

Will of God vs Will of Man

(1/18/26)

Please turn to *Psalm 40:2, John 8:35*

LAST WEEK:

- We tell our kids: “my house, my rules” and expect them to respect and obey us.
- We quote the Bible to them:

Ephesians 6:1-3 (ESV)

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

Colossians 3:20 (ESV)

"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

- Yet do we balk or cry “legalism!” when we hear a sermon about obeying God?
- If we get to make rules for our kids, then doesn’t God get to do the same for us?
- If we’re loving and wise enough to make rules that **protect** our children, then isn’t God the same?
- If our kids claim we’re being tyrants and treating them like slaves b/c of said rules, and we KNOW that’s not true, then can we call God a tyrant and we His slaves b/c He made rules for us?
- None of us are as righteous, loving, compassionate, just, understanding, wise, or smart as God...so maybe the fact that He has rules and expects us to obey isn’t legalism or Him being a dictator.
- It’s not Him trying to bring us back under the old covenant.

TODAY we’re going to understand that **we obey God **from** a position of being a son or daughter of His and not **for** it.**

Psalm 40:2 (KJV)

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

BACKDROP. Imagine that you and I ***are standing in a deep pit*** that’s way over our heads. What’s more is that the bottom 2 feet of said pit is mud and we’re stuck—we can’t even lift one of our legs up! We’ve tried to free ourselves and climb up, but we can’t. We suddenly hear footsteps and, when we look up, Jesus is standing at the top of the pit looking at us.

From this point on, I’m going to give you 3 different scenarios as follows:

- SCENARIO 1: Legalist with no hope.

- SCENARIO 2: Legalist who believes he walks in grace, but is actually still a legalist and has false hope.
- SCENARIO 3: Grace, New Covenant Christian.

SCENARIO #1: THE LEGALIST WITH NO HOPE. Jesus looks down at you and says “you’re in here because of your sin and disobedience. I’ll get you out of there, clean you up, get you some new clothes, give you a purpose, and move you into My house... as long as you obey every rule I’ve ever made perfectly. Not one error or failure from the time you were born until you die.”

PROBLEM: speaking for me, I’m 57 years old so I have 57 years of disobedience and sin already on my account. Therefore even if I could obey Jesus 100% from this point forward, which I cannot, I can’t be Saved.

SCENARIO #2: LEGALIST WHO THINKS HE WALKS IN GRACE AND HAS FALSE HOPE. Jesus looks down at me/you and said “you’re in here because of your sin and disobedience. I’ll get you out of there, clean you up, get you some new clothes, give you a purpose, and move you into My house. If you’ll repent and receive Me as your Savior, I will forgive all your sins up until this very moment...clean slate.”

“Yes Lord!” we cry, and Jesus lifts us up out of the miry clay, sets our feet on solid rock, cleans us up, gives us new clothes, and a purpose.

“Hold on,” Jesus says, pointing His finger in our face and speaking sternly, “your account starts back up right now. Every time you sin it will be added to your rap sheet. Remember: if you think you’re going to heaven when you die, you can’t take your sin with you! You’d best keep your nose clean—completely clean—from here on out or I’ll kick you out of my house back in the pit you go! I’ll be watching...closely.”

SCENARIO #3: GRACE, NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN. Jesus looks down at me/you and said “you’re in here because of your sin and disobedience. My Father so loved you that He gave me to you, that if you believe in Me you won’t perish in that pit, but I’ll give you everlasting life. I’ll get you out of there, clean you up, get you some new clothes, give you a purpose, and you will dwell in My house forever. Repent and believe in Me. I will forgive ALL.”

“Yes Lord!” we cry, and Jesus frees us. He sets us on solid rock, cleans us up, gives us new clothes, and says “I’ve paid your entire debt and you owe nothing. You are now a son of God like Me. I’ve placed My Spirit in you and sealed you for the resurrection.

“You are now made in My image. Your old life is gone, your old self dead. I give you a new purpose and direction. You will pursue righteousness, for I am righteous. You will turn aside from every wicked way and walk alongside of Me in holiness. I am the Lord your God, and I expect you to do what I say.”

“What if I sin, Lord?” we ask, “will You throw me back into the pit?”

“I’ve already paid for ALL your sins,” He responds. “You’re never going back to that pit. Whoever I set free is free indeed. I will still correct, rebuke and discipline you...but I won’t renege on anything I’ve done in you or the promises I made to you. You are mine forever and I am yours. I will help you in your obedience: strengthen and empower you to do so.”

Let’s sum it up:

- The Hopeless Legalist realizes he’s never done anything right, so will stay in the pit.
- The Legalist who believes he has grace but doesn’t, says Jesus made a PARTIAL payment for his sins...and now he’s responsible for a) earning his own righteousness and b) paying for his own sin after his salvation. If he fails, back into the pit he goes.
- The Grace Christian realizes Jesus has paid for it ALL. It’s not just that he won’t go back to the pit, He moves into and stays in the house of the Lord...forever.

Let’s make another analogy: the bank is about to take your house or car because you can’t make the payments no matter how hard you work or try. You have a rich friend who comes to you and says: “how much in back payments do you owe?” After you tell him, he makes the back payments...and leaves you with the remaining balance that you **still can’t pay.**

Only thing the rich friend has done is **delay the inevitable**...you will still lose your car or home. No, we need the rich friend to **pay off the car or house so it’s ours**...because we can’t pay for it ourselves. If he does that, we no longer have to live in fear. We will be secure AND always thankful to our friend for bailing us out.

