

# Willingly Going to the Beach in Nineveh

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Over thirty years ago now, when I was a teenager, I was initially applying to attend Ambassador College. The application process involved your local pastor having to write a recommendation for you. He had to put his experience with you in writing and recommend whether he thought you would be a valuable student. At the time I started to apply, I had recently changed church areas. I had grown up in the church and the previous pastor I had known for many, many years. But the pastor that was over the church area that I was in, didn't know me very well. So, when this came about, he purposefully set up a time to come over to the house and sit down and talk with me and have a chance to get to know me a little better. So that he could then make an informed opinion when he wrote his evaluation. When he came over, we had a lengthy discussion, and at the end of our conversation he made a statement that has stuck with me for the rest of my life. It was a very simple but valuable lesson that I've always tried to keep in mind throughout my life. Which is exactly what he told me to do.

At the end of our conversation, he looked at me and said, "James, if you get accepted, and I think you probably will, don't ever forget this: "It's Thy will be done, not my will be done."

That's a very simple, basic lesson in Christianity, but it's the most fundamental thing that we could ever learn in our Christian lives. The basic idea that we always have to submit our will to God's will. That we always have to be willing, when God tells us to do something in His word—leaves instructions for us—we have to follow that. and if we are all honest with ourselves, there are a lot of times in our Christian lives when our carnal human nature tends to fight that. We just want to do things our way not God's way because sometimes in doing it God's way, it's painful for us. It puts us through hard trials and sometimes we have to sacrifice. Life is difficult trying to do it His way. As the Bible thoroughly explains to us, sometimes we may have to give our lives by being willing to submit to His will when it's not what we want to do.

What we are going to do today is look at this particular principle in the Bible. We are going to look at several examples—several individuals—who typically fought God's will, at least in what we have recorded of them. And then we are going to look at individuals who faithfully followed God's will, even at times when they didn't want to. When the situation they were put into was difficult and scary and they knew they were going to face difficult pain. They didn't really want to do it but they had the attitude of "Thy will be done, not my will be done."

They subjected themselves to following God's will even when it was painful and difficult for them.

If you would like a title for this sermon, it is

## Willingly Going to the Beach in Nineveh

I had a little fun with this title and you will understand how as we get into our first example.

As I'm sure a lot of you have already guessed, I stole that title from the example of Jonah and you're exactly right. That's the first example we are going to look at today. The reason I did that is because Jonah winds up with the beach in Nineveh whether he liked it or not. He didn't go willingly and God had to force him to go because he was directly fighting God's will. That's why I titled it, "Willingly Going to the Beach in Nineveh" In other words being able to subject ourselves to God's will even when we don't want to.

Before we start reading the example, let me give you a little history. I think it's important to understand some of the historical context of why Jonah was being so resistant. We read the story and it's pretty obvious that God gave Jonah instructions but Jonah blatantly fought against them. It's not like he wasn't clear on what God was telling him to do, he knew what God was telling him to do, he just directly defied God's will. The Bible doesn't directly tell us exactly why he did that, but I think it's fairly easy to figure out. If we look at the historical context and put that together with some of the comments that Jonah makes in the book, I think it's a pretty simple puzzle to put together why he would have the attitude that he did.

To share a little of the historical context, I would like to share some information I got off a website titled, [PreachingSource.com](http://PreachingSource.com). It's an article titled, [Historical and Cultural Background for Jonah](#), authored by Mike Mills and posted on October 9, 2019. I just took a few brief comments from Mike's article and strung them together because my whole purpose is just to share some of the historical context so we get a picture of why Jonah might have had the attitude that he did. If we understand the Israelite point of view as how they looked at the Assyrians in Nineveh, it gives us some insight. To quote from his article:

*Understanding Assyrian culture at that time is vital to a proper interpretation of the book of Jonah. The Assyrian Empire was a constant threat to Israel, both before and after Jonah's time. Assyrians were a fearsome society. Nineveh's violence is particularly singled out in the book of Jonah 3:8 and by the prophet Nahum. From an Israelite standpoint, the Assyrians at Nineveh were to be hated. Israel believed that God ought to only show grace to them because they were God's chosen people. They might have celebrated the idea of God bringing judgment on Nineveh.*

If you look at it through that point of view you see that these people were a thorn in the side of the Israelites. They would rather see them get destroyed and go away and get out of their lives. You can understand if God tells Jonah to go and preach to these people to repent why Jonah said, "If I do that they might repent and then God won't

destroy them and He'll be merciful and nice to them and that's not what I want to see happen. I want to see those dirty dogs destroyed".

