

SERVING GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

The Supreme Will

Acts 13:36a—For David indeed, having in his own generation ministered to the will of God.

Exodus 8:1—And Jehovah said to Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith Jehovah: Let my people go, that they may serve me.

Shall we pray:

Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for Thy presence with us. We pray that Thou wilt give us the right attitude towards Thyself, that we may remove our shoes because we are standing on holy ground. Dear Lord, as we gather here we look to Thee to see what Thou hast to say to us. Speak, Thy servants heareth. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

Our theme for this conference is “Serving God’s Purpose”, and I was asked to give a general background or foundation of this purpose. There is nothing nobler or higher than serving God’s purpose. Suppose someone who is higher up asked you to come for dinner. What will be your reaction? Of course, you will prepare yourself for that dinner, and you will go early in order to serve your friend. But we have been invited this morning to dine with our Lord Jesus; therefore, I believe that in our hearts we are full of gratitude. Who are we that we should be invited to His table? How are we to prepare for that dinner? And this is the attitude that we come with this morning. There is nothing nobler or higher than serving God’s purpose, and this is our responsibility or our calling.

A Personal Testimony of Learning to Serve

I remember in 1930 when I was saved, it seemed as if nobody understood what service really was. Usually after a week of revival meetings, the last day would be a call to consecration. A large map of China was hung on the wall and the preacher would begin to preach. He told us that God had saved us through His Son Jesus Christ; therefore, how are we to express our gratitude to Him? If you were a man you would become a preacher, but if you were a woman you would become a Bible woman. In other words, his calling for consecration was limited to those who would spend their whole life serving the Lord.

Even though I was just fifteen years old and newly saved, my heart was warm. So the preacher said, “You may choose where you want to serve God. Here is the Chinese map, and you can come to the platform and point your finger to the place where you want to serve. Think of that! I was only fifteen years old and newly saved, but my heart was warm. Thus I told myself that I had to go to the furthest part of China to serve God and prove my love for Him. So as a young man I

marched up to the platform and pointed my finger at Mongolia because at that time it was considered the furthest place—and I meant it. After I made that decision it was my last year in high school, and I spent a year searching out everything about Mongolia and I set my heart to go there. When I finished high school, I did not want to go to college because I thought it was a waste of four years. Instead, I chose a Bible School so that I could prepare myself for going to Mongolia; but to my surprise my father did not agree.

My father was a pastor and he loved the Lord. So I thought he would be very glad with what I had chosen, but he said, “No; you go to college, and after you finish college I will send you to America to study theology.” I was so disappointed, but thank God for disappointments, because His way is not our way. I wanted to serve God in my way, but God wanted to be served in His way. And thank God, during my college years the Lord began to open my eyes, and here I am.

A Noble Calling

We are serving God, and there is nothing nobler than that. And this is a call not only to a few; this is a call to all who are saved by His grace. You remember in the Old Testament time when God sent Moses to Egypt to say to Pharaoh: “Let My people go that they may serve Me.”

Do you know why you are saved? Is it because you are better than anybody else? Is it because there are some good points in you? Not at all! All of us are the greatest of sinners, and we are all saved by grace. So why did God save you? Was it just because He wanted to fill up heaven? No, He saved us for a reason. As we read our Bibles carefully we discover what that reason is. So this morning I would like to give you a general background, and probably a number of you already know it. When we read the Bible, it is not that we read it once and think we know it, so that’s it. We are to read the Bible our whole life. Therefore, we need to go back to the Word of God and see something very, very basic.

Angels were in the First Creation

Have you ever thought why God made man? We know that in the first creation the highest created beings were angels; there was no man in sight during that time. Then why did God begin to create man during the second creation? I am sure you know Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” That was the beginning of the universe. But we know that when God creates, it is not half-done or nearly done. When He created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, it was complete (Genesis 1:1). The heavens and the earth were created when He spoke a word and it was done.

Lucifer

So in the first creation the highest created beings were angels, and in the beginning everything was rosy. The angels were worshipping and serving God, and according to the Bible among all the

angels that were created the highest was Lucifer, the bright morning star. In Ezekiel, chapter 28, we find a description of Lucifer. Even though Ezekiel used the king of Tyre as a type, nobody, not even a king could fit the description that was given there because it is a description of an archangel. It is Lucifer, a bright and shining star who was created almost perfect. He was full of gifts and as the anointed cherub he led all the angels in worshiping God.

In the beginning Lucifer did well, but gradually, because of the abundance of his riches he began to think of himself. He wanted to be more than an angel; he wanted to be equal with God. Isaiah 14 tells us that five times he said: "I will, I will, I will." In other words, he was thinking of himself. He looked at himself and he saw his own beauty, his own gifts, but he was not satisfied with what God had provided. He wanted to be equal with God. To put it more specifically: he wanted to take the place of the Son of God, and because of this God dismissed him. That is why we find in Genesis 1:2: "And the earth became void and ruined and was filled with water." We do not know how long this continued, but we know it is what is called the ice age. Did God give up what He had in mind? No, whenever God makes up His mind, He will do it. After the failure of the archangel we do not know how long it was before God began to restore the earth to be habitable. From Genesis 1:2 onwards it is God restoring the earth to be habitable, and on the sixth day He began to make man. Now man was made very special because he was made in God's image after His likeness.

