

~Other Speakers A-F: John A. Broadus:**I delight to do thy will, O my God! Psalm 40:8**

This psalm tells of one who has suffered, been graciously relieved, and now responds in grateful praise and grateful obedience. This is not shown by mere externals of worship, but by delighting to do God's will, by having his law in the heart, by proclaiming his glorious character and gracious dealings (verses 1-10).

Verses 5-9 apply to Christ. So it is with various psalms; often the language is exclusively prophetic of him. These words, therefore, are designed to be adopted by anyone, while at the same time it may look to the great example of the Lord Jesus Christ. Observe, that this delight is not merely to hear, but to do, the will of God.

I. In one sense, the will of God will always be done, Whether we do his will or not.

Here we touch a most difficult subject but we need not turn away from it; but we must be humble, and content to take what we can understand, and leave alone what we cannot.

We are compelled to speak of God's will in terms applicable to our own. This is done in Scripture. There are three distinct senses in which this term is employed. First, the will of purpose; it is always done. "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will"- "Who doeth his will in the army of heaven, and among," etc. (Dan. 5:35). Next, the will of desire, or wish, which is not always done-for inscrutable reasons he permits free agents to act counter to his wish-"How often would I, etc. but ye would not." "Not willing that any should perish," etc. "Who willeth all to be saved," etc. Last, will of command-the wish of one in authority, When expressed, becomes a command. Every command of God it is our solemn duty to obey-but, alas! It is not always done. Of course, it is human imperfection that makes these distinctions necessary, and they must not be pushed too far-yet they are, within limits, just distinctions, and should be borne in mind.

Now God's purpose, as distinguished from other senses, is not dependent upon us for accomplishment. It may be accomplished without us, by overruling and finding others willing. But God's will of desire, what is well-pleasing to him, we should seek to ascertain, and do. His will of command we should learn and obey.

How do we ascertain what is God's will? Partly from our own conscience, aided by general conscience of mankind, but this is by no means an infallible exponent of God's will. What has come to pass, is always in accordance with God's general purpose, however wrong the motives of agents-gives indication as to what we should do. To some extent we may seek the best judgment and advice of others. It is always important to have the mind stored with Scripture. Then we can pray and trust we are doing God's will.

II. We should always do God's will, even if it be not with delight. We seldom, if ever, do anything with perfectly correct motives and feelings. Yet with the most proper sentiments we can at the time command, let us still do our duty.

Sometimes we cannot rise above resignation. Especially when we have to bear what disappoints and distresses us.

Sometimes we may do his will with shrinking and reluctance. Human nature is weak. Even apart from sin, it naturally shrinks from danger, suffering, physical or mental. Even Jesus, to whom the text specially applied. "And now what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But," etc. Again, "If it be possible, etc. nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." This cost an effort, and a struggle, for a time-yet he did not fail to do it.

Yes, we should always do God's will, even if it is not a delight. And often, the painful effort will change to pleasure, the duty commenced reluctantly will become a sweet joy! Yet, do not condition obedience upon its becoming delightful. It is the will of my God? Then his will I must do.

III. We should delight to do God's will.

We may be led to it.

1. By sense of right. The vexing question of ethical speculation does not here matter-whether God wills a thing because right, or it is right because he wills it. What he wills, is right. To do right is man's highest duty, and should be his greatest delight.

2. By feelings of interest. It is right to consult our own improvement and enjoyment. Lawful to be pleased at advancing these, provided we are doing God's will. Now always our true interest, in noblest sense, on largest scale, is to do God's will. Hence self-love should conspire with a sense of right in causing us to delight in God's will.

3. By feelings of benevolence. I hope no one present is wholly ignorant of the pleasure derived from benefiting others. "And learn the luxury of doing good" (Goldsmith). Now in doing God's will, we may be sure we are promoting the well-being of our fellow men-whether we can always perceive the connection or not. If it is God's will, it shall be best for all we love, for all mankind, that this should be done. What a pleasure, then, it should be, to do his will.

4. By feelings of gratitude. My brethren, let us think of all our providential and spiritual blessings. And while our hearts glow with gratitude, for all God has done, and is doing, and promises to do for us, shall we not be able to say, "I delight to do thy will, O my God!"

In doing God's will, we follow the example of Jesus-seen in his whole life, and declared in his own words. (John 4:34) Remember him at Jacob's well-fatigued, needing rest and food, yet busy doing good, and yet saying to his disciples, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." In doing this, we are dear to Jesus. (Matt. 12:46-50) "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." We become as near as the dearest kindred.

Oh, it is sweet to do God's will. Oh, ye who delight to do his will, go on, and it shall grow more and more delightful-go on, and the path you tread shall grow more and more a path of light, till it shall lead you into the dazzling glories of the celestial world; and there, oh there, in perfect obedience you shall find perfect delight.

And meanwhile, however, the number shall be multiplying on earth, of those who delight to do God's will. The prayer our Saviour taught his disciples to pray shall rise from many a pious heart, shall stimulate many a toiling brain, shall nerve many a weary laborer, in Christian and in heathen lands, till Christianity, everywhere triumphant, shall cover the earth in a flood of glory, till God's will shall be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.