

## The Only Way to Know His Will(3)

November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Kichijouji Bible Study  
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御心を知る道(3)

2014年11月18日、吉祥寺学び会  
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### 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.

[International Standard Version]

### Psalms

143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

I would like to continue the discussion regarding “the necessity, importance, possibility and greatness of understanding the Lord's will.”

The Psalm 143, verse 10 we just read is the prayer David recited 3000 years ago and it should become the daily prayer for each one of us as well. “Teach me to do your will. I don't know what to do if you don't. For you are my God. Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground. Please teach me. Please lead me.” This was a sincere prayer of David, who pleased the Lord.

We have been discussing so far what we need to do to understand the Lord's will and I would like to continue the discussion today. Actually, we already know the conclusion. To know the Lord's will, we need the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, “The Holy Spirit reveals my glory.” So, we need to know how we can be led by the Spirit of the Lord in our lives.

In order to do so, first of all, we need to be willing to listen to his word. We all have ears, but it doesn't mean at all that we are all willing to hear. David was never perfect, but he had ears to hear.

So, he prayed sincerely, “Teach me and lead me.” We first need to be prepared to listen to his words and then, we also need to be prepared to obey his words. David always stayed in this frame of mind, “Lord,

Please teach me.”

Just like him, those who beg for teaching in front of the Lord will receive immeasurable blessings. What is important for us is to ask the Holy Spirit to talk directly to our spirit so that we understand the intention of the Lord and stand firm with the conviction.

As I just mentioned, it is nobody but the Holy Spirit who can lead us. There is no conflict between the Holy Spirit and the words in the Bible; rather, they complement each other. The Holy Spirit uses the words from the Bible when he talks to us. When we face problems, the Holy Spirit picks up some words from the Bible, gives life to the words and casts them into our hearts. The in-dwelling Holy Spirit makes the words in the Bible live and talks to us through them.

How do we recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit? When we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we first need to understand that all things exist for the glory of the Lord alone. I talked about it last week. It is also written in this verse;

### 1 Corinthians

10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.

“For the glory of God,” we will be truly blessed if we can say what Paul said. Do not do this only while you're being watched in order to please them, but be like slaves of the Messiah, who are determined to obey God's will. Serve willingly, as if you were serving the Lord and not merely people. This was Paul's sincere desire and prayer. When we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have to keep in mind that all things exist for the glory of the Lord.

Secondly, the Lord always works according to the word of the Bible. What does the Bible say about it? We need to consider not just a specific part of the Bible but the entire text.

How do we recognize the guidance of the Holy Spirit? As I just said, when we seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have to understand that all things exist for the glory of the Lord.

Thirdly, we need to keep in mind that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is related to our conscience and rationality. The Holy Spirit should be the only one who leads us. Rationality is a sort of instrument that transforms the guidance of the Holy Spirit into reality. When you hit a serious problem, you need to contemplate on it from all angles based on your rationality. We need to think about two points I

mentioned earlier; that is to say, how the glory of the Lord can be revealed and whether there are some words in the Bible that answer this question.

Fourthly, we have to understand that the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the purpose of the Lord cannot be separated from each other. This can be understood from what happened to the people of Israel. When the Lord God rescued his people from Egypt, he showed them that their destination was a land called Canaan.

And the Holy Spirit led the people of Israel to the land of Canaan, the destination of the Lord. Canaan tells us the richness and fullness of Jesus. We are destined to walk to our destination being led by the Holy Spirit. If we understand the purpose of the Lord and set it as the destination of our life, we will realize that all things that happen in our lives are beneficial to accomplishing this goal.

#### Romans

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.

The plan Jesus has for his believers is that each one of them be transformed to the image of the son of God. It is a truly amazing and wonderful plan, isn't it? The intention of the Lord is explained in the Epistle to the Colossians.

#### Colossians

1:19 For God was pleased to have all of his divine essence inhabit him.

3:11 In him there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free person. Instead, the Messiah is all and in all.

Furthermore, it is also important to understand that the guidance of the Holy Spirit is deeply related to churches; in other words, flocks of believers who belong to Jesus. The purpose of the Lord is revealed and accomplished through churches.

To the people of Israel in the era of the Old Testament, the instruction of the Lord was shown through the tabernacle. When Moses left Egypt, he was taught the detailed structure of the tabernacle from the Lord, which took 40 days. The tabernacle was built by the hands of the people filled with the Holy Spirit, exactly as indicated by the Lord.