Man Made in the Image of God

Do you know why God made you in such a glorious way? There is nothing in the universe that is made after God's image except man. Even though the angels are higher than man, they are more intelligent than man, yet only man was made in the special way of His image which points to the inward. So far as the inward is concerned man has the love of God within him, and he is made differently.

Why did God make man in such a way? As we look at the world today we see how far away the idea of man is from what God had originally made him! God made man according to His own image after His own likeness. But why did God make man in such a special way? Because God has a purpose. We know that God is the greatest will in the universe. Even before the foundation of the world, even before He created anything, God set a will in Himself. Before the foundation of the world God made a will according to His good pleasure. God is the supreme will in the universe, and before He created anything He first set a will which is according to His good pleasure because this is what He desires. He has no advisor; He decides all by Himself, and He set a supreme will. After He had set that supreme will then He began to do something.

God's Will Governs Everything

So we can see how important that will is. And His will not only governs all creation, it also governs every believer. So it is extremely important that you know what God's will is for you, and

what God's will is for mankind because it explains everything. If we live in this world but do not know what the supreme will is then our life on earth is in vain. No matter what you have done in the world, what accomplishments you may have done, all these are nothing in comparison with the will of God. If we live outside of God's will, it is a life wasted. Only if you live within God's will, is your life worthwhile. So the question is: What is God's supreme will?

All Things are to be Summed Up in Christ

In Ephesians 1:9-10 it says, "Having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for [the] administration of the fullness of times; to head up [sum up] all things in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth."

That is the supreme will. That is the will of God for each and every one of us. It does not matter what profession you are involved in; this is what man is meant to be and do—God's supreme will.

What is that supreme will? God wants everything in the universe, whether it is in the heavens, on the earth, or under the earth, to sum up all things in Christ. In other words, everything in the universe, whether it is things in the heavens or upon the earth or underneath the earth, will speak of Christ. Everything will express Christ Jesus. Everything will bring glory to Christ, and this is the supreme will of God for all of us. In other words, God wants to sum *you* up in Christ Jesus, that in your whole life, in every aspect of your life, it will express and glorify Christ. That is God's purpose.

Love is the Whole Law

No man is to live for himself or herself. If he does this then his life is wasted. Whatever profession you may have, no matter what you do, your life on earth is to glorify Christ and express Christ. This is the supreme purpose of God. In order to understand this the Bible has another illustration which is found in Romans 13:9-10: "For, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not lust; and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love works no ill to its neighbor; love therefore is [the] whole law."

This Scripture tells us that love sums up all the commandments of God. Whatever commandment it may be, if there is love you fulfill that commandment. If there is no love, even if you keep these commandments, it is nothing before God.

The Rich Young Ruler

You remember the story of the rich young man. One day he ran towards the Lord Jesus so anxious in his heart that he did not mind the multitudes that were there. He knelt before Him and

said, "Good Master, what should I do to inherit life?" The Lord looked at him and said, "Keep the commandments." And the young man said, "What commandments?" And the Lord repeated the second tablet of the commandments. We know that the first tablet has four commandments concerning our responsibility before God, and the second tablet has six commandments which is concerning the relationship of man with man. So the Lord just mentioned the relationship with man to that young man because if you cannot fulfill what is towards man how can you fulfill anything towards God? This is what the young man said, "I have kept these from my youth." The Lord looked at him and loved him. Surely you would love a young man like that. And the Lord said, "There is only one thing you lack: "Go, sell all that you have. Give to the poor and then you come and follow Me." But that young man could not do that because he was very rich.

All Things will Express Christ

If we cannot love our neighbor, how can we love God? So here you find love sums up all laws. If there is love you automatically keep all these laws. So far as God's purpose is concerned, He wants us to express His beloved Son in every aspect of our lives so that Christ may be seen. We are to be hidden, but He is to be seen. This is the supreme purpose of God towards you and me, and this is the reason for our time together. We have gathered together for one supreme purpose, that Christ may be seen in our lives and everything in us will give glory to Christ Jesus. It will be an expression of Christ but not our expression.

God willing tomorrow and the next day we will see how we can express Christ in our life. We do pray that after this conference we will be able to truly say, "It is no longer I who lives but Christ lives in me," and then the supreme will of God concerning us is fulfilled.

Shall we pray:

Dear Lord, as we wait upon Thee we pray that Thou wilt open our eyes that we may see very clearly Thy will for us. Wherever we are the will is one, that Christ may be all and in all to us, that in everything in our lives Christ may be expressed. So we want to give ourselves over to Thee. We are made by Thee; we are saved by Thee; we are totally Thine, and we want to yield ourselves to Thee. Dear Lord, we want to be where You want us to be. We want Christ to be all and in all to us. We want to say with the apostle Paul: "For me to live is Christ." Oh dear Lord, may this be a reality to every one of us that Thy name may be glorified and Thy return will be speeded up. Dear Lord, we wait upon Thee. May Thy blessing be upon every one of us. Glorify Your name. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.