

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 Samuel 8:4-20, 11:14-15; Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

Jesus' mother and brothers have come to Capernaum to take Him quietly back home to Nazareth. They think He has gone crazy. He has been performing miracles and preaching, with very little rest and not enough to eat. They loved Him and thought they knew what was best for Him.

When someone is involved in ministry, or other leadership roles in a Christian community, hindrances can come from both friends and foes. Sincere love does not necessarily go hand in hand with wisdom and understanding. Through prayer and attention to the Holy Spirit, is the only way to determine God's path for us, and once determined, must be taken no matter what others think or say.

Jesus knew His path. He followed the course the Father had set for Him, and He now calls all who call themselves His, to do the same, which is the point of this message today.

As we look around me, we become increasingly concerned with how many in the church claim to be Christ's disciples, but do not seem to be actively seeking His will and following it. So today let's consider what the will of God is for us, doing the will of God, and judging for ourselves whether we are in the family. The question most often asked about living the Christian life, is, 'how can I know God's will for my life?' I believe what people are really asking is, "What does God want me to do; and how can I know from day to day if I am in the right place at the right

time? How can I know from moment to moment whether I am doing the thing God wants me to be doing?"

Many will try to give complicated religious answers to these questions. However, in reality there is no trick to knowing God's will for our life; and there is no stumbling block so big that it can stop us from doing God's will. We know this to be true, because Jesus said, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

"Hear the word of God, and do it", not search for it diligently, not struggle against all odds, and hope in the end to accomplish a little, just simply, "hear the word of God and do it."

The way to know God's will, is to know His word as contained in Holy Scripture. If we hear and study His word, we will know His will; until then we can't even begin to follow it.

So, let's talk about doing the will of God, which is really a lot simpler than we tend to make it. Doing God's will does not necessarily mean doing mission work, or becoming an ordained minister, or teacher, or giving large sums of money to the work of ministry. All of these are important, but the truth is, God wants witnesses for Him everywhere.

If He wants His witnesses to be everywhere, then it stands to reason that He wants plumbers, construction workers, schoolteachers, people in the medical profession, students, retirees doing His will, and He wants all these people doing His will in the workplace and anywhere their chosen profession, their interests, their hobbies, take them.

Now, we could go into quite a long list today of things to do that are God's will for us to do. The Bible is full of them. But there is really a very basic and simple way of knowing and doing God's will, if we want to know if we are in God's will? Make it the desire of our heart. Then pray that God will keep us in His

will. Study His word and spend time in prayer to find His specific will and then do it. Don't worry about taking a wrong turn, if we have actively sought to know the path. The Bible promises that to those who seek Him and seek to do His will, He will give guidance and direction.

Finally, let's talk about judging for ourselves whether we are in the family. Let us begin by saying, "Either we is, or we ain't".

We are either saved or lost. We are either one of God's children, or one of Satan's slaves, one of the elect, or one of those under God's wrath, Heaven bound, or destined for eternal separation from God where the fire is never quenched.

Of course, we can not know each other's heart the way God does. We can somewhat judge by each other's fruit, or lack of, whether or not we have a relationship with Christ. Jesus said we could do that, and we must do that for each other's safety. But in reference to the Gospel for today, we can only say what Jesus told all of us here. He said that His family, consists of those who hear the word of God, and do it! Which means that He also said that those who do not hear the word of God, or those who hear but do not do, are NOT His family. If we do not have an ear for the word of God, or if we hear it but ignore it, we are not his family!

Will it benefit us to be a sympathizer of Jesus only? Will it get us into Heaven, to say that we were on His side in all arguments; a friend, standing outside the door listening only? No, as was said earlier, either we is, or we ain't. We're a doer, or a deceiver. We are family, or we are not family.

What we really are is infinitely more important than what we say we are. We have to be honest with ourself, and make a decision. Are we His family? Are we both a hearer and a doer of what we hear? Are we self deceived; thinking we belong to Him

simply because we hear the word and agree with it, but don't do it? Don't be afraid of the truth; it will set us free. We have Jesus' own promise. Jesus said, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples".

If we will heed these words; if we will ask God to search our own heart and make us not just a hearer, but an effective doer of His word, we will ask and it will be done; we will bear much fruit, thereby giving glory to our Father in heaven.

May God bless our sincere effort to open our eyes to truth, and give us grace to begin, and/or continue, a faithful walk with Him, knowing His word and doing His will.

AMEN.