That was his viewpoint. As we will see later in the book, he got mad at God and said, "I told you, you were going to do this."

We know this is what he was thinking.

**Jonah 1:1** *Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2) Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."*

*3) But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so, he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. (NKJV)*

Now realizing Jonah's situation here, it wasn't like he was not clear about what God wanted. It wasn't like he was struggling with a situation not really sure what God's will was. He knew very clearly what God wanted him to do. God had made that really clear; Jonah just copped an attitude. That's not what I want, that's not my will and I'm going to force my will and not God's will. That did not turn out so well for him.

That's why I titled this sermon, "Willingly Going to the Beach in Nineveh", because he winds up on the beach at Nineveh whether he likes it or not.

It's a lesson for all of us to learn in our lives, because I don't think any of us have ever had God appear to us or give us dreams or visions or tell us His will. But he gave us His book; He gave us lots of examples and instruction and He expects us to study it and apply them in our lives and bend our will to doing them. He expects us to pray to Him and ask Him what His will is in our lives and try to follow the direction that we receive.

We can be in situations in our lives too—maybe not as blatantly as Jonah where God spoke to him or gave him a dream. (We don't know exactly how He communicated these instructions). But clearly, he knew what God's instructions were and he just decided to fight it. We can do that in our own lives as well. When we are in a situation where God's will clearly say we should do A, but our carnal nature wants to do B and we just decide to do B.

To follow the analogy, God tells us to go to the beach in Nineveh but we would really rather be on a boat to Tarshish. We decide the boat to Tarshish sounds like more fun—so I'm going to do that. This is something we have to be aware of in our own lives. We need to realize that God can force the subject.

If we just follow the story (and I'll just summarize the rest of chapter 1) Jonah gets on this boat and as they're traveling. Rough seas come up to the point that it's frightening everybody on the boat and everybody is getting concerned about their safety. Jonah is

fully aware that this is all about him; he knows he has defied God's will. He told the others to just throw him into the water and it would get better for them because God is doing this because of my actions. They take him up on it and they toss him into the water and things do get better for them. We can pick up the story in verse 15.

*15) So, they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging.*

*16) Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.*

*17) Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

Notice, the turmoil that happened here was dramatic enough to get the attention of all the other guys too and that is why they were sacrificing. They threw Jonah into the water because there was something to this. Just like Jonah had said that if they got rid of him the sea would calm. One of the lessons for us to learn is that God can force the subject. If we are defying His will, He can make His will happen. Turn over to chapter 2:10.

**Jonah 2:10** *So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.*  
(NKJV)

Throughout chapter 2, Jonah started to have a little bit of an attitude adjustment. He was totally fighting God's will and what he knew he was supposed to do. Then he finds himself inside the belly of this fish and decides that maybe he should rethink this decision. Maybe he should be a little more receptive to God's will because this was not turning out the way he had planned. Now he starts being more repentant but as we will see, he doesn't totally repent; he just gets a little more compliant. We'll see later, he is still fighting God's will, even when he gets to the beach in Nineveh. God forcefully sends him there. He went to the beach in Nineveh but he didn't do it willingly. One of the lessons for us to learn in this is, and I'll just put it the way I like to jokingly state it:

*God has an endless supply of whales and He's not afraid to use them.*

In other words, if we defy His will, He can force the subject. He can say, "No I want you to go here and you are going whether you like it or not" He can force it. I think it is important for us to understand that it's just smarter to go along with His will. This is what He wants me to do, the smart option for me is to just submit and just go along whether I like it or not. That's always the smarter view.

Let's notice that God sent Jonah there to preach to the people of Nineveh. He does that but also notice that he still has his own attitude. He starts complying somewhat, but he does it with an attitude; notice in Jonah 3:1.

**Jonah 3:1** *Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,*

2) *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.*” (NKJV)

Jonah fought His will the first time and after God orchestrated an attitude adjustment said, “Let’s try this again; let Me give you My instructions and now go do it.”

