

LORD AS YOU WILL!

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Old Testament Lesson; 2 Kings 5:1-15

Epistle Lesson; Romans 12:17-21

Sermon Text; Matthew 8:1-13

I have two books, here. One of these is a book that is sealed. It has a flap on it that keeps the book closed. Let's imagine that I cannot open this seal, so I don't know what this book says. What is in this book is hidden to me.

Then, here is another book. This one does not have a seal on it. I can open it, read every word of it, and know exactly what it says. These two books represent two different wills God has for each one of us.

First of all, God has what we call His Hidden Will. It is like a sealed book. There are things about you that God wills, that you don't know. For example, what does He want to happen to you tomorrow? That is a sealed book. We don't know, until tomorrow comes. How long will you live? We don't know. That is part of His Hidden Will. That won't be revealed to us, until that day comes. So, there is a Hidden Will of God for each one of us. It is like a sealed book.

Then, there is the Revealed Will of God. Those are things God has revealed to you that He wants you to know about yourself. We find that in scripture. There, God reveals to you everything He wants you to know. That is the Revealed Will of God, regarding you.

In today's scripture reading, we find two men who come to Jesus. Both of them are sick or have trouble going on in their lives, some affliction, some sorrow, some anxiety. They both come to Jesus and we learn two things about faith in today's scripture reading. The first thing we learn about faith is:

Faith trusts the power of the Revealed Word of God.

The second thing we learn is:

Faith trusts the Hidden Will of God.

Let's look at those two different aspects that we learn in today's scripture reading.

When I was a little boy, my dad was a pastor. He had his office at home, and I used to, sometimes, snoop around, when he was not in his office. I would like to look through all of his stuff. Sometimes I would see his sermons laying out on his desk. I wasn't really all that interested in reading the sermons, but I would kind of shuffle through them. Over a period of time, I came to realize that every single one of my dad's sermons started in the exact same way. If his sermon was laying out on his desk, it always started with these three initials: *INI*. That intrigued me. I also noticed that every one of his sermons ended with the same three initials: *SDG*. I wondered what that meant.

Finally, one day, I was snooping around in his office and he happened to walk in, so I said, "Hey Dad. I noticed that every single one of your sermons starts with the initials *INI* and they always end with the initials *SDG*. Why is that?"

Here is what he told me. "Mark, what I do is not a unique practice. It is common. Lots of pastors do it. Lots of Christian musicians do it. The *INI* is a Latin abbreviation for the words: *in name Jesu*. Nobody sees that in the sermon, except me. I start every sermon, before I ever write it, *INI, in name Jesu, in the name of Jesus*. That is there, at the beginning. I start right away writing that down to remind me I am writing this sermon, in the name of Jesus. I am to

be His representative to the people. I am to speak on Jesus' behalf, as I preach this sermon.”

And then he said, “So, Mark, that reminds me Jesus should predominate in my sermon. It should be clear, when anybody walks away from my sermon, that Jesus loves them. Jesus died for their sins. Their sins have been washed away in the blood of Jesus. I preach Christ and Him crucified. And, we want to live for our Savior, Jesus. So, I write *I N I* to remind me this is to be done *in the name of Jesus.*”

Then he said, “I end every sermon with the letters *S D G*. Nobody sees that except me. That is also a Latin abbreviation. It stands for the Latin words *soli deo gloria*, which means, *alone to God the glory*. That is to remind me that during the preaching of the sermon, if somebody is brought to repentance of their sin, if during the preaching of the sermon, someone is brought to the great comfort of knowing that Jesus has washed them clean of all their sin, and that burden of guilt is lifted off of their shoulders, if during the sermon, someone is motivated, by the love of Christ, to go out and live a new life, if that happens in my sermon, Mark, I want to be reminded *alone to God the glory!* That is not anything I did. It was the Word of God that was preached, the powerful Word of God that accomplished its purpose.”

There is a Bible verse that says,

“My word will not return to me empty or void.

It will accomplish the purpose where on to I sent it.”

The Word of God is powerful and effective. We say the Word of God is efficacious. To be efficacious means it actually does what it says it does. And so, for example, in today's scripture reading, when this centurion came to Jesus, and he needed help, he said, “My servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering.”

Jesus said, “I will go and heal him.” *I will come to your house.*

This centurion said to Jesus, “Lord, I do not deserve to have you

come under my roof.” *I am not worthy. I am not worthy to have you come under my roof.*

One of the things faith understands is, *“I am not worthy. If I am sick, if I am in trouble, if I am anxious, if I am lonely, if there are some troubles going on in my life, I am not worthy to have the Lord Jesus help me. I am not worthy.”* I don't come to Him and say, *“Lord Jesus, look at the love I have for other people. You ought to help me, because I am so loving to others.”*

This centurion gave a lot of money to help build a synagogue. He didn't say, *“Jesus I am worthy. I helped build the synagogue.”* He simply said, *“Jesus, I am unworthy.”*

All of us are unworthy to have the Lord help us in any way whatsoever. We are all sinners. And yet, what does faith trust? The centurion simply said to Jesus, *“Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed.”*

Just speak the Word.

You see, this man understood the efficacious power of the Word of God. One of the great comforts that we have, as God's people, when we are going through any kind of trouble in our life, (whether it is sickness, whether it is anxiety, whether it is loneliness, whether it is some trouble or tribulation), is you can go to the revealed Word of God. The revealed Word of God is powerful and efficacious in your life. And, it will accomplish the purpose it was sent for.

