5/29/20 Devotional

Let us hear God’s word from the Gospel of Matthew:

*“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*.” Matthew 6:10.

The will of God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom or will of God. These terms are synonymous in the New Testament. How do we begin to conceptualize what this means? We must recognize at least four things about this concept. First, God’s will is both known and unknown, seen and unseen, hidden and revealed. Second it contains multiple levels of understanding, that is, from cosmic to personal. Third, we seek to understand it from a perspective of faith. Finally, our theological view of God presupposes our understanding of God’s will.

I have found the book by Rev. Leslie Weatherhead, *The Will of God,* insightful for approaching this subject. As I summarize his insights, I hope you will find it helpful as you think about what the will of God means to you. The author describes the will of God by breaking it down into three aspects.

First, *God’s Intentional Will* means God’s original intention, plan or purpose in creating the world and human beings before the Fall. Genesis says: “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* God created the universe and human beings out of nothing with a purpose in mind. What was that purpose? God created people with a free will. Human beings have the free will to love and obey God, to worship God alone, rather than idols, to love their neighbor, to be whole beings spiritually, relationally, physically, and emotionally rather than broken, to treat one another with fairness, respect and dignity, to live together in unity, to lead spiritual and moral lives, to care for the earth rather than exploiting it, to gain knowledge rather than living in ignorance, to live a meaningful and joyful and fulfilling life in fellowship with God. This wasGod’s Intentional Will.

Second, God’s Circumstantial Will. Because of human disobedience, the Fall destroyed humanity’s relationship with God, creation, other human beings, and the individual self. The relationship between God and human beings was broken. A right relationship turned into a wrong relationship. Humanity as represented by Adam and Eve, turned away from God and fell from God’s grace. Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden.

God’s Circumstantial Will refers to the truth that despite the aftermath caused by sin and evil that resulted from the Fall, God is present in this world accomplishing His will and purpose. God continues to work in and through the world and in and through our lives and circumstances. God works in our lives to achieve His will. God works to bring good out of all things. “*In all things God works together for good*.” Romans 8:28. God’s will is to not let us be defeated by our circumstances, but rather to lead us through them and finally triumph over them. God sent His own Son Jesus the Christ, to seal this promise. Jesus is the demonstration, seal or proof that God has not given up on humanity, but continues to fulfill His will in this world.

God promises to effect his will in history as the ruler of all nations. God promises to instill hope in the midst of seemingly hopeless times. God promises to impart courage when we are overcome with fear and anxiety. God promises to provide strength for us, when we feel weak, exhausted and helpless. God promises to bring good things out of bad circumstances. God redirects our lives when we are lost or misguided. God seeks to transform bad circumstances into positive purposes. This doesn’t mean that everything will always turn out perfect or the way we want it to be. This is God’s circumstantial will.

Thirdly, we come to God’s Ultimate Will. This means that God’s purposes in the world will ultimately be achieved. God’s plans will ultimately be realized and established forever. God's plans and purposes cannot be defeated or destroyed by any event, ideology, system, power, nation or person. God will ultimately make sin and evil serve His final purposes.

“Lord, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

God’s grace and peace be with you,

Rev. Alan W. Deuel