3) *So, Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent.*

4) *And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day s walk. Then he cried out and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”* (NKJV)

I’m sure in forty days he said more than just the one sentence that we have written here. I suspect that what we have written here is representative of his approach with this; especially when we see his attitude later. What’s taking place here? Notice, he doesn’t say anything about, repent and God will be merciful to you. It’s just, forty days and you’re all going to die, because that is just what he would really like to see happen. He just wants them all destroyed.

There is another thing to notice in this story, which I think is one of the most important things in this example. When we let our own will rule us; when our whole point of will is, “my will be done, not Thy will be done”, we tend to totally miss God’s perspective on things. Notice the main difference as we go through this story. Jonah’s whole focus is on himself and how these events affect him. He does not care how it’s affecting everyone else. God’s perspective is always what is in the best interest of all parties concerned. Even though the people in Nineveh were evil and very violent and famous for being so, to the point that God was ready to destroy them—He still cares about these people and He would like to see them repent and change and for things to go better. Jonah doesn’t care—I want my way and that’s it. That’s his whole focus. We have to realize that this is the lesson we can all learn. If we get so focused on our own lives, we stop caring about the innocent bystanders. We stop caring about how our actions can affect the greater number of people we interact with, a ripple effect of our actions. We stop caring about that and just go our own way—it’s just my way or no way at all. That’s exactly the attitude that Jonah had.

In chapter 4:1 we see how this story turns out. After Jonah had preached to all the people, he winds up without the outcome that he was hoping for. He wanted the people to be hard headed so God would destroy them. To his surprise, all the people repented and called a fast—they even had the animals fast—and they said that they needed to clean their act up so they would not be destroyed. That’s a successful outcome. He is a prophet sent to preach to this nation, to tell them to repent by instruction of God and the people were receptive and repented. It’s a successful mission but that is not how Jonah sees it. Notice in Jonah 4:1.

**Jonah 4:1** *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.* (NKJV)

He's angry because people have repented and stopped being so wicked. This just tells you how twisted his attitude was.

*2) So, he prayed to the LORD, and said, Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore, I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, one who relents from doing harm. (NKJV)*

Think about this; he is mad at God. You are nice and kind and merciful to people and that's bad—that's the approach he is taking and it tells you how twisted his thinking was. This is what happens to a person when the focus is, "my way or not at all". The whole perspective of what's good for the overall number of people involved and caring about the innocent bystanders, that just goes out the window. Notice verse 3.

*3) Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!" (NKJV)*

In other words, if I can't have my way, I would rather die; it's my way or not at all.

*4) Then the LORD said, Is it right for you to be angry?"*

*5) So, Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. (NKJV)*

He is still hoping that he can sit back and wait for them to be evil and get destroyed because that's what he wants to see happen.

*6) And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So, Jonah was very grateful for the plant. (NKJV)*

In spite of what a bad attitude Jonah is showing, God is still being kind to him.

*7) But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered.*

*8) And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, It is better for me to die than to live." (NKJV)*

Basically, to put this in modern terminology, Jonah is just throwing a hissy fit like a spoiled child. He didn't get his way; "I didn't get my way and now it's my way or no way at all. He's so focused on getting his way that he does not care how it would affect all these other people. Notice what God points out to him. God is looking at the overall good for all parties concerned and He points this out to Jonah.

9) *Then God said to Jonah, Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" And he said, It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"*

10) *But the LORD said, You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.*

11) *And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?" (NKJV)*

What God is pointing out to him is that yes, these people are evil, they are famous for their violence but they are also deceived. They didn't receive the law and all the things that Israel has. They didn't know a whole lot better. Do you not have any concern for them in that regard? Jonah totally missed the point and that's what can happen to us if we allow ourselves to fall into a mentality of, "My will be done, not Thy will be done."

What naturally happens is, our focus will limit and get myopic. We stop looking at what the bigger picture is. What is in the best interest of all parties concerned and how do my actions affect the innocent bystanders in all this? That totally gets out of the big picture and that's what we need to be aware of in our personal lives. This can play out in a lot of different contexts and a lot of different ways. The bottom line is, we need to try and have God's perspective because that is always in the best interest for all parties involved.