This time, the Lord gave spiritual significance to this tabernacle, through which he attempted to make us understand his guidance. This substantial tabernacle represents the spiritual tabernacle, which signifies Jesus along with the churches as his body.

For the people of Israel, the tabernacle and the guidance of the Holy Spirit were deeply related to each other. Whenever the pillar of the cloud or the pillar of fire, which represented the Holy Spirit, were lifted up, the Israelis would set out on their journey. When the pillar of the cloud stopped, they too stopped with it. People of Israel walked as guided by the cloud. Just like the pillar of the cloud and the fire stood above the tabernacle, the Holy Spirit came down on churches, which represented the body of Jesus. If our church satisfies the intention of the Lord, the Lord will be able to lead us at will.

Without the tabernacle that was led by the pillar of cloud, the people of Israel could never have entered the promised land of Canaan. Likewise, we will never get to the fullness of the Lord without churches. Our spirit will never be fulfilled unless we live together with other brothers and sisters. The guidance of the Lord for each one of us is more or less related to his own purpose and the church.

If our eyes are open to the purpose of the Lord, which is to fill us with the same righteousness of Christ and if we understand the fact that churches exist as instruments to accomplish this very purpose of the Lord, we will be truly blessed. Let me finish this topic with some verses which explain this truth in much simpler words. The Epistles to Colossians and Ephesians described in the finest detail the reason that churches were made.

#### 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,

2:9 because all the essence of deity inhabits him in bodily form.

2:10 And you have been filled by him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

3:11 In him there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, or free person. Instead, the Messiah is all and in all.

#### Ephesians

1:22 God has put everything under the Messiah's feet and has made him the head of everything for

the good of the church,  
1:23 which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills everything in every way.

4:13 until all of us are united in the faith and in the full knowledge of God's Son, and until we attain mature adulthood and the full standard of development in the Messiah.

These verses help us to understand the intention of the Lord. All guidance of the Holy Spirit is deeply related to this purpose of God. Today, the only concern of the Lord is for the accomplishment of this purpose. It is not the dissolution of our problems and sufferings that the Lord desires, but the heart of the Lord to be formed inside us through events in our lives.

What the Lord wants from us is not that we be completely satisfied in all aspects of our lives in this world, but rather, it is his intention to be wholly formed inside us. The Holy Spirit was sent for nothing but this purpose and is willing to lead us to this destination.

#### 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.

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.

We have seen the guidance of the Holy Spirit from four different angles. When we hit some problems in our life and need his guidance, let us remember these four points one by one and ask the Holy Spirit to lead us.

However, what is critical when we do so is that we have peace of mind, which is the fifth point of today. I have seen a painting in the magazine called Reader's Digest. It was a painting of one believer of the Lord walking around in his room just like a raging lion in a cage. There was a caption beneath the painting.

When someone asked the believer what was keeping him so busy, he answered, "I have an urgent problem I have to solve and I am all tied up to it. However, the God remains silent. He just looks so relaxed and seems reluctant to help me."

If you are not clear about the guidance of the Lord, you should stay calm in front of him and wait for his answer, believing in his words, "I will keep my eyes on you and give you my instruction." The devil always puts pressure on you. Contrarily, the Lord demands that we wait patiently; it is unimaginably important to lay our hearts before the Lord and then to wait for his voice quietly.

When we are agonized over something and are constantly preoccupied with that problem, we are depriving the Lord of the chance to work on us. If we entrust our problems on the Lord and ask for the solution from him, the Lord will answer abundantly. At the same time, the Holy Spirit will give our spirit the conviction and show us the direction in which we should proceed.

It is so important to be silent in the Lord's presence. It is possible to be silent in the Lord's presence wherever you are, even when you are in a huge crowd or packed train. To be quiet is necessary in order to entrust all your problems to Jesus. When we do, we need to become like little children. Entrust everything to the Lord humbly and never demand an answer from the Lord.

As the servants of the Lord, we are privileged to listen to his voice. It is no surprise considering that even the lowliest slaves are allowed to listen to the command of their master.

