

God's Will for 2020 **Matthew 7:21-27**

I am not an expert on building construction, but I do know that using a flawed blueprint, or inferior materials can lead to disaster. Such was the case on March 15, 1986 in the country of Singapore to The Hotel New World. Watch what happened. (show video clip).

In all, 33 people lost their lives and dozens others were seriously injured in a disaster that could have been averted. Several days after the collapse, the President of Singapore ordered a full investigation to determine its cause. Here is what was discovered:

1. An unqualified draftsman made a fatal miscalculation of how much dead weight the columns and walls could support. The experts found that the building could not even support its own weight.
2. On top of that, the foreman in charge of the building requested to use inferior materials in order to reduce the cost.
3. The investigation concluded that it was a house of cards waiting to collapse from its very beginning. And collapse it did!

This morning I want us to talk about something far more significant than a building. I want us to talk about the eternal destiny and condition of our eternal souls. How can you and I be certain that we are a part of God's eternal Kingdom? And how can we be sure that we are building our faith and life upon the solid Rock that will withstand the storms of life and the test of time?

Jesus answers this question in this passage. In verse 21 He says, "You must do the will of My Heavenly Father. And in verse 24 He similarly states, "You must hear and obey my Words."

You see, there are two basic blueprints that people use to live their lives: there is God's blueprint, and then there is man's. God's blueprint is good, perfect and trustworthy, and leads to life—abundant and eternal. And then there is man's blueprint, which is flawed, imperfect, and fatal—which ultimately leads to disaster and death (separation from God).

So the question we want to consider this morning is: “What is God’s will for you in 2020 and beyond?” “What is God’s blueprint for Life?” Well, thankfully, God has given us a very clear revelation of what His will is for our lives in His Word. We will look at two passages from I Thessalonians 4 and 5. In these two chapters God gives us 4 divine wills for every child of God. Think of these 4 wills as 4 powerful pillars, that if you and I will build upon them, then we will be able to live a life worthy of the Lord and pleases Him in every way, and have a strong faith that will stand the test of time. Let’s look at the first one found in I Thessalonians 4:1-8.

1. God’s will is that you pursue a life of personal purity and holiness.

Read I Thessalonians 4:1-8

The culture in ancient Thessalonica was steeped in all manner of sexual immorality and perversion. Just about every kind of sexual perversion was prevalent and acceptable in this pagan city. It is very similar to our 21st culture. Like ancient Thessalonica we are encouraged to embrace immorality, endorse it, celebrate it, and even participate in it. But God’s revealed will says the opposite. If you are in Christ, God’s will for you and me is this:

You should be sanctified.

You should avoid sexual immorality.

You should learn to control our own body in a way that is holy & honorable to God.

You should not allow passionate lust to control your body, like those who do not know God.

Defining sanctified: To be sanctified means to be set apart or made holy. At the moment of salvation God sets you and me apart. He sets us apart (rescues us) from the Kingdom of darkness, and places us into the Kingdom of God. At that moment He removes all of our sin and guilt, and replaces it with a spotless robe of righteousness. He sets us apart from our old life of sin, and He sets us apart to Himself. He sets us apart for one purpose—to serve God and live a life of purity and holiness. We are to stop living for ourselves, and start living for the One who died for us and rose again.

Example: Let me illustrate it this way. When I was growing up on a farm in Eastern Wisconsin, Mom kept our farmhouse pretty spotless and clean. However there was one room that was different from all the other rooms. We called it “The Front Room.” This room had new carpeting, a very comfortable couch and easy chairs, a piano, nice end tables and coffee table, and beautiful lamps and window coverings. This room had one reason for existence: it was to entertain company. All of us kids knew that no dirty clothes, no dirty shoes, no horse play or shenanigans were ever allowed in that room. If we ever had the nerve to sneak in there without mom’s permission, we knew we were in big time trouble. Because Mom set this room apart from all the others.

