

Intro:

- Recap

- o Have you had to make any big decisions today?
- o How about this week?
 - Making decisions can be an incredibly daunting exercise
 - There are so many factors that affect our decisions and our decisions affect so many other aspects of our lives that sometimes it's just safer to not make any decisions at all.
 - o Unfortunately, eventually we must make decisions if we would like to move forward in our lives.
- o We have learned that God has given us ways to know His will and thus to make decisions that please Him
 - He has given us...
 - 1) The Bible as our road map for life
 - 2) The Holy Spirit as our helper to walk beside us through Life sort of like a road sign helps us navigate the road
- o Making the decision to stop for gas
 - We have talked about following the right roads, watching and obeying the road signs but...
 - Continuing on in our family vacation discussion we must talk about the one aspect of the vacation that is vital to our trip.
 - In order for the family to make it from Orange Park to Oregon you are going to need gas
 - o With the price of gas, when and where you stop is an important part of your vacation
 - In fact, the whole gas issue can be an issue of tension between the driver and passenger...At least it is in my car sometimes.
 - o Most importantly, however, is that you stop before it is too late and then you have to walk
 - EX: Running out of Gas
- o Today we will find out about our third channel into the heart and mind of God.
 - The third piece of our puzzle that God has given us to make godly decisions and to live a life that pleases Him
 - Just like we need to stop for gas on a regular basis as we travel in our car, God has commanded us to stop and pray on a regular basis so that we will know His will in the future.
 - If you do not stop for gas eventually what will happen?
 - o Eventually your vehicle will use all of the gas and will stop and be inoperable.
 - Today we will see that we come to God in prayer on a regular basis to better know Him and as a result to know how to live as He wants us to.
 - o To give us our fuel for the future so that we can continue on living in His will.

- Bible Reading

- o Phil. 4:1-9

- Prelude (:1-5)

- o Here in this passage we first see Paul helping the Philippian church in some basic relational matters
 - These verses will help us understand the context behind the key verses that lie ahead in this message and thus will help us understand just what prayer is and how we use it to know God's will
- o There was a conflict between two women in the Philippian church
 - Euodia and Syntyche were having some type of problems, the subject of which we know nothing about.
 - What we do know is that their conflict was causing disunity in the church and so Paul is stressing the importance for them to live in harmony together and thus to allow the entire church to live in harmony
 - o So in order to be the church that God wants us to be we need to be living in harmony together
 - So Paul asks Syzygos whose name means yokefellow or comrade to assist in their conflict resolution
 - Paul reminds them and those of us who are in a conflict with a fellow brother or sister in Christ to remember just what they have been through together for Christ and how we need to be unified in our ministry for Jesus
- o In the midst of the difficult things in life...we rejoice
 - The word translated rejoice here is from the word joy
 - The joy described by Paul here is a state of life
 - o It is not a transitory feeling or mood
 - o It is a way of life
 - EX: Southern way of life (slow moving, no hurry)
 - So as a believer, God wants you to live rejoicing Him!
 - o This frees you to be happy no matter what the circumstances are in your life.
 - o This also means that in our difficult decisions we seek His will and rejoice in the decision that He wants us to make.
 - I am tired of feeling like as a believer I am to live a defeated, sad life here on earth.
 - God has commanded us to live out our lives rejoicing in the life given to us by Him
 - This means that no matter what your circumstances, no matter what is happening in your life, God loves you, has sent Jesus to die for you, and has given you new life in Him.
 - o That makes everything else small and insignificant and reminds us that God has a plan for our lives and it is good and perfect and because of that we rejoice
 - What do we rejoice in?
 - Not our circumstances, not our feelings, not in the things that will one day fade away
 - We Rejoice in the Lord!
 - Are you ready to live this life?

- Here in verses 6 and 7 we find our key instruction about prayer and knowing the will of God
 - o We find three important aspects of prayer here that teach us how to pray:
 - 1 - The Approach
 - 2 - The Action
 - 3 - The Affect
- The Approach
 - o Here in :6 Paul tells us to "Do not be anxious about anything"
 - Importantly here, Paul is giving us a direct command based on the authority of God.
 - This is not a suggestion for us to not be anxious or a one time statement for the Philippian church
 - As believers God wants us to rejoice in our life because of what has happened in our life through Jesus
 - o Living life in an anxious way is almost the opposite of rejoicing
 - When you are anxious about something how do you feel?
 - Nervous, scared, confused
 - Why do we get anxious?
 - o Because we do not know what is going to happen in the future.
 - o God does not want us to live life this way...it is not His will because it is not in His nature to be anxious...He wants you to have peace.
 - o So we see here as an overall life goal and a way to approach God for prayer is in peace or without anxiety
 - When we begin to trust God for our future and truly seek His will, we will not have anxiety because we know that it is in God's hands
 - So when we approach God through prayer, we approach Him being ready to trust Him with our future.
 - o Is that always easy?
 - No, but it is necessary if we want to live a life in the will of God.
 - o Does that mean that we will never worry?
 - No, but it does mean that we are committed to a process of worrying less and less and we depend on God more and more.
 - The Action
 - o Next, Paul states, "but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
 - In everything with absolutely every aspect of our lives, no matter what the apparent importance we should do 2 things:
 - 1 - In everything We should pray
 - o This is translated from a Greek word which is very complicated meaning 'to speak to God'
 - I really don't know when the act of prayer became this very ritualistic, formal, and boring process but the Biblical prayer is nothing more complicated than a conversation with God

- Conclusion

- o So tomorrow and each day after we will all be faced with different decisions.
 - Some will be more difficult than others, but no matter what their importance many of us want to do what pleases God
 - How do we do this?
 - How do we go about making decisions based on the will of God?
- o 1 - we must spend time each day reading the Bible.
 - Through knowing the words in the Bible we begin to know God since the Bible is His own journal, His own communication with us
- o 2 - We must rely on the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit who has come to live inside of when we became Christians
 - We are commanded not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30)
 - So we are encouraged to take advantage of this Gift from God and to let God work in our lives through the Holy Spirit.
 - o He will help you make godly decisions
- o 3 - Finally, we need to talk with God and ask Him to meet our needs.
 - Just like every other person in our lives, if we want to know God, we need to talk to Him.
 - Through our conversations with God we will find a peace that will penetrate every aspect of our lives and allow us to live as He has intended us to live in Christ Jesus
- o Will you commit to reading your Bible on a regular basis?
- o Are you ready to listen to the Holy Spirit as He walks alongside you?
 - Do you rely on His guidance in all aspects of your life?
- o Are you ready to talk with God on a regular basis?
 - If you are ready to do these things then you are ready to begin to make godly decisions, to know the will of God.
 - God is always ready to do an amazingly wonderful work in your life...He is always ready to give you the peace that flows from His being.
 - o He is offering it to you in this life...right now.
 - Are you ready to truly begin living a godly life?