If we look at Jonah's example, he was pretty blatant in fighting God's will. God told him directly, go to Nineveh and preach to these people. He said, no, I'm not going to do it. I am going to do my own thing.

Sometimes we act as defiantly, but more often than not, it's not that blatant. Normally it's a little more subtle. We are trying to follow God's will but we have to twist it with our own will too. We mix them together and then we lie to ourselves and say, "I didn't do all of what He said, but I was kind of doing right because I kind of did God's will." That is more what we tend to do as carnal human beings.

Let's look at an example that clearly illustrates this in the life of Saul. In 1 Samuel 9 we see instructions that Saul was given when he went to Gilgal and then look at what he actually did. In 1 Samuel 9:27 notice Samuel is going to have a conversation with Saul and there's a lot of instruction that Samuel gives him after this. Samuel makes it very clear when he's talking to him, that he is the mouthpiece and delivering God's will and God's instruction for Saul. This isn't Samuel's opinions or what Samuel wants to happen, he's not just giving him advice—no, he is telling him, I'm coming to you as a judge from God and I'm delivering His message to you. These are God's words, I'm just the mouthpiece.

**1 Samuel 9:27** *As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Tell the servant to go on ahead of us." And he went on. But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God." (NKJV)*

Notice, as Samuel begins, he tells him that these are not my words, I'm just the spokesman here and I'm giving you God's instruction. In chapter 10:8; there are a lot of other things he tells him prior to this, but we just need to focus on verse 8 and notice what God's instructions were.

**1 Samuel 10:8** *You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely, I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings and make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do.*" (NKJV)

There are basically two major things in these instructions.

1. You are going to wait seven days.
2. Samuel is the one who is going to do the sacrificing.

It's very clear in the instructions that Samuel was to do the sacrificing.

So, there are two pieces to this. We are going to notice later that when it actually happens Saul does wait seven days but he totally disregards the issue that Samuel said he was supposed to do the sacrificing. That was explicitly stated in God's instructions. Continuing in 1 Samuel 13 we pick up the story.

**1 Samuel 13:5** *Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven.*

6) *When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits.*

7) *And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.*

*As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.*

8) *Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. [He does one part of it right] But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.* (NKJV)

We will see that Saul gets impatient and takes matters in his own hands. One of the lessons for us is, we just have to be patient and let God work things out the way He wants. There are times our carnal nature says, no I want to take the bull by the horns and do my own will. That can end very devastatingly and we'll notice that it did just that in the life of Saul.

9) *So, Saul said, Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering.* (NKJV)

This was in direct defiance of the instructions he was given.



10) *Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him.*

11) *And Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash,*

12) *then I said, "The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD. Therefore, I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering." (NKJV)*

In other words, I just felt I had to take the bull by the horns and do my own will. Even though he knew that was not what the instructions were. He was not willing to be patient and say, okay the boss said to wait and I have to wait on Samuel. I don't know what God is doing here but I need to submit and do it His way—no he had to take the bull by the horns and do his own will. This did not turn out well.

13) *And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For now, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.*

14) *But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."*

15) *Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people present with him, about six hundred men. (NKJV)*

Notice, this had some devastating consequences for Saul. Saul didn't look at this like Jonah did, saying God said to go to Gilgal and I'm just not going to Gilgal, I'll go to Tarshish—he didn't take that attitude. He went and he waited seven days but when things didn't work out the way he wanted he thought, I've just got to step up and do it my way. He didn't stop and say, no, these are not the instructions of God so I'm just going to have to be patient and let God work it out His way. He insisted on doing his own will. This was not a onetime mistake for Saul. We all, in our human nature, stumble at times and learn the hard way by making bad decisions. Hopefully when we face the bad consequences again, we think, I did this last time so maybe I should make better decisions this time. Unfortunately, this is not what Saul did. This became a trend in his life where he kind of tries to do God's will but he always insists on doing it his way. This had some devastating consequences in his life.

1 Samuel 15 is another time where Saul gets very clear instructions of what God wants him to do, but once again he half does them and forces his own will. When his hand gets called and he's told he didn't do it right, he starts to rationalize that it's the people's fault, somebody else is to blame. I just felt compelled, I just had to do it—it's never that I didn't do God's will and now I want to repent, he's really only repenting when he's facing the consequences and he got caught and wants the consequences to go away. We will pick up the story in 1 Samuel 15:1.

