

HOW THEN SHALL WE LIVE?



WEEK FOUR: LIVING GOD'S WILL

Read 1 Peter 4

The immediate question that springs to mind is, “*What is God’s will?*” We can find this difficult to answer. However, Micah 6:8 puts it simply:

“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Read verses 1-8

The NIV version of verse 1 is this: “*Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*”

We must understand that it isn’t saying we will never sin again, but rather that we seek to follow God’s desires rather than our human desires.

- Do we seek God’s desires rather than our own?
- If we do, what difference does it make to our lives?

1 Corinthians 2:16 says: “*For, “Who can know the Lord’s thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?” But we understand these things for we have the mind of Christ.*”

The website, BibleRef says: *Paul uses the quote from [Isaiah 40:13](#) to ask a self-answering question: who understands the Lord's mind? Who teaches the Lord anything? Of course, no human person teaches God anything. He knows all ([Isaiah 55:8-9](#)). Paul's answer to the question confirms and adds a layer to what he has already written. We have the mind of Christ. By that, he seems to mean that, aided by the Holy Spirit, believers have been given access to the thoughts of Christ. We have been given the ability to see what is spiritual and to think what Christ thinks.*

Two useful quotes regarding the Mind of Christ:

“The Mind of Christ is Given to Believers Through the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit dwells in believers. God's Holy Spirit is the only way that we can understand the Bible, acquire wisdom to discern spiritual matters and supersedes human wisdom. The human mind cannot do this apart from God.”

And:

“This means we have the ability to maintain the same focus and values as Christ has. I believe it also means viewing the world through a Christ-centred lens. And yet this gift, which is given to every believer freely, must be developed in order to be of full value. We do this by taking our thoughts captive; reading, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture; spending consistent time in the presence of Christ; and leaning heavily on a trusted accountability partner.”

- It is vital that we understand the power of the Holy Spirit.
- We can do nothing of ourselves, only what is done through the Spirit which lives in us.
- What struck me in reading this is that the standard set for us is high BUT NOT SO HIGH that it is unattainable. We must keep loving each other, using God's gifts to serve each other with God's power in and through us, so all the glory goes to Him.

The key to it all is **BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

- How do we keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit?

There are some very practical instructions here, too. We are encouraged to use the gift God has given us “..from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them to service one another.”

Read verses 9-11

- We are encouraged to show hospitality. Verse 9

This can be a great blessing both to those giving and those receiving.

- What does Peter exhort us to do in verse 11?
- Do you know what your gift is?

Read verses 12-19

These verses tell us that we should not be surprised by fiery trials. Suffering is not a topic people want to hear about. At the time of Peter's writing, as we mentioned in Study One, Christians were suffering greatly for their faith, just as they are now, in many parts of the world. However, we are encouraged in verse 13 to be glad for these times of trials.

- Do you think it is possible to be glad whilst suffering trials?

- Why does Peter say we should be?
- Do you think that because, in most of the Western world, we do not suffer greatly for being Christians, we can empathise with Christ's sufferings?
- Is it possible to have joy in suffering?
- What does Peter say about being partners in Christ's sufferings?

How many of us have ever been insulted because we call ourselves Christians? If we are, however, verse 14 says we will be blessed because *the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you*.

There is an important 'however', in verse 15. If we are insulted for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs, then we can't complain and won't receive God's blessing.

Verse 16 made me stop for a moment. There is no shame in suffering for being a Christian, to which I think we would agree. However, it finishes with this statement:

PRAISE GOD FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING CALLED BY HIS NAME!

- Are we grateful to the extent that we praise God for being called Christians?

Not being challenged or persecuted for our faith can make us complacent and perhaps lack the fervour of these early Christians.

I'm not saying we should ask for persecution, but I do think we need to consider all that Jesus has done for us and allow that to make us grateful for all that God, through Jesus, has done for us. Thank him too, for making us his child.



Prayer:

Thank you, father, for choosing me. Enable me to determine what that purpose is for my life and, by your Holy Spirit, accomplish it.

Amen