

## The Only Way to Know His Will.

November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Kichijouji Bible Study  
Gotthold Beck

みこころを知る道  
2014年11月4日、吉祥寺学び会  
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### Romans

8:12 Consequently, brothers, we are not—with respect to human nature, that is—under an obligation to live according to human nature.  
8:13 For if you live according to human nature, you are going to die, but if by the Spirit you continually put to death the activities of the body, you will live.  
8:14 For all who are led by God's Spirit are God's children.  
8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery that leads you into fear again. Instead, you have received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba! Father!"  
8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.  
8:17 Now if we are children, we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with the Messiah—if, in fact, we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

8:26 In the same way, the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, since we do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words,  
8:27 and the one who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, for the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to God's will.  
8:28 And we know that for those who love God, that is, for those who are called according to his purpose, all things are working together for good.  
8:29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that the Son might be the firstborn among many brothers.

### Philippians

1:9 And this is my prayer, that your love will keep on growing more and more with full knowledge and insight,  
1:10 so that you may be able to choose what is best and be pure and blameless until the day when the Messiah returns,  
1:11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus the Messiah so that God will be glorified and praised.

### Colossians

1:9 For this reason, since the day we heard about this, we have not stopped praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the full knowledge of God's will with respect to all spiritual wisdom and understanding,  
1:10 so that you might live in a manner worthy of the Lord and be fully pleasing to him as you bear fruit while doing all kinds of good things and growing in the full knowledge of God.  
1:11 You are being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, so that you might patiently endure everything with joy  
1:12 and might thank the Father, who has enabled us to share in the saints' inheritance in the light.

### Ephesians

3:16 I pray that he would give you, according to his glorious riches, strength in your inner being and power through his Spirit,  
3:17 and that the Messiah would make his home in your hearts through faith. Then, having been rooted and grounded in love,  
3:18 you will be able to understand, along with all the saints, what is wide, long, high, and deep—  
3:19 that is, you will know the love of the Messiah—which transcends knowledge, and will be filled with all the fullness of God.

Unfortunately, I can't stay until the end of this meeting today. I am not skipping out but I have to go to the hospital to take some radiation treatment. I believe it will continue until December 14th.

For the subject today, I would like to discuss with you, "the way to understand the intention of the Lord." It revolves around how we understand what the Lord wants from us. To come right to the point, the intention of our Lord God can be understood through nobody but the Spirit of God, and by nothing but the work of the Holy Spirit.

Those who desire to understand the Lord's will need to live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, we first need to know how to live such a life, being led by the Holy Spirit. Two things are required.

We first need to be ready to listen to his words, and then we need to be ready to obey his words.

David, the author of a lot of the Psalms prayed. He desired from his heart. Here is his extremely important prayer. I believe that we, too, should pray this way everyday:

### Psalms

143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my

God. Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Teach me. Lead me. So prayed David, who pleased the Lord. This prayer of David should be our prayer, too. The Bible says that David fulfilled the intention of the Lord.

We, too, want to be someone who please the Lord, don't we? However, to fulfill the intention of the Lord, we definitely need to understand the life led by the Holy Spirit. So, we should offer this prayer of David in front of the Lord today from the bottom of our hearts; "Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground."

David mentioned in the Psalm we just read, "for you are my God." To receive the precious guidance of the Holy Spirit, we first need to be newly reborn, belong to the Lord, and have his Spirit inside. The attitude of David toward the Lord was always, "Lord, please teach me."

Those who pray this way will receive his blessing. Whoever begs to teach in front of the Lord this way, will never fail to receive an abundant blessing. The man who had been blind since he was born begged Jesus for teachings. When he asked, "who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him," Jesus revealed himself to that man.

John

9:37 Jesus told him, "You have seen him. He is the person who is talking with you."

9:38 He said, "Lord, I do believe," and worshiped him.

He prayed. He worshiped. The Ethiopian eunuch did the same. When he was taught by Philip and sought help, saying, "How can I unless someone guides me," the eunuch obtained the salvation and continued his trip filled with joy according to the Bible. Let us look it up from the wonderful chapter 8 of the Acts of the Apostles.

Acts

8:26 Now an angel of the Lord told Philip, "Get up and go south on the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is a deserted road."

8:27 So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, who was a member of the court of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was in charge of all her treasures and had come up to Jerusalem to worship.