When God saved you, when He called, when He place you into His Kingdom He set you apart for Himself so that you would pursue a life of moral purity and holiness to the glory of God and His glorious grace. In verse 7 Paul says, “For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life

Definition of the word sexual immorality: let’s go back to verse 3 and define the term “sexual immorality.” The Greek word for sexual immorality is “porneia.” It is the Greek word we get the word “pornography” from, and it means all sexual sin. It includes adultery (sexual intimacy outside of marriage); fornication (sexual intimacy before you are married); all homo-sexual sex; and viewing pornography in movies, books, magazines & websites. I personally think this also refers to cohabitation, because it is an appearance of evil—and it is also flirting with temptation. We are to get rid of it all; and in its place we are to pursue God and His righteousness, His purity, His holiness with all our hearts. God didn’t save you and me just to keep us from going to hell. He saved us so we could actually begin living a holy life for His glory. So that people can see the change Jesus has made in our lives and want what we have.

2. God’s Will is that you pursue a Life of Joy. See I Thessalonians 5:16

I Thessalonians 5:16 says “Be joyful always.” Pretty short and pretty clear, right? Notice 2 things about this short verse. First, it is a command. Joy is a choice. It is a decision. I can choose joy, or I can choose to be disgruntled, or depressed, or hopeless. Secondly, notice what this verse doesn’t say. It doesn’t say “be happy always!” There is a huge difference between joy and happiness. Happiness is something we feel when good things are happening; when circumstances are just

right. But joy is something we can experience regardless of what is happening in our lives. It is not tied to circumstances. Then where does it come from?

David answers that question in Psalm 16:11 "In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Joy is found in the presence of Jesus. Wherever Jesus resides, that is where joy is found. Regardless of circumstances!

Jesus also answered this question in John 15:10-11 *"If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have remained in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

Notice once again what the source of joy is! Joy is the by-product of knowing and obeying the will of God which are revealed to us in the written Word of God.

Definition of Joy: Joy is an overwhelming sense of contentment and well-being that is anchored in the truth that God is in control and that Jesus is present in my life. This kind of joy cannot be found anywhere else. Nor can this joy be destroyed by circumstances, tragedies, sickness, or hardship. I am 66 years old, and I have found God's Word to be true. Let me give you an example:

Example: From 1977 to 1986 I was involved in a family farm with my dad and two brothers. We expanded the home farm in 1978 by purchasing more land and a modern dairy farm. Things went well for a while, but by 1984 we had gone so far into debt we had to let the 280 acre modern dairy farm go back to the original owner. The plan was to try and save the home farm. But by 1986 it was apparent we would lose that as well. Those were very hard days. It even began to affect our relationship with each other. Dad saw what was happening and wisely called us to prayer. Every morning after chores we had a prayer circle. We prayed for His wisdom, we invited His presence into our daily lives and work, and we asked Him to give us His joy and strength to do His will; and that somehow He would turn this ugly thing around for His glory. Well, almost immediately we began to notice a difference. God drew us back together as a family, He drew us closer to Himself, and we began to experience God's peace and joy even though we eventually lost the family farm. And God used that experience to open new doors of employment and ministry, and a closer walk with Him for all 4 of us.

So God has called you and me to choose a life of joy. And we do that by inviting Jesus into every area of our lives—even in the midst of trials, pain, and tragedy. Joy is found in choosing to pursue Him and live all of life in His presence.

3. God's Will is that you pursue a Life of Prayer. See I Thessalonians 5:17

Verse 17 says, "Pray continually." Now this does not mean that we are to spend all our waking hours on our knees in our prayer closet. Rather, this is talking about cultivating an attitude of prayer and dependence on God for everything. God's design for life is that you and I have an ongoing intimate communion with Him throughout the day. We do this by learning to have short prayers all day long; affirming our total dependence on Him. When we are happy we pray. When we are sad we pray. When we have needs we pray. When we have plenty we thank Him. When we are on a mountaintop, we pray. When we are in the valley, we pray. Why is this God's will for us?

