

Friday, July 10, 2020

He has told us what is good

- Pastor Hank French

Your will be done on earth as in heaven (Matthew 6:10).

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2).

It seems important—doing the will of God. At one time Jesus told his followers: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work” (John 4:34). At another time, when told that his mother and brothers had come to see him, he declared: “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3:34-35). It seems that being a part of the family of God involves doing the will of God.

So what exactly is the will of God? One might point to the Ten Commandments as the will of God. One might point to all of Jesus’ teaching. One might also point to Micah 6:8—the best one-line description of both the will of God and a truly Christian lifestyle that can be found in the Bible. It is a text that sums up both the Ten Commandments and Jesus’ teaching—the will of God in a nutshell.

He [God] has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Naïve though it may seem, one wonders how the world would change if politicians and diplomats, business leaders and economists, and all the other powers that be would ask themselves three questions before making decisions that affect the lives of countless people: “What does this have to do with justice? What does this have to do with loving kindness? What does this have to do with walking with God?”

Given the broken, sinful nature of humankind, it’s not going to happen anytime soon. But what if these questions guided the agenda, decisions, and actions of every Christian faith community, and of each individual Christian man, woman, and child? How would the world change—given the fact that there are some 2 billion Christians in the world—if people who pray “Your will be done” took God’s will a bit more seriously? What would happen if we all were a bit more serious in taking the will of God as “a lamp to [our] feet and a light to [our] path” (Psalms 119:105).

If there is one thing that is clear from the beginning to the end of the Bible, it is that God desires to be in relationship with us. We have already seen that one of the things God wants from us is that we “walk humbly with [our] God.” Throughout the Bible, God beseeches his people to “return” to God, return to following God. Isaiah 44:22 represents a constantly recurring refrain: “I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.” When we pray that God’s will be done on earth, we are praying that we (and everyone else) would return to God, trusting and celebrating the forgiveness and redemption that have been freely given to us.

Prayer: God, I do not know where today will take me. I only pray that, wherever I go, I walk with you. Amen.