**1 Samuel 15:1** *Samuel also said to Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. (NKJV)*

In other words, he's warning him; you have a track record of not heeding—listen this time.

2) *“Thus, says the LORD of hosts: I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.*

3) *Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.*

4) *So, Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand-foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah.*

5) *And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley.*

6) *Then Saul said to the Kenites, Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.” So, the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.*

7) *And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt.*

8) *He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.*

9) *But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed. (NKJV)*

Notice what happened here; this is an easy lesson for us in our human nature. God said destroy everything that was there. They started seeing the attractive things, the good stuff that was there and thought, surely God doesn't want us to get rid of all the good stuff. We can make practical use out of these things. We would like to have these things—all the worthless stuff we are happy to destroy but we want to keep the good stuff. They could rationalize this with their own human reasoning—this is practical and God likes us to have good things and He wouldn't want us to destroy the good stuff. But God did say destroy the good stuff—He said destroy it all. This is the lesson of how our human nature can start rationalizing about how we can put our will above God's. It's something we are all subject to; we all have that human nature that wants to do our own thing and wants to do our evil way. It's a lesson we have to learn and it can mean giving up the good stuff to follow God's will. But if that's what He said we should do, that's what we have to do, whether we like it or not.

Let's pick up a story in verse 10.

10) *Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,*

11) *I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.” And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.*

12) *So, when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul went to Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal.” (NKJV)*

That’s an interesting comment there in verse 12 and we will see this later in another example with Saul. Notice he made a monument to himself. That tells you about his self-will; I’ve got to be the center of attention, everybody, look at me, I have to have my will done. We’ll see that later when David gets given more credit in some things than Saul, he gets jealous and wants to kill him. His focus is that he needs to be the center of attention and the credit needs to be coming to him. Continuing in verse 13.

13) *Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”*

14) *But Samuel said, What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” (NKJV)*

In other words, it’s impossible for you to have followed His instructions because the instructions were to kill all of these animals and I hear them alive.

15) *And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” (NKJV)*

He immediately says, it’s the people’s fault and I did it for their benefit. He’s not taking any responsibility for forcing his own will; “I did it for the good of the people, that’s what I did it for.” No, he just did his own will.

16) *Then Samuel said to Saul, Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night.” And he said to him, Speak on.”*

17) *So, Samuel said, When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? (NKJV)*

Notice this particular point, because we are going to see later the progression in Saul’s life. Samuel is clearly saying, Saul wasn’t always like this. There was a time when Saul was humble, he was small in his own eyes and more dedicated to putting God’s will first. What happens is a transition throughout his life where he goes from someone who was trying to follow God’s will and was humble in his own eyes and God made him king but later what keeps creeping up is, “my will be done”. Have to do it my way, I have to be the center of attention, I have to have my own will and this has very devastating consequences, in fact it destroys him over time. Very slowly, this erodes his life and as we are going to see later in this sermon, he literally descends into madness in terms of what this does for his thinking.

18) *Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.*

19) *Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"*

20) *And Saul said to Samuel, But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. (NKJV)*

He's still just, "I did what was right, I did exactly what He told me." He knows what the instructions were and they were very clear. But he said, I did it for the good of the people, I followed Him, I'm good. He is justifying his actions, he's not admitting that no, you just didn't follow His will because you insisted on doing your own will and he just won't admit it.

21) *But the people [notice it's the people] took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."*

22) *So, Samuel said: Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.*

23) *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king." (NKJV)*

This had very devastating consequences for Saul's life. He had a premier position here—he was the king of Israel and as Samuel told him, being king over Israel, it could have been his line for years to come. But he blew all of that simply because he couldn't accept, it's has to be "Thy will be done, not my will be done". This was literally his undoing because he established a track record of trying to follow God's will, but he had to do it his way. He had to force his own agenda, he had to do it his own way and be the center of attention, build a monument to himself; he was not small in his own eyes anymore. What he was actually doing in these decisions was resisting the Spirit of God and pushing it away from his life. It is a mistake we can all fall into if we don