Because the truth is without Him we can do nothing. That's right, nothing. Jesus reminds us of this truth in John 15:5 "...apart from Me you can do nothing." The reason this is true is because we cannot see the future. And we are not all knowing; we do not have full knowledge of our circumstances and what our decisions will lead to. And we are often misguided by sinful motives. You might say we are blind. But God sees the future completely; He sees the end from the beginning. He knows what is Best for us. If we truly believe these things, then we will continue to cultivate a moment by moment connection and communion with Him throughout the day and night.

Example: On November 7, 2008 the New York Times tells the true story of a 65 year old man who was left blind when he suffered a stroke. What was significant about this story was that this happened when he was 5500 feet in the air, flying his small Cessna aircraft, solo.

The pilot, Mr. Jim O'Neill, radioed the air traffic controller and reported that he had lost his eyesight, and could not see his instruments. The air traffic controller located another pilot who happened to be a flying instructor. He was asked to approach Mr. O'Neill's plane so he could talk him down to the nearest runway. The flight instructor flew alongside Mr. O'Neill for more than 40 minutes at a distance of 150 feet. He used his radio to tell him when to turn right, or left, to lower the

plane and to help him line up his plane to the airstrip. After two rough bounces onto the runway, the third time Mr. O'Neill was able to keep his plane on the ground. This is a miniature picture of us and illustrates why it is God's will that we learn to pray continually. Without His continual guidance, wisdom and directing hand we would crash and burn!

4. God's will is that you pursue a Life of Thanksgiving. See I Thessalonians 5:18

Verse 18 says, *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* Notice, God's Word is not saying that we thank Him for all circumstances. Rather, it is saying that we should thank Him in all circumstances. There is a huge difference. Our thanksgiving should not be based upon circumstances. Rather, our thankful hearts should be based upon who God is, what He has already done for us in His mercy, and His unchanging promises!

I want to share just one of God's promises that He has used to cultivate an attitude of gratitude in my heart. It is Isaiah 43:1-3 where God promises this: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."

I know that many of you are facing some tough circumstances and decisions in 2020: health issues, financial problems, family issues, even tragedies. Let these words wash over you today. God promises that no matter what you are facing that: (1) You are His possession, (2) You have His presence, (3) You have His peace—you will not be overwhelmed—(4) You Have His protection. Nothing will touch your eternal soul. You are safe in His hands.

Personal Example: I have found that when I am down or discouraged or overwhelmed it is because I am focusing on the negative: what I don't have and what I am not. I have also found that the medicine for this spiritual malady is to start giving thanks! It is good to make a list of all the blessings of God in my life. And before long my burden is lifted and my heart is overwhelmed with a genuine attitude of gratitude to God. I encourage you to try doing this. Here's what I am thankful for:

I am thankful that God rescued me from my life of sin & gave me a new life in Christ. I am thankful that He washed away all my past, present, and future sins in the blood of Jesus.

I am thankful that He lives in my heart & promises to go with me through all of life. I am thankful for a dad & mom who loved Jesus & pointed me to the Savior.

I am thankful that He has given me a godly wife who has been a wonderful help mate for me.

I am thankful that He has been with me during the valleys as well as the MT. tops. I am thankful that He has promised that nothing can pull me out of His hands; and that He is going to take me safely home to Heaven someday. That is only a start.

Conclusion: So brothers and sisters, this is what God's will is for your life. That you pursue a life of moral purity and holiness; that you pursue a life of joy; that you pursue a life of prayerful dependence; and that you pursue a life of giving thanks in all circumstances. Now I have a feeling you might be thinking, "The bar has been set too high. I can't live out God's blueprint!" If that is where you are, you would be absolutely right, and you would be in good company. Because honestly, that is where we all are. None of us can do this in and of ourselves.

Thank God we don't have to do it on our own strength. Romans 12:1-2 gives us the key to living out His good and perfect will: "Therefore I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer (surrender) your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not be conformed any longer 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."

God's invitation is to get out of the driver's seat of our lives, to let go of our lives and let Him be in control. If you will get out of the driver's seat and surrender your life to His Leadership and Lordship and let Him sit on the throne of your life, then He will begin to do His good and perfect will in you and through you. May God grant you and me His wisdom and strength to live His good and perfect will, for His glory, and for your good.