If our debt of sin is only partially paid then Jesus might kick us out of His house and toss us back into the pit. We’ll live a “Christian” life of fear, paranoia, guilt, shame, and condemnation.

OR we’ll **falsely believe we are obeying God**, keeping our nose clean, and we’ll become pridefully self-righteous. We’ll compare our self-obtained goodness with others and truly have the “holier than thou” attitude.

It’s been awhile since I’ve said this: **the righteousness of God doesn’t come in different shades of light, gray, and darkness.** The righteousness of God is pure Light with no darkness whatsoever. No gray. There is no such thing as “more” or “less” righteous—it’s not measurable. Someone either is or they aren’t...and the only way to have it is for Jesus to give it to us.

The legalistic Christian doesn't know this or has forgotten it.

They've walked away from the true Grace of God and falsely believed they're doing their best to maintain their Salvation. Restraining themselves from evil, doing good, and then begging Jesus to forgive them—again—when they mess up. Usually comes with lots of self-loathing in private, and being condescending “holier than thou” in public.

SHIFTING GEARS.

In the days of Jesus it was common for middle income and rich homes **to have servants**—it's still that way in other parts of the world right now. Servants were either outright slaves or the homeless poor who worked for nothing more than room and board. Imagine a married couple, living in their own home, with kids and servants also living there full time. Now we get to John 8:35 to understand the context:

[Jhn 8:35 NIV] “Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but **a son belongs to it forever.**”

Please do this: **take a deep breath and as you exhale, say “forever.”**

In my view, ***this word is better than “love, peace, joy,” or any other word in the Bible*** for this reason: when God says “forever” He really means it. He won't change His mind, won't renege, won't break His promise.

- God loves me... forever.
- I am His son... forever.
- The Holy Spirit lives inside me... forever.
- I will live... forever.
- Jesus returns, establishes His Kingdom, and it lasts... forever.
- I'll be raised from the dead and given a new body that lasts... forever.
- I will live with Him and in His Kingdom... forever.

Son/Daughter of God = forever.

- I have no risk that God is going to disown me.
- I have no fear that He stops loving me.
- There's no chance He kicks me out of His house and throws me back into the pit.
- He won't get angry and suddenly change His mind about raising me from the dead when that time comes.

It's from this position that I obey Him.

It's from this position that I realize—for the rest of my life—**how good Jesus actually is.** How generous, merciful, patient, and kind. How He is all of these things w/o compromising His justice or holiness. Justice for you and I was satisfied, paid for, by the blood of Christ. Communion isn't a ritual, it's a time of thankfulness and celebration.

How did our Salvation benefit Jesus? What did He get out of it?

Here's what I know: **I got a whole lot more out of it than He did.**

Being the son or daughter of the King means we're in covenant with Him, and **part of that covenant is obedience.**

- Are we His kids and set to inherit all things from Him? YES
- Even better: aren't we JOINT-HEIRS with Jesus Himself? YES

In a home with sons and servants, it wasn't just the servants who were supposed to obey ***but the sons too:***

[Mat 21:28-31 ESV] 28 "What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' 29 And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward **he changed his mind and went.** 30 And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I will, sir,' **but did not go.** 31 **Which of the two did the will of his father?**" They said, "**The first.**"

The two sons are sons and not servants...yet their father still expects them to 1) work and 2) obey.

- Are we destined to rule and reign with Him when His Kingdom comes? YES
- Aren't we labeled as both priests and kings, royalty? YES

[1Pe 2:9 ESV] 9 But you are a chosen race, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Yet in THIS world, being the son or daughter of the King isn't just a walk in the park. **We don't just get to do whatever we wanna, live our own lives, and follow our hearts.**

Our King has expectations. He's given us a purpose and even a destiny.

Here's an imperfect analogy and just so you know: there are very few perfect analogies.

Have you watched a movie or show set in the Middle Ages? Some of them go like this: a prince or princess of a king meets a pauper and the two fall in love. The pauper is all in: he or she wants to run off, get away from it all, get married, have kids, and live happily ever after. The prince or princess, even though they're in love, refuses. They end up saying something like: "I've already been promised by my father, the King, to marry prince/princess so and so of the neighboring country to forge an alliance between our nations. This alliance will bring peace and prosperity to the people. I'm not free to just do this like you are, but I must think of my nation and people first."

And they're right! Movies like this cause you and I to side with the pauper and hope they both follow their hearts and elope. But that's childlike and immature. Self-serving and self-focused.

You and I are no longer paupers. We're now princes and princesses of the King: God. Our old life is gone and been replaced by the one He's given us. He has a purpose and yes, has given us a destiny. And He expects us to obey Him and follow His ways.

[Pro 16:9 ESV] 9 The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

[Pro 19:21 NIV] 21 Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

[Eph 1:11 ESV] 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

[Eph 2:10 ESV] 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

SUMMARY:

- God making rules and enforcing them isn't legalism.
- Us being prompted to obey God isn't legalism.
- We do so FROM the position Jesus gave us: being His son or daughter and living in His house forever, a joint heir of His kingdom.
- We're not at risk of Him changing His mind and throwing us back into the pit.

CALL TO ACTION:

- Where in our lives are we rebelling against our Father?
- Disregarding His commandments about how we should be living...or shouldn't be?
- Have we taken advantage of His forever grace and decided to live some aspect of our life the way we see fit?
- Has our conscience been bothering us about it?

Let today be the day that we ask God to help us in our obedience to Him.