8:28 Now he was returning home, seated in his chariot, and reading from the prophet Isaiah.

8:29 The Spirit told Philip, "Approach that chariot and stay near it."

It is beyond our imagination. He traveled from Africa to Jerusalem to worship. Although it is not explained specifically in the Bible, I believe that he was so disappointed because, while Jewish people were allowed to listen to the words of God in the Holy temple, being a Gentile, he must have been rejected from entering the temple.

However, he was rich enough to buy the Book of Isaiah. Today, anyone can buy the Bible. Actually, they can get a free copy at Kichijouji. However, it was never that easy in those days. Books were not printed, but were copied by hand, and thus, they were only affordable for very wealthy people. He could purchase the book, anyway, and read it on his way back.

8:30 So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah out loud. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

8:31 The man replied, "How can I unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him.

It was a kind of hired cab for him.

8:32 This was the passage of Scripture he was reading: "Like a sheep he was led away to be slaughtered, and like a lamb is silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.

8:33 In his humiliation, justice was denied him. Who can describe his descendants? For his life is taken away from the earth."

8:34 The eunuch asked Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet talking about? Himself? Or someone else?"

8:35 Then Philip began to speak, and, starting from this Scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus.

8:36 As they were going along the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look, there's some water. What keeps me from being baptized?"

Why don't you testify the faith you were just given?

8:38 So he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

8:39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch went on his way rejoicing and did not see Philip again.

8:40 But Philip found himself at Azotus. As he was passing through that region, he kept proclaiming the good news in all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

He kept proclaiming the good news; in other words, he introduced Jesus to people. This Ethiopian not only

had an ear to listen to the words of the Lord, he was also ready to accept and obey all of the words of God.

After Paul had made a remarkable repentance, he asked, "Lord, what must I do?" When he humbled himself in front of the Lord and asked this question, the Lord clearly showed him the way to proceed.

#### Acts

16:6 6 Because they had been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the word in Asia, Paul and Timothy went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia.

When the jailer begged for teaching from Paul and Silas saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved," in trembling and in fear, he was given these amazing words of salvation, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you and your family will be saved."

These are unimaginably wonderful words of God. In those days when the New Testament was being written, the meaning of the word "family" was quite different from what we consider today. While a "family" today refers to those who are connected by ties of blood, it was not so those days. The "family" included all relatives and acquaintances. This makes us realize the importance of thanking God for our family members, relatives, and all unsaved people we know.

All of these people I mentioned above were prepared to listen to the words of the Lord. Furthermore, they were ready to obey the Lord. They had flexible hearts, which made it easy for them to obey the Lord. It is clearly promised in the Bible that we all will be guided by the Holy Spirit. The people of Israel actually experienced it.

#### Exodus

40:34 The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tent.

40:35 Moses was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tent.

40:36 Whenever the cloud was lifted up from the tent, the Israelis would set out on their journey,

40:37 but if the cloud was not lifted up, they would not set out until it was lifted up.

40:38 For the cloud of the Lord was over the tent by day, and the fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel in all their journeys.

These people of Israel had a magnificent experience. David, too, experienced this guidance. It was what he prayed for and desired. We can see this wonderful promise in this famous Psalm 32, verse 8:

#### Psalms

32:8 I will instruct you and teach you concerning the path you should walk; I will direct you with my eye.

Jesus also explained the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

#### John

16:13 Yet when the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own accord, but will speak whatever he hears and will declare to you the things that are to come.

16:14 He will glorify me.

When the people of Israel traveled across the wilderness, the Lord led them with the pillar of the cloud and the pillar of fire. Likewise, all the saved people are given this wonderful privilege of receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

#### Romans

8:14 For all who are led by God's Spirit are God's children.

The destination of the Holy Spirit, when he led the people of Israel was fertile land of Canaan. The Holy Spirit always leads us with one definite objective.

#### Psalms

78:53 He led them to safety so they would not fear. As for their enemies, the sea covered them.

#### Psalms

107:7 He led them in a straight way to find a city where they could live.

When the people of Israel wandered in the wilderness, many incidents occurred to them. As we can see from the ordeals they had to go through, they were not led to the destination peacefully. Still, the Holy Spirit lets them reach the land of Canaan at the end. It makes us convinced that the Holy Spirit leads his people securely, after all.

