

What is God's will?

What is God's will? Such an important question! Many theologians have sought the answer over the centuries. Many people seek to know God's will every day. What are they seeking? To answer this question, first let us define the meaning of the word "will". In the context of the question, Webster's defines "will" in its intransitive form – to have a wish or desire. Does asking the question "What is God's desire?" provide any more insight into being able to answer the question? Perhaps not. But where should we turn to find answers to such an important question? Who better to answer that question than God's only begotten Son, Jesus.

Jesus frequently tells us in the Gospels that His Father's desire is for us to be with Him in the Kingdom of heaven. Jesus says His Father wants us to enjoy eternal life with Him. In the Gospel of Luke (10:25-27), Jesus is asked, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life"? And Jesus confirmed that the correct answer is "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself". That sure sounds like God's will! In Matthew (25:34-40), Jesus gives us further detail when He talks about final judgement and says: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". Jesus then tells us that those who shall inherit the kingdom are those who fed Him, quenched His thirst, welcomed Him when He was a stranger, clothed Him when He was naked, visited Him when He was sick or in prison – and says that whoever did so to the least of his brothers did so to him. Perhaps telling us how to love our neighbor! Again, this sounds like a definitive answer to our question.

If these are definitive and correct answers to our question, why do so many continue to seek to find an answer? Jesus tells us why. After confirming the answer to the question about capturing

eternal life, Jesus is asked, “and who is my neighbor?” He responds in Luke 10:29-37 with the story of the Good Samaritan. Samaritans had broken away from the Jewish faith, established their own temple and married non-Jews - they were looked down upon, avoided and hated by the Jews in Jesus’ audience. This story must have been very appalling to his audience and many would have had revulsion at the thought of helping a Samaritan. Jesus was pointing to a flaw in the Jews holding on to a deep-seated and unsupportable belief – that Samaritans were not also brothers, sisters (“neighbors”) and God’s creation. Undoubtedly those in Jesus’ audience wanted a different answer to the question – one with which they could more easily comply. People today are no different. Are we ready to help the reeking homeless man begging for a hand out? Are we willing to assist the robed Islamic person in distress? Do we take the time to visit the imprisoned? Perhaps we too continue to ask what is God’s will because we are uncomfortable accepting Jesus’ answers.