Even during the time of waiting, we need to devote ourselves to the given missions faithfully. Unless we follow all guidance we receive obediently, the Lord cannot give us new guidance to lead us further. It is not easy to summarize how we can understand the Lord's will in simple words. Sometimes, he gives us very clear instructions by letting something happen in our lives. Very often when we lose our direction in life because of a sudden change of circumstances and we see another path open in an unexpected direction. It was what happened to Paul. Paul was disrupted by the Lord while he was preaching in Asia and he was dispatched on a mission to Europe.

#### Acts of the Apostles

16:6 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.

167 They went as far as Mysia and tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them, 168 so they bypassed Mysia and went down to Troas.

169 During the night Paul had a vision. A man from Macedonia was standing there and pleading with

him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!"  
 16:10 As soon as he had seen the vision, he immediately looked for a way to go to Macedonia, because we were convinced that God had called us to tell the people there the good news.

The Holy Spirit may lead you through a letter from your old friend or some book you read. On some occasions, the Holy Spirit may pick up some words from the Bible and use them to show you the direction to proceed, telling you that this is the way prepared for you to glorify the Lord. Whatever the way he shows us, the Holy Spirit gives us the conviction. When we have that conviction, the Lord himself will give us the peace which will dominate our souls then all our anxiety and fear will disappear.

**Colossians**  
 3:15 Let the peace of the Messiah also rule in your hearts, to which you were called in one body, and be thankful.

However, the clearest point of all is that whichever way he leads us, it is nobody but the Holy Spirit who can lead us there. If we can understand the intention of the Lord, we can accomplish his will with conviction. We will not have to fight for victory anymore.

Because we already have the victory in Jesus, all we have to do is to let others have this victory. That was what Abraham did. Some verses in the Epistle to the Romans describe this man Abraham, who was called the father of faith. These are truly wonderful verses.

**Romans**  
 4:18 Hoping in spite of hopeless circumstances, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," just as he had been told: "This is how many descendants you will have."  
 4:19 His faith did not weaken when he thought about his own body (which was already as good as dead now that he was about a hundred years old) or about Sarah's inability to have children,  
 4:20 nor did he doubt God's promise out of a lack of faith. Instead, his faith became stronger and he gave glory to God,  
 4:21 being absolutely convinced that God would do what he had promised.

Jesus too said;

**Matthew**  
 17:20 He told them, "Because of your lack of faith. I tell all of you with certainty, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.

I would like to finish this sermon after adding some words about obedience to the guidance of the Lord and the consequence of that obedience. The Holy Spirit leads us with one definite purpose.

The purpose is to enable Jesus to become all in all in us and to transform us to the image of the Lord. When the Holy Spirit leads us, he already knows everything about each one of us, unlike human beings whose views are quite limited. Spiritual growth is only possible when we sincerely obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As we continue to obey sincerely, we will be filled with the Holy Spirit more abundantly.

The consequence of sincere obedience is not always receiving some special gift or being led into a life of worldly happiness. As is clearly promised, the Holy Spirit is given to all those who sincerely obey. However, the presence of the Holy Spirit is not welcomed by our old self, that is to say, by our innate nature.

John said, "He will absolutely be increased and I will be decreased." However, it is not an easy thing to wipe out our old nature, destroy our old self and move down into the valley of humbleness. To surrender our control to the Holy Spirit is something that goes against our innate nature. When we are led by the Holy Spirit, very often it exposes the ugliness of our nature, such as in our habit of justifying ourselves, our hunger, greed and unforgiving attitude.

When Jesus sincerely obeyed his father, in consequence, he was isolated, falsely accused and finally crucified. If we walk obediently as led by the Holy Spirit, we will have to suffer just like Jesus, his disciples and so many saints did. Jesus prayed before he was crucified;

**John**  
 17:14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.  
 17:15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world but to protect them from the evil one.  
 17:16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.

17:24 Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, which you gave me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

This was an incredible prayer of Jesus, a prayer that will absolutely be heard. After he was raised to heaven, Jesus called upon us from above;

Revelation

3:21 To the one who conquers I will give a place to sit with me on my throne, just as I have conquered and have sat down with my Father on his throne.

If the Holy Spirit leads us so that we can say, just like Paul said, that we are in harmony with Jesus from the bottom of our hearts, we will be truly blessed. I will finish this sermon with one more verse.

1 Corinthians

2:16 For “Who has known the mind of the Lord so that he can advise him?” However, we have the mind of the Messiah.

When we can say these words, the Holy Spirit will lead us further to reach Jesus sitting on the throne.

End