Likewise, we, too, ought to keep walking with our eyes fixed on the destination to which the Holy Spirit is leading us. The compassionate Holy Spirit leads us to the heavenly perfection and spiritual satisfaction, to which we are transformed to the same image of Jesus. When we are preoccupied with the problems and pains that occur in our lives, just like the people of Israel did, we sometimes wonder whether the Lord has forsaken us.

However, when we stop at some point of our lives and look back to our past, we can't help but admit that disease, agony, suffering, and all kinds of problems that we have gone through were under the guidance of

the Holy Spirit. Until we reach the destination the Holy Spirit is trying to take us, we will be challenged by even more problems. Every time we suffer, we need to be taught the intention of the Lord behind them.

We pray when we suffer. However, the result of the prayer is not always clear. We experience it in our prayer meetings, too. We meet to open the Bible, learn from the words of the Lord, and pray without seeing any consequences. Why is that? It is because we are not convinced that what we are about to pray is the intention of the Lord.

This is why we say very often in our prayers, "if you are willing, please do it this way and please make it that way." When people pray in this kind of state of mind, they won't get any conviction even after the prayers. When someone asks them whether their prayers are heard, they can only answer, "Well, that is what we hope." These kinds of prayers are neither encouraged in the Bible, nor desired by the Lord.

What the Bible urges us to do is first to learn the intention of the Lord, and then to offer faithful prayer with a conviction that it is what the Lord wants. Elijah stood firm, being convinced that he was following the Lord's will, and said these words with authority. It was his wonderful testimony:

1 Kings

17:1 As the Lord God of Israel lives, in whose presence I'm standing, there will be neither dew nor rain these next several years, except when I say so.

Of course, it went exactly that way. It was a remarkable conviction and confession of Elijah. The Lord is alive.

James

5:17 Elijah was a person just like us, and he prayed earnestly for it not to rain, and rain never came to the land for three years and six months.

18 Then he prayed again, and the skies poured out rain, and the ground produced its crops.

As we can see from these verses, it was because the prayer of Elijah was led by the Holy Spirit that it was heard and answered. If we, too, want our prayers to reach the throne of heaven, we need to offer prayer that is led by the Holy Spirit. What is important is not just to pray, but to stand firm, being convinced of the Lord's will before the prayer begins. The Holy Spirit is here to give us this conviction. Let me read again these famous verses:

Romans

8:26 In the same way, the Spirit also helps us in our

weakness, since we do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words, 8:27 and the one who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, for the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to God's will.

The Holy Spirit is there to guide our prayers. True prayer must be the prayer of the Holy Spirit that is prayed through us. The Holy Spirit begins by teaching us the intention of the Lord. It is not until this occurs on us that we are able to pray with faith in Jesus, and we are given the conviction that our prayers will absolutely be answered.

Lack of faith and conviction arises when we do not understand the intention of the Lord. It was for this reason that many prayers are left unanswered. We ought to wait and seek until we clearly understand the intention of the Lord and move forward only when we are certain of what the Lord wants from us. This was what Moses did. The Lord spoke first, and then Moses acted, as commanded by the Lord. Paul, too, first asked for the intention of the Lord, and then obeyed the voice he heard. Let me read one more verse.

John

14:10 You believe, don't you, that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own. It is the Father who dwells in me and who carries out his work.

What we can see in here is that even Jesus obeyed the words of his Father God, which were whispered in his heart. Jesus was not moved by the voice actually he heard in his ears, or by the incidents happening around him. The important thing is that the Holy Spirit speaks directly to our spirits. We need to understand the intention of the Lord and stand firm being convinced of it.

It is nobody but the Holy Spirit who can lead us. There is no conflict at all between the Holy Spirit and words in the Bible, but they totally match with each other. The Holy Spirit uses the words of God as he talks to us. When we face problems, the Holy Spirit picks up some words from the Bible, gives them a life and casts them into our hearts.

The in-dwelling Holy Spirit gives life to the words in the Bible and talks to us with them. Only the Holy Spirit can lead us. This was the reason Paul wrote in Romans 8:16:

Romans

8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

These words - not only do they apply at the beginning of our lives of faith, but they also remain true throughout our lives. The Holy Spirit, who first testified the words of the Lord, continues to lead us by talking inside us. True guidance can be accomplished by no one but the in-dwelling Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this guidance of the in-dwelling Spirit is not given only to specific Christians, but it is a privilege granted to all brothers and sisters who have been saved by the Lord.

End