

The Father's Will – 17/07/2016

“Cease striving and know that I am God;

I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Psalm 46:10)

Beloved in the Lord,

It is very hard to walk into a strong headwind. Just recently I was visiting my birthplace, Wellington NZ. One morning I decided to go for a walk along the harbour. I had forgotten how windy Wellington is, and how difficult it is to walk against the wind. As I was striving to make progress I suddenly thought of this verse and how many people are constantly struggling and striving in their relationship with Almighty God. They strive to gain God's favour and approval.

As I think about this, two well-known names spring to mind. The first is Saul (Apostle Paul) and the other is Martin Luther. Both men spent time striving to please God. Both were servants of religion and both were very zealous.

We know from his own testimony that Paul was a well-educated Pharisee who had studied at the feet of the one of the greats – Gamaliel. In his zeal to defend Judaism, Saul was persecuting Christians far and wide. He believed that these people who called upon the name of Jesus were members of a dangerous sect and that they should be punished and eradicated. Saul was totally dedicated to religion, but he didn't know God. This all changed on the road to Damascus, where Jesus appeared to him. Jesus asked him “Why are you persecuting Me?” Jesus also said to Him: ***“It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” (Acts 26:14)***

This is exactly what Saul was doing. Thinking that he was serving God, he was actually fighting against Him. Meeting Jesus changed everything. His striving against God ceased and now his battle was with men of his former religion. That is a story for another time. Today I would like to emphasise, that the moment Saul surrendered his life to Jesus, and submitted to God's will for him, his life changed.

Our text today says: ***“Cease striving and know that I am God;***

I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Psalm 46:10)

In Saul's case, God had to strike him with blindness for a few days to make him cease striving. The once proud and fearsome Saul now had to grope around in the dark, helpless, dependent upon someone to lead him. This humbling of Saul, was to lead him to become the great Apostle Paul. While Saul was striving to please God, God could not use him. It was when he ceased striving, and submitted humbly to God's will, that God began to use him mightily.

The other person is Martin Luther. Luther was sincere in his desire to serve God and he was very aware of his own sinfulness. He did everything prescribed by the Catholic Church, to purge himself of his sinful nature. He wanted to be close to God, The more he tried, the worse it became; until one day God enlightened him. He saw in the Scriptures that man is

saved by faith and not by works. He saw that salvation could not be bought or earned by works, but that salvation is God's gift. God graciously saves all who place their trust in Jesus Christ.

Luther ceased striving, and he surrendered to Jesus, and he was saved. He gave himself over to God's will and became the great reformer.

Luther like Paul was getting nowhere until he ceased striving. When he surrendered his life to Jesus in faith and trust, then everything changed.

Our text today contains the key to a blessed life for all people.

"Cease striving and know that I am God;

***I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."* (Psalm 46:10)**

We need to cease striving, Be still and trust in God. That brings blessing. When we surrender to God's perfect will, then we are no longer walking into the wind, but we turn around and have the wind at our backs. That is much better and it is so much easier to walk. In the Holy Scriptures wind is a symbol of The Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out He came as a mighty rushing wind. We read:

***"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance."* (Acts 2:1-4)**

From that day on, the believers no longer did their own thing. No, they were led by The Holy Spirit. They allowed the Spirit to blow them in God's will. The Church grew rapidly.

It is vital, that we like them, walk in the Spirit. Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians:

***"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."* (Gal.5:16)**

To walk by the Spirit means to be constantly led by Him. It means to trust and obey God's Will in every aspect of our life. It means to respond to His promptings and to do His will. It is not always easy to do so, but it is always the best way and the blessed way. Jesus taught us to pray: ***"Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."***

We need to understand that God's will, will be done whether we pray or not. What happens when we pray; is that we align ourselves with God's will. We agree with Him. We place ourselves on God's side. When we ask for God's will to be done, we come into the slip stream of God's will and we power on in the Holy Spirit. God can use us well.

God's will is always right. He makes no mistakes ever! We may not understand God's ways but they are always right. Our life would contain much more joy and peace if we stayed in the centre of God's will all the time.

It shouldn't be hard to surrender to God's will, if we get to know Him as He really is. There are three words that describe God so well. We find them in 1 John 4:16 **"God is love."**

In order to gain a fuller understanding we now take this verse in its context:

"By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. ¹³ By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. ¹⁴ We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (1.John 4:9-16)

So we see that God is love. He so loved us that He gave us His only begotten Son Jesus. When we love Jesus and trust in Him alone for our salvation from sin and hell, then we are God's children. When we are God's children, then Jesus lives/abides in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Our relationship with God is not religion but family. Our relationship is not sacrifices and rituals and works, but a loving Father-child relationship. It is all about love.

God's will for us is that we live in love. That we walk hand in hand with Him. We can summarise the whole Bible in two verses:

"YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' (Mt.22:37-39)

When we cease striving, become still and know God, then His love permeates our heart and we fulfil God's will by keeping the great commandment and God is honoured and glorified,

Do you get it?

Don't walk against the wind, but let go and trust in God and your light will shine forth brightly, and your life will proclaim that God is love! That is my prayer for us all.

Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.**