

SUNDAY 17.03.2024

**▶ DISCERNING THE WILL OF
GOD**

▶ JOHN 10:22-31 NIV.

▶ 22 Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. 24 The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

▶ 25 Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, 26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

▶ 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

▶ 31 Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?”

Introduction:

The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” 25 Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, 26 but you do not believe (24-25).

It is possible to be so much involved in Church and still miss out on God. ...

“The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me” (25). The discourse is most likely a continuation of Jesus’ conversation with the Jews following the healing of the blind man. (John 9:35-41).

- ▶ Since this happened on a sabbath day, Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.” (John 9:16).
- ▶ We can miss so much on God’s timing and blessings just because we cannot discern what he is doing.

▶ The Jews missed on what God was doing, simply because, they could not discern His will. They were selfish, lost in their rules and rituals and yet missed out on his works. We can do the same, we can miss so much from God, just because, we cannot discern His plan.

► We need to understand that God is doing his work, even during chaos and challenges. He has invited us to join Him through a relationship to be able to fulfill his purpose. We can be so self-centred instead of Christ-centred hence miss out on him.

▶ That's why Henry Blackaby, in his book 'Experiencing God', suggests that asking God "what is your will for my life is not the right question, instead we should ask, what is God's will?"

► In other words, I should be able to find out what God is doing, and once I know what He is doing, then I will know what I need to, the focus need to be on God and not on my life.

▶ When I talk about God's will, I am referring to God's divine plan and purpose for his people and his entire creation. God did not create us for nothing. His will encompasses His desires and intentions for how his people should live,

... and conduct themselves in alignment with His principles. Understanding God's will can be very crucial for us as believers as we seek guidance, purpose, and direction as He continues to work in us and with us.

1) We can discern God's plan by surrendering ourselves to Him, Jesus started by telling the Jews "But you do not believe because you are not my sheep." (26). God's will often call for obedience and surrender,

▶ not only our lives but surrender to His plan as well, even when it may not align with our personal desires or understanding. Trusting in God's wisdom and sovereignty is vital.

► Mary (Mother of Jesus) is a good example of how God worked with many Bible characters. Mary told the angel, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:38 NKJV).

▶ Writing to Romans, Apostle Paul urged them by saying, “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world,

▶ ... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.”
(Rom. 12:1-2).

2) “My sheep hear my voice” (27). In other words, they are sensitive. We can discern the will of God by being sensitive to the Holy Spirit. As Christians we believe the Holy Spirit is a divine helper, and dwells within us. Listening to the Holy Spirit's leading can offer clarity about God's plan.

3) Discerning God's will may require seeking wisdom from trusted spiritual mentors, elders, or pastors, as well as seeking God's guidance through Bible, prayer and fasting

Conclusion

- ▶ God has a plan just as he did in the days of Israel, Moses discerned his will and responded to his voice during his burning bush experience. (Exodus 3).

- a) He has given us life by proclaiming, “I give them eternal life (10:28)
- b) He has offered assurance by saying, “they shall never perish”. (10:28).
- c) He has guaranteed our security by declaring that “No one will snatch them out of my hand.” (10:28).

Yet we can miss on all these things if we don't discern his will, most of the Jews spent time with Jesus, saw most the miracles and teachings he did, yet they were not able to discern the will of their Father.

Jesus is inviting us to a place where we can see what the Father is doing and join him. When we join in what he is doing, we become one in purpose and operation. Jesus did the same, that's why he declared that "I and the Father are one." (10:30).