

05 | Praying the Will of God

THE PROMISES OF GOD Series

Welcome back! This is our last teaching on the promises of God. In the broader series, the walks of God. I'm Caleb Tyler, if you don't know me. And it's been a joy to be with you and we are going to finish with a bang here!

Practically speaking, how do we gain access to these promises? Can I just pray anything? Is God a cosmic genie where I just say the right thing, and the words in the right order and then poof, things show up? Well, I think we're going to find out that God is a little more nuanced than that. But he has given us some directives. We've already talked about believing in God. We talked about believing in these promises. We've talked about the authority of His word and that He's always faithful. But I want to talk to you about praying according to the will of God, or praying the will of God. For that, let's go to 1 John, chapter 5, verse 14. 1 John 5:14 says this, "This is the confidence which we have before Him. That if we ask anything, (Now, notice this phrase) according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him." There's an old saying that goes like this, "Faith begins where the will of God is

known." Faith begins where the will of God is known. What does that really mean? Well, it means that I can't really be confident that something is God's will unless I know it's God's will. That seems a little circular, but have you ever prayed a prayer and you're like, "Oh, I don't know if this is really God's will, but I'm just going to put it out there." And someone might say that that's a reflection of bringing our desires before the Lord, but even our desires need to be weighed and measured against His will. Look at the scripture again, "This is the confidence which we have before Him." Let me just make an observation here and say, isn't it wonderful that you and I can stand before God and have confidence when it comes to prayer? In fact, I love the scripture that says when we are in trouble, when we need help, that God invites us. He says, come boldly before the throne of grace! Come boldly. Hey, when you're in trouble, and you need help, and when you need mercy, which, by the way, when you need mercy, that actually means you're in a position where you deserve judgment. And God said, even in that moment, when you have sinned and you deserve judgment, He says, "Come boldly. I mean, get in here! Wastes no time whatsoever. Get in My presence!" And guess what He said we'll find? Grace to help and mercy in that time of need. Isn't God good? I mean, come on, you and I. We're not good like that. Can you imagine if you have kids or think forward to when you might have them and think that, you know, a kid does something bad, and the first thing you want him to do is come in and so that you can give

them grace and mercy. Or you're like, "What did you break?" What can you imagine that scenario? Well, that's not the God we serve. That's why in the scriptures we've talked about in the past, in the series, we've talked about how Jesus contrasted good fathers and the Heavenly Father and used that phrase, "How much more then will your Heavenly Father?" You know, He is a good, good Father!

And so we can stand in His presence and have confidence, but what's that confidence attached to? That if we ask anything (that's pretty broad, but then it narrows) according to His will. You know, it's akin to someone saying, "Oh, God, I want a wife. Yeah, I want a wife." And you start giving Him the list of everything you want. But will God answer that request? Well, it might be contingent upon the fact that you're married already. So God is not going to give you another wife when you're already married. You understand what I mean? That would not be His will. His will is one man, one woman for life. That is the marriage covenant. So do you understand how that not just asking anything is appropriate, but asking things that are according to His will? In fact, Jesus said, "whatever things you ask in My name". You know, there is a certain function to the language that we use in the name of Jesus. That's our entry into the presence of the Father. But "in My name" also means in the spirit of my mission. On my mission that I have for you. Like if I were to tell you, "Hey, go down to Starbucks to get me a coffee. It's there and go in my

name. Go do this thing and tell them that I sent you." You see what I mean? So it's it's akin to being in partnership with His mission. So it's not just magic words, as it were, in the name of Jesus and then whatever we say happens. But it's what is in agreement with the total plan of God for our holiness, for purity, for ministry, for all of it. So if we can figure out what the will of God is, then faith can begin. Then we can stand with confidence and know. So that's what it is to pray. A prayer of faith. It's to be convinced. I mean, how have we talked about being convinced in the past in this series? How has God been trying to convince us from His word? Well, guess what? This is where we're going to find our confidence. This is where we're going to find what the will of God is for our lives in terms of these promises.

So how could we know that something is God's will? If we don't know if it's God's will, how could we pray in faith? But we see the Scripture. As a matter of fact, if you look through 1 John, you will see this phrase repeated over and over and over again. "That you may know, that you may know, that you may know, that you may know." I think John wants us to know that we can know. I think he wants us to know that the scripture was written so that you and I could have confidence to stand before God and to ask him on the basis of His promises and know with a surety in our heart that they would come to pass. And so the scriptures are the thing that will now tell us what is God's will. The will of God is

shown in the promises of God. But sometimes we don't pray God's will because we're not even asking the question, "God, is this your will?" Hey, I think that's just part of Christian discipleship. It's a good check on our hearts that when we have a desire come up, or especially in the realm of desires, "Lord, I want a new car", or "Lord, is it your will that I should have that?" and not just try to find a Scripture and make the Scripture jump through some hoops so that we can get what we want? Because James said that sometimes we don't get our prayers answered because we're just going to end up spending it on our lusts, our desires, you see.