In my mind, one of the most comforting passages in all of scripture, where somebody was in great need, was this man who was let down through a roof. He was paralyzed. His friends let him down through the roof, with the hope Jesus would heal him. What was the first thing Jesus said to that man? Does anybody remember? I bet you do! The first thing Jesus said to that man was,

“Son, be of good cheer.
Your sins are forgiven.”

The Word of God is powerful and effective. That man's sins stood forgiven. They were forgiven. So, why did Jesus tell that paralyzed man, first and foremost, “Your sins are forgiven”? In His revealed Word, God wants you to know how dearly He loves you and His Will for you is nothing but a good and gracious Will. He wants it to be spoken to you, in His Word,

**“Son be of good cheer!
Your sins are forgiven.”**

When those words are spoken, they accomplish the purpose where on to they are sent. And, you are comforted in your heart, with a comfort that the world cannot give you of knowing, “*My Lord Jesus loves me so dearly, (though I am unworthy), He has revealed to me in His Word, that He died on the cross for all of my sins. And, I am forgiven.*” That is accomplished and I hold onto that. I am forgiven. We are comforted by the Word of God, the revealed Word of God. **S D G...** to God alone the glory!

When we are troubled over anything in our lives, the Word of God accomplishes the purpose where on to it was sent. You know, when Jesus spoke to the wind and the waves,

**“Peace,
be still”**

and calm came over creation, He also speaks His Word to our troubled hearts, our troubled souls, and calm comes over them, because they accomplish the purpose of His Words that they were sent for.

When, as a Christian, in times of trouble, you look at the Word and the Word says,

**“I will never leave you.
I will never forsake you”**

those are the Words of Christ. The Word has the power to calm our hearts, because we trust and know,

“Jesus never will leave me.

He never will forsake me.”

When your troubled heart goes to the Word, and hears the promise of God,

**“All things work together for good
to those who love God”**

there, His Word calms our troubled hearts, no matter what the trouble may be. When we hear His Word,

**“God is our refuge and strength,
an ever present help in every trouble.**

**Therefore, we will not fear,
though the earth be removed**

and the mountains be tossed into the depths of the sea”

there, our troubled hearts are calmed, knowing that God is our refuge and strength. He calms us through that very powerful word.

Our hearts are calmed, when we hear passages like this from the revealed Word of God.

“You may have had to suffer trials and all kinds of troubles,
but these have come (these trials have come)
so that your faith,
which is of greater worth than gold,
which perishes even though refined by fire,
may be proved genuine
and may result in glory honor and praise
when Christ is revealed.”

Through words like that, the powerful affect of the Word of God, our hearts are comforted in the storm, and we are brought peace, knowing God accomplishes His purpose in my life, even through troubles. ***S D G***... to God alone the glory!

And so, one of the great things we learn in today's scripture reading is that when you are in some kind of trouble or trial, whether you are sick, lonely, or in danger, go to the revealed Word of God. The Word of God accomplishes its purpose in your heart. ***S D G***... to

God alone the glory! And then, we can look more clearly at the hidden Will of God.

There is another Latin abbreviation that used to be quite a common practice. When someone would write a letter to someone else, they would end it with the abbreviation *D V*. So, they may have written, “*I plan on coming to visit you.*” Or, “*I plan on accomplishing this or that.*” And then, they would sign it, *D V*, and their name. The initials *D V* stand for the Latin words *deo volente*, which means *if it is God's Will, God willing*.

The leper came to Jesus, in today's scripture reading. The Bible, in the book of Luke, tells us he was filled with leprosy. He looked at Jesus and what did he say to Jesus? He said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

deo volente

What was the leper willing to do? He was willing to submit himself to the hidden Will of Jesus. He knew Jesus was omnipotent, all-powerful. He trusted the love of Jesus and the power of Jesus. And, he was willing to trust the hidden Will of Christ and submit himself to Christ's Will. And so, he did not say, “*Lord Jesus, heal me.*” He said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.”

Faith trusts not only the Revealed Word of God, but faith trusts the Will of God. Whether God chooses to lead you through thorns, or through roses, faith is willing to submit to a God who loves me so dearly, that He has revealed that all of my sins are forgiven. He has revealed that He will work out everything for my good. So, I am willing to submit to His Hidden Will, no matter what it may be.

There is a Bible passage that tells us God predestined us, before the world was ever created, to be conformed to the likeness of His Son. It is as if God is painting a picture, as your life progresses. The picture is you. He is conforming you, more and more, each day, to the likeness of His Son, to be more and more like Jesus. It is like an artist painting a picture. Sometimes, when we see an artist paint a

picture, there may be a line in that picture, or a brushstroke, that to us does not look like it fits. It seems to make no sense. But, God has promised, He has revealed to us, He is conforming us to the likeness of His Son. That has been revealed in His Word. And so, that means I trust each brush mark that comes into my life. I trust the Will of God. I am willing to submit, whether it is a brushstroke that is pleasing to me and takes me into a bed of roses, or whether it is a brush-mark that is a place of thorns. I know the Lord is conforming me more and more into the likeness of His Son. And so, faith trusts the Word of God and the Will of God. Everything we do, we want to do *in name Jesu, in the name of Jesus*, to give glory and praise to Him. Everything we do, we want to understand, *solī deo gloria, to God alone the glory*. And, as we go through life, and God unfolds the pattern of our life, we always submit to the Will of God, because

**the Will of God
is always good.**

Amen