

“WHERE HE LEADS ME I WILL FOLLOW”

Acts 22:11-21

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

Our hearts are stubborn and proud—“desperately wicked,” says Jeremiah!

God does not intend for us to make our own choices and determine our own direction in life. He knows what is best for us.

Sometimes we are so determined to follow our choices that we end up hurting and ruining those closest. We get what we want **but He sends “leanness into our souls.”**

Saul of Tarsus learned the hard way that he needed to wait upon God to know his will, and then he needed to take every step to be obedient to that will!

YOU MUST FOLLOW THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT IN KNOWING AND DOING GOD’S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE.

In this passage the Holy Spirit shows us several important steps taken by the young Christian to find and to do the will of God.

But first, note also the masterful defense Paul makes to those desiring to kill him there on the steps of the fortress of Antonia:

- 1) I was not expecting to meet the Risen Christ, and I actually saw him personally.
- 2) I was helpless to resist Him.
- 3) I was given direction by a Jewish man who was God-fearing even by Jewish standards of the Law and had a good reputation with all the non-Christian Jews in Damascus.
- 4) He spoke to me in the name of “the God of our fathers”—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc.
- 5) The Jesus about whom Ananias spoke is “The Righteous One”—He is no Law-breaker.
- 6) God Himself is the one who commanded Ananias to come to me and who gave me directions.
- 7) Afterward I continued loyal to Judaism and temple worship and was diligently praying there when Jesus confronted me again.
- 8) God put me into a divine trance and I saw Jesus again and He spoke with me—giving me explicit instructions to leave Jerusalem.
- 9) I had no desire to go and believed that it would be best for me to try to reach my own people, seeing that my life had changed so dramatically from my past course of persecution. Surely the Jews would notice the change and give me a listening ear so that I could reach them with the truth.
- 10) I imprisoned Christians, beat them, and even participated in and approved the killing of Stephen the **witness** (martyr) for God. **Surely my plan to stay is good!**
- 11) God would not hear of it! He told me that my **testimony** would be rejected; He was sending me far away to the Gentiles.

All was quiet and peaceful until Paul mentioned the “Gentiles” and his special mission to them; then the mob scene continued as we will see next week.

But now let us see the important steps Saul took in finding God’s will for his life—and how we can do the same.

- I. _____ YOURSELF BEFORE GOD IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO LISTEN TO HIM (11)
 - A. You cannot trust your own sight—Saul became blind.
 - B. Submit yourself to others who can see the right way.
- II. PUTTING YOURSELF UNDER THE _____ OF GOD’S CHOSEN SPIRITUAL LEADERS (12)
 - A. He was not an apostle.
 - B. He was a God-fearing leader about whom we know nothing else.
- III. NOT HESITATING TO TAKE THE _____ IMPORTANT _____ OF OBEDIENCE—BAPTISM (14)
 - A. Get yourself baptized—permissive middle; you don’t baptize yourself!
 - B. Permit your sins to be ceremonially washed away—see Rom 6:4-6 for the clear significance of the ceremony of water baptism.
 - C. Salvation and forgiveness depends upon the fact that you have **already called upon the name of Jesus Christ** [in Paul’s case on the Damascus road, and again publicly when in the baptismal waters].
- IV. PRAYING FOR SPIRITUAL _____ (13) cf. 9:11: Saul was praying before Ananias came.
 - A. Saul received physical healing for literal sight restoration.
 - B. The seeing and looking up at Ananias is a powerful illustration of how God gives spiritual sight so as to be able to humbly look up and trust someone whom God has chosen—even though we don’t really know him that well!
- V. ACCEPTING THE FACT THAT GOD HAS A _____ FOR YOUR LIFE (14); in Saul’s case It was:
 - A. Know His will
 - B. See the Righteous One—His literal vision of Christ is the keystone of His apostleship.
 - C. Hear an utterance from His mouth—Paul received extensive divine revelation.
Note that we now discover His will through the revelation in his Word—that is where we see the risen Christ and hear His voice and get to know His will.
- VI. ACCEPTING YOUR PART IN WORLDWIDE _____ (15; 17-21)
 Being a “witness to all men”—“Gentiles, kings, children of Israel” (9:15)
 - A. You must not close any doors that God wants open.
 - B. You must be willing to leave home and family and familiar places and companions (17-18)
 - C. You must accept the fact that you are different now and your old friends and ways will no longer work (19-20).
 - D. You must be willing to go wherever He leads you—even “far away” (21).

CONCLUSION

You can start knowing the will of God by doing the simple and basic things that you know God wants you to do right here and right now. And then the Lord will guide you step by step to greater things!

- 1) Humble yourself before God.
- 2) Put yourself under the authority of God’s spiritual leaders.
- 3) Don’t hesitate to take the first important step—baptism for new believers, or the steps mentioned above for the rest of us.
- 4) Pray for Spiritual enlightenment.
- 5) Accept the fact that God has a plan for your life.
- 6) Accept your part in worldwide evangelism.

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