop being ashamed of and about what we are doing, and we lose our

ability to blush about what we're doing when those around us find out what we're involved in.

2 Peter 2:10 says it this way: *"...Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid..."*

Jeremiah says it this way about the nation of Israel: *"...they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush..."* (Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12).

All of us struggle with being self-willed. And, while that is completely understandable in the lives of those do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, it is completely unacceptable in the lives of those who do have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

In Proverbs 14:14, we find that a *"...backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways..."*

In Isaiah 53:6, we find that those who *"...have gone astray..."* have *"...turned...to his own way..."*

In Isaiah 65:2, we find that a *"...rebellious people...walketh...after their own thoughts..."*

In Isaiah 66:3-4, we find that people who practice idolatry choose *"...their own ways..."* and findeth delight *"...in their abominations..."*

I don't know about you, but I don't want to put myself in the category of a person who is backslidden, who wanders astray, who is rebellious or idolatrous, and yet, I find that because of sin I have the ability to do just that...frequently.

Jeremaiah 18:12 says, *"And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart."* That could be you and that could be me.

Romans 10:3 says, *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."* That could be you and that could be me.

Philippians 2:21 says, *"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."* That could still be you and that could still be me.

2 Timothy 3:2 says, *"For men shall be lovers of their own selves..."* That could still be you and that could still be me.

Jude 16 says, *"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts..."* That could still be you and that could still be me.

Now, the good news is that while those things could be true of every single one of us, they don't have to be true of us. Victory over our wicked and wayward will is indeed possible within a right relationship with Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58 says, *“But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*

The question this evening is – How? How do we win in the area of our will? Well, we have to begin by acknowledging that we are our own greatest problem. Here’s the thing: we will not **ADDRESS** what we aren’t willing to **ADMIT**, and we won’t admit what we aren’t **AWARE OF**. The solution to the battle of our will begins with what the Bible calls being *sober minded*.

1 Thessalonians 5:6 says, *“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”*

The idea here is that instead of **DELAYING** and **DISREGARDING** our responsibility, we are to be **DILIGENT** about and **DISCIPLINED** in our responsibility.

The word *discipline* means “to concentrate; to manifest or reveal; to train.” Which is exactly what the word *sober minded* has in mind. It literally means “to be balanced, curbed, and controlled. And it’s something that regardless of what age we are, we are supposed to be. Titus chapter 2 tells us that aged men, aged women, young men, and young women need to be sober minded. While the individual struggles may vary, the individual responsibility is the same – be aware of what is going on around you, be aware of what is going on within you, and be actively engaged in applying the proper discipline on your will so that you can please God with my life.

Romans 12:2 says, *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”*

1 Timothy 4:7-8 says, *“But refuse profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”*

GODLINESS is the **GOAL** and **DISCIPLINE** is the **MEANS** by which the goal is reached.

Now, what we need to understand about discipline is that it is a process that must be **REPEATED, PERFECTED, and CONTINUED.**

A) **DENY**

Matthew 16:21-26 says, *“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

The word *savourest* means “to be entertained by; to be interested in; to be affectionate about.”

Matthew 16:23- 26 says, “*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*”

Jesus tells us two things are required for discipleship, which I think can appropriately be called spiritual discipline of the soul: (1) to deny oneself and (2) to take up one’s cross. Two things that I think we have completely misunderstood.

DENY HIMSELF

When we think of the phrase “...*deny himself...*”, we have a tendency to have the mindset of the refusal or the withholding something that we want, like, prefer, or desire. And, while that is indeed a part of it, it really is much more than that. It has the idea of an intentional and complete disassociation of a relationship with a particular person. That particular person is our old nature – who we were primary to knowing Christ as our Saviour.

Ephesians 4:22-24 says, “*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*”

The phrase *put off* means “to lay aside; to renounce; to abandon.”

It isn’t saying “No,” to our old nature (which by the way is more like saying “Not now.”); it’s putting to death our old desires and delights (which is where the second part of the statement comes in).

TAKE UP HIS CROSS

When we think of the phrase “...*take up his cross...*”, we have a tendency to apply this statement to a variety of situations that we face in life - from being used in **JEST**, to expressing **FRUSTRATION** over minor inconveniences, to describing truly **DIFFICULT SITUATIONS**. But it’s much more than that. To “take up one’s cross” referred to the practice of forcing a condemned person to carry the cross beam to his own execution site. It was a sign of complete surrender. When Jesus said that those who follow Him would need to take up their cross, He was saying that we need to be as submitted to Christ as the condemned criminal was to his death.

Galatians 2:20 says, *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Galatians 5:24 says, *"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."*

B) **DIRECT**

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."*

Proverbs 11:5 says, *"The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness."*

God never forces men to act against their will, but He works mightily through those who will willingly and completely surrender to His will. This is primarily accomplished through **WORSHIP** (we become like what or who we worship); **STUDY** (we walk, and we work according to what we know), and **PRAYER** (we become like who we spend our time with)

1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 says, *"Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints."*

2 Thessalonians 3:5 says, *"And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."*

C) **DELIGHT**

Delight is when God's **WILL** and God's **WORD** becomes our **WANT**.

Psalms 37:3-5 says, *"Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."*

Psalms 40:8 says, *"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."*