



exclude faith, but presuppose it as the principle from which other good works flow” (*Commentary on Matthew 7:21*). Sustained saving faith is obedient faith. Emmett Fox writes, “Mankind is slow to realize that there is simply no way of sal-

vation except by changing one’s consciousness, which means trying to do the Will of God consistently in every department of life” (*The Sermon on the Mount*, 135). To follow Christ, and attain entrance into God’s kingdom one must zealously desire to do God’s will. The Jewish Mishnah taught, “Be strong as the leopard, and swift as the eagle, and fleet as the gazelle, and brave as the lion to do the will of thy father which is in heaven” (*Pirke Aboth 5:20*). We must understand that this is not salvation by works—it is the defining condition of saving faith. One who refuses obedience to God’s will does not have saving faith.



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ISSUE

14.43

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

October 21
2012



Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM
Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Steve Dixon
Pat Goguen
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

The Revealed Will of God

By Kyle Pope

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declared, “**Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven**” (Matt. 7:21, NKJV). With these words the Lord shows that it is not enough for one to recognize Jesus’ Deity or simply acknowledge his lordship—entrance into “**the kingdom of heaven**” is granted only to “**he who does the will**” of God the Father. In Luke’s similar account, Jesus asks the question, “**why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?**” (Luke 6:46). Obedience to Jesus’ commands is thus equated with doing the will of the Father.

In this command, Jesus speaks of divine will in the sense of what we could call the *revealed* (or *instruc-*

tional) will of God. This must be distinguished from God's *providential will*. Jesus asked, **“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will”** (Matt. 10:29). God's providence governs the care and sustenance of all things through the



Olsen Park church of Christ

design of His creation, and His maintenance of laws that govern it. But God's revealed will must also be distinguished from His *permissive will*. There are things that God allows to happen which are not necessarily things that He *wants* to happen. Jesus declared, **“it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish”** (Matt. 18:14). What God permits is allowed but does not happen by the direct action of Deity (cf. Matt. 18:14). When Jesus commands man to *do* the will of God (Matt. 7:21), He cannot be talking about either of these aspects of divine will. Man cannot *do* God's will in its *permissive* or *providential* sense. Instead, Jesus is speaking of that measure of God's desire and expectation for his creation that has been made known to man in this age.

God's revealed will can be known. Paul wrote, **“do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”** (Rom. 12:2). It can be understood. Paul told the Ephesians, **“do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is”** (Eph. 5:17). This knowledge and understanding comes through study of Scripture. Paul

told Timothy, **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”** (2 Tim. 2:15).

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 7:21 is a solemn warning against a casual conception of man's accountability to God. The second century work, written by an anonymous author, often called *Second Clement*, drawing on this passage encourages, “Let us therefore not only call him Lord, for this will not save us” going on to quote this verse and declaring “so then brethren, let us confess him in our works” (4). This is contrary to the typical denominational view of saving faith. Foy Wallace put it well:

The language of verse 21 “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,” does not within itself indicate insincerity. Rather, it may describe a high type of denominational church members, by human measures, paying homage to Christ in true ardor, and fervor. But that is not all that is needed for membership

in the kingdom of Christ (*Sermon on the Mount*, 93).

J. W. McGarvey noted, “It is here taught that prayer, unattended by *doing the will* of the Father in heaven, can not save us” (*Commentary on Matthew*, 73). Where does this leave faith? Jesus taught, **“this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day”** (John 6:40, KJV). Reformer, John Calvin, in harmonizing Matthew 7:21 with John 6:40, argued correctly, “These words, therefore, do not