

**Sing before the service:** Psalm 31:17

Our help is in the Name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.  
Beloved, grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Psalm of praise 103:2

Prayer

Psalm 141:5

Scripture reading: Hosea 10

Scripture text: Hosea 10:12

**Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.**  
(Hosea 10:12 NIV)

The Lord really notices whether or not people are seeking his will.

- The Bible clearly shows that the Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of man to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God (Psalm 14:2; Psalm 53:2, 3).

What does the Lord complain about? He brings a charge against those who have no faithfulness or love and are not committed to the will of God (Hosea 4:1).

- Dishonesty causes great trouble with the Lord.
  - There are always people who will in some way act against the will of God to get hold of something they want to have.
- The Lord declares himself severely against it.
  - Straightforward He says that people who acquire things in a dishonest way will not profit by it eventually.

They will land up in hell. The implication is clear:

- Live a dishonest life and eventually end up in eternal death.
- Live according to the will of God and you are saved from death (Proverbs 10:2).

**Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death.**

We shouldn't think that we are the only people who have difficulties when we have to do the will of the Lord.

- All people who seek the will of the Lord have to take difficult decisions at times.
- Even the greatest among the champions of faith had to take decisions and do things they could not see their way to do it.
- John the Baptist, for example, did not see his way to baptise the Lord Jesus, but Jesus told him to do it to "fulfil all righteousness", in other words, to do the will of God (Matthew 3:15).

This simply means that we know the way. We know the will of the Lord, and we have to obey it, regardless of what it requires of us.

Can we do it? Of course we can. Remember two things:

- By the grace we receive from God through the Lord Jesus we are able to know the will of God and, also, we are able to obey his will.
  - A long time before Jesus came to the earth, the Lord said something that is also true of us. He said:  
**Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.**  
(Matthew 12:18 NIV)
  - It's all about the fact that we have become servants of God through the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.
  - All those who share in this grace receive the love of the Lord in full.
    - He pours out his Spirit on such people so that they understand the will of God and tell other people about it.
- The other thing is that the Lord has infinite patience with us and He is always forgiving towards us. He shows us how the mercy of the Lord Jesus reaches us when our faith deteriorates.
  - He says He will not break a bruised reed and He will not snuff out a smouldering wick.
  - The Lord will not chase away or disown someone who believes, even if his faith is bruised or smouldering.
  - The Lord will save such a man through the redemptive blood of the Lord Jesus. He will let the will of God triumph (Matthew 12:20).

However, it's also true that people who let them be controlled by their sinful nature, are unable to do the will of God (Romans 8:8).

**Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.** (Romans 8:8 NIV)

Hence we must think carefully and seek the will of God so that we do not conform to the pattern of this world.

- We should let God transform us by renewing our minds.
- Then we will be able to test and approve what God's will is.
- Then we'll know what is good, pleasing and perfect to Him (Romans 12:2).

The Lord Jesus also had to take decisions with regard to his faith and worship. He took the strait and narrow road.

- He fully conformed to what God required of Him. It was God's will that He would sacrifice Himself for our sins so that we could be rescued from this evil world.
- It was not easy, but He did it. So He fulfilled the will of God our Father and saved us (Galatians 1:4).

Now it is quite clear what we ought to do.

- We must seek the will of God in all respects and do it.
- Paul wrote to the Ephesians (4:24) "to put on the new self, created to be like God". If they lived like this, they would be truly holy according to God's will.
- Our life on earth must no longer be controlled by our human desires, but rather by God's will (1 Peter 4:2).

The Lord's punishment for people who know about God, but do not live according to what

He demands of us, is absolutely horrible.

- The Lord said it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them (2 Peter 2:21).

Maybe it's not always pleasant to live prayerfully. Especially for our young people whom unbelieving youngsters could mock if they refuse to take part in sinful practices.

- Sometimes the mockery of the truly faithful is in fact because they do not want to lose depth in their religious life and therefore do not yield to peer pressure.
- And then we must remember what the apostle John said: "The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17).

**Amen.**

Closing prayer

Closing hymn: Psalm 146:1, 5

The Lord will bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift His countenance to you and give you peace.

**Amen.**

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Date: 3 June 1999 (evening)*