So, Matthew 6:33 says it like this. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." You might think of righteousness like the good things of God in the earth, the good work of God, the working out of the righteous plan of God in the Earth. So seek His Kingdom and how that kingdom is implemented inside this world. You do that. His kingdom and His righteousness seeking that first. And all these things will be provided for you. Now again, I think it would be playing a little bit of falsehood on our part if we stood up to God and we said, "Lord, I want your kingdom and Lord, I want your righteousness. And hey, by the way, I need all this boom, boom, boom, boom, boom." And we spend all this time just trying to tell God and present Him with our to-do list, and then kind of just telling God, "Hey, and by the way, I need it fast. I need it now." Sometimes I kind of wonder who's on the

throne, you know, like maybe we're trying to summon the Holy Spirit to come before our throne and telling Him, "Hey, Holy Spirit, let's go. There's some promises here. Let's get this done, and I need it by the end of the week. So we'll see you when you got it done." Oh, no, no, no, no. We've got the wrong person on the throne. You and I need to come humbly yet boldly to that throne of grace. We need to make our petitions known. But we need to be asking God, "God, what is Your will? What do You want for my life? Lord, are You trying to teach me contentedness right now?" Because that's something the Scripture talks about. "Lord, are you wanting me to persevere in a certain situation?" We need to ask God. We need to sit before Him, present these questions, and ask. And guess what Jesus said about asking? Ask and it will be given. The answer to whether it would be the will of God would come through the Holy Spirit and through the Word.

So we need to examine our hearts. Psalm 139 talks about that "search me, know my thoughts, try my ways, see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me into the paths everlasting." There is, I should say it like this, "Is there a promise in Scripture that applies to me?" You know, some people might want to take a scripture about Israel going into the Promised Land and then go, "Oh, let me do the math here. So I live over here in La Habra, and so from Egypt to the war to the promised land, and then the depth..." And they measure out all the miles and direction

and then they start marching out in Fullerton what God has for them on the basis of that Scripture. What? But that promise was meant for those people in that time. But there are other passages of Scripture where it talks about the character of God in relation to His covenant people. For instance, sometimes the scripture in Jeremiah, where it talks about "I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says Lord". There are some people would say, "Oh, you're taking that out of context because it was written to the people who were in Babylon. They were in bondage, and they were going to be delivered out." And I say that's absolutely true. That is what that meant. But do you know what it tells me? It tells me that God's heart towards people that He is in covenant with is a future and a hope and not to do harm. Is that right? It is right. Since you can't respond to me, it is right, ha! That is a reflection of how God feels about the people He's in covenant with. So while it applies to the people in Israel, it still applies to us because it's a reflection of His love for His own people. So I should also say we need to find out whether it is applicable to us, whether it is righteously and truly belongs to us, but also that just because it's God's will does not mean it will automatically come to pass. Now when pastoring a church, I've said this a lot. If God's will was always done, people would be on time to church. They would serve in a variety of ministries. They would give and tithe and all that sort of thing. But guess what? God doesn't always get what He wants. Why? The way He set this planet up is

there's opportunity for partnerships. One of the scriptures that I've repeated throughout this teaching is that through these promises, we become partakers of the divine nature. It's an invitation to partake and see these promises to come, to see the power of God in action right in our own lives and in the lives of the people that we minister to. So since just because it's God's will, it won't automatically come to pass. What are you and I to do?

Well, let me give you something that I heard years ago, and that is we must push. P.U.S.H. We must pray until something happens. Sometimes we're praying and it's a little fuzzy, but we're just praying for the will of God. "Oh, Lord, let your kingdom come, let Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven." And we know there's a lot that we need in there, but we're just like praying the scripture because we don't know exactly some of the details. So, pray until something happens. We realize that delay doesn't mean denial. How long did Abraham wait? And there was even a little period where Abraham kind of gave up, went with plan B, and that's still paying problematic dividends even today in the Middle East between Arabs and Jews, the Israelites. So we have to in the middle of praying until something happens, we have to take all contrary thoughts captive. We need that 2 Corinthians 10 "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ so that anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God," the revealed promise of God for us, we don't let ourselves get talked

out of it with these lower thoughts that come against the higher thoughts of God and say that they're not true. We have to endure and persist effectually and fervently because that's the kind of prayer that avails much. By the way, did you know that there is a way to pray the will of God? Even when you don't know how to pray for as you ought to pray about any given subject. Well, you would have heard it in one of our other walks of God teachings about being filled with the Holy Spirit. Because when you and I don't know exactly what's the right thing to pray, you can begin to pray in the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit makes perfect intercession to the Father. And you'll find that Romans Chapter 8:26-28.

You know, I remember there was a time when my dad was not walking with God and I prayed for him a lot. But after praying for him for decades, I just didn't even have words left. It was like, I don't know what else to pray. And in those moments, I would just feel the invitation of the Holy Spirit to pray in the Holy Spirit. And I could know that the Holy Spirit for sure is praying the perfect will of God in a given situation. So that's a wonderful way to access the confidence. And I don't know about you, but in my experience when I have given over to the Holy Spirit to pray, confidence and faith is built! And so here I am in the presence of God with that confidence that John wrote about, because the Holy Spirit is the one doing the praying. In Hebrews 10:35, it says, "therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has great

reward. For you have need of endurance so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised." So that when you have done the will of God. You may receive the promise. Another version says that "after you have done the will of God, you would receive the promise." Verse 37, "For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not among those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith for the safekeeping of the soul." Do you hear what the scripture writer's saying here? He's like, "We've got this faith, but you have to hold on to faith. You have to persist in faith. Faith is in partnership with the fruit of the Spirit. And one of those fruits of the Spirit is long suffering.

I heard a pastor say long ago answering a question where someone said, "Pastor, how long is long suffering?" And he said, "it's forever". I think it was even from that point I started, when I would come to that verse, I would say "loooooong suffering". Because sometimes that patience, that endurance, seems like it goes on and on and on and on. But if you and I are praying with confidence and not letting that confidence be stripped away by feelings of doubt or the fatigue of waiting so long. Listen to what the Scripture said there, "You have need of endurance." "Yeah, but God, I don't want endurance. I want this prayer answered!", and the Lord, in His wisdom, says, like He said to Habakkuk.

Do you remember back in the book of Habakkuk, who saw all of this injustice going on, judges being bribed, and the priests were corrupt and he makes this big list of things that are wrong and he makes this big complaint to God. And then he said, "And I'm going to sit and wait for the answer." And he even uses the word like "when I am corrected", he's even expecting that maybe his attitude wasn't all right, but that a correction is coming from the Lord. And one of the Lord's responses to him was, "I am doing something. If I told you what it was, you wouldn't believe it. Wait for it." We really don't like that answer from the Lord and David asked that question a lot in the Psalms. "How long, Lord? How long, how long?" And it's okay for us to ask God how long by the way, that's ongoing communication, like the kids in the back seat, "are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there? Do I have the promise yet? Do have the promise yet?" But listen, if we know we're in the will of God with what we pray for, we see a Scripture for healing, for provision, for restoration of family relationships -- I'm going to restore the hearts of the fathers, of the sons and and so on, things like that in your family relationships. Think about emotional and spiritual health, they're all there. They're part of God's loving plan for us. If we can stay in confidence and keep our words aligned and our hearts aligned, and when they get out of alignment go back to the Lord and say, "God, I'm struggling in my belief. I need you to empower me by the Holy Spirit to persist in faith." Then we are imitating those who,

through faith and patience, inherited the promises. Do you want to inherit some promises? Find out what God's will is by diving into this land of promises in His word. The heart of God is rich. His paths drip with abundance. His word is secure. It's forever settled in heaven.

Lord, help us get it settled in our hearts. Lord, let the words that You sent, that don't return empty, may they accomplish Your purpose. Right here in us. Right here in our minds. Right here in our mouths. So that we don't speak harsh words about You being unfaithful or not doing what You said. Instead, let us stand boldly as people of covenant, looking at every giant in the land, every mountain that rises before us and say, God has given me that country. I'm standing on a promise based on a covenant with the Almighty Creator of the universe who does not change. There is no shadow of turning. He is not a man that He lies, nor a son of man that He repents, has He said it and will He not do it? Has he spoken and will He not make it good?" The answer to that is He will make it good. Stand in faith! See the salvation of the Lord. Well, it's been a pleasure to be with you walking through this promised land of God's word. And I pray that you will see many rich, great and precious promises coming to pass in your life and in your ministry for the glory of God and for your good.