

My will and God's will (part 1)

ODCC 07/06/09 (x.pages)

Text: Gen 1:26-30; 2:15; 3:1-13 (4:1-8)

Introduction

1. I want to speak about our human will although it is not expressly mentioned in our text. I had been thinking about this subject for some and recently had a discussion with Wayne (a member of the congregation) and some things he said were in line with what I was thinking.
 - a. There's a lot in this passage but I am not going to speak on it as a whole but rather draw out some points (rather like taking a couple of bites out of an elephant; we'll take enough for a meal but put most of it back in the freezer).

Purpose and religion

When Adam and Eve were in Eden God communicated 2 things to them. The **first** had to do with PURPOSE and the **second** with RELIGION. (They actually go hand in hand; you can't have one without the other.)

1. When I talk about religion I'm talking about eternal right relationship with God. God never created man to experience anything negative like war, hunger, disease, death, etc., or to suffer alienation from Himself. (Original creation contains the idea of eternity.)
 - a. In the midst of the garden was the "Tree of Life" and whilst we do not know much about it, elsewhere it is mentioned it definitely refers to eternal well-being (i.e. Rev 20). Adam and Eve had access to the tree until they sinned then God barred them from the garden to prevent access to that tree (Genesis 3:22-24).
 - b. Each day God met with Adam and Eve for companionship – God socialised with them.
 - c. So religion equals right relationship – if religion every becomes anything else it's false religion!
2. Man's purpose has a number of parts. Briefly they are:
 - a. God brought the animals to Adam to name. That doesn't literally mean that he decided what they should be called but the Hebrew indicates that he was to learn about them much as modern scientists are learning about the natural world today.
 - b. Man (and woman) were to be fruitful and multiply (the man couldn't do it on his own). (What does this tell you about homosexuality?)
 - c. Man was a gardener – he could eat the fruit but was also required to "tend" his God-given environment. The Hebrew word can mean to *work* but it especially means *to bring under bondage*. The picture is of a bear patch of ground in which an expert gardener plans and builds a beautiful garden which bears their creative mark and shows good return for hard work.
 - d. And man's influence was to go beyond the garden as they were instructed to fill the earth and subdue it (I imagine that the garden with the Tree of Life would be the centre of true worship).
3. It seems to me that man has basically lost his way on both counts and unless a person can rediscover both purpose and religion, they will never have fulfilment.
 - a. A square peg will never fit into a round hole and you will never know contentment as long as you are trying to be a square in a round mould.
 - b. We are wrecking our world because of abuse and greed – a world which has the capacity to support every human being but we find extreme poverty and famine among billions of the world's populations. Science has become a religion where men are more concerned about the creature rather than the creator.
 - c. And as far as religion, it's as the Bible says, "*All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned each to his own way*"

A broken rule

1. Many people are turned off Christianity because they believe that there are too many rules and regulations – “if I become a Christian I will have to give up too many things.”
 - a. God is not as interested in rules as He is in relationship!
 - b. How many rules did God give to Adam and Eve? Only one – you are not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve, with a sinless nature were tempted and wilfully disobeyed God’s one command.
 - c. How many rules did God give to mankind after? Only ten (actually at least one more; the death penalty for murder was a command that God gave to Noah). There were other regulations given to the Israelites which had to do with the worship of God but all of them fulfilled in Christ so that His Church is no longer required to uphold them.
 - d. Jesus castigated the Pharisees because they had turned the worship of God into a set of rules and regulations.
2. How did Eve manage to break God’s only command? Especially when we consider that God gave them so much. You can eat of any tree including the supreme tree in the centre of the garden, the Tree of Life.
 - a. How much liberty God gives! How much freedom of choice! How much individuality He gives each person. An exciting life, a rewarding life, a full life, a **free** life
 - b. ***It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery (Gal 5:1).***
 - c. Put simply, Eve was deceived into thinking that God was withholding something good that was rightfully theirs. *God knows that the day you eat of that fruit you will become like Him, knowing good from evil (cf 2 Cor 11:3).*
 - d. The serpent was right. Up to that time they did not know evil – not even what it was. But when they disobeyed God they forfeited good and inherited evil in it’s place.

Conclusion

1. I want to pick up on this theme again next week but let me highlight a very important point from today.
 - a. God is not so much interested in rules as He is in relationship.
 - b. It’s not that God does not have *any* rules – He has rules and His rules are for our good and when we keep them we are blessed and when we break them we are literally cursed (this is what I want to talk about next week).
 - c. But God is more interested in freedom because in freedom we get to express ourselves just as Adam was given freedom of expression in tending the garden.
2. God had met with Adam and Eve every day. His presence was literal.
 - a. God still wants to meet with us and He still wants us to experience His presence on a daily basis. He doesn’t just want to meet us at special meetings and through special speakers, etc.
 - b. Jesus said, “*If anyone is thirsty let him come to me and drink*” (John 7:37).
 - c. I cannot tell you how much we miss out if we are not thirsty and if we do not make it a priority to meet with God on a daily basis.
 - d. God said, *Let us make man in our image...* it was for relationship that we were created if we do not have relationship with God we have lost the most important PURPOSE OF LIFE! We ought to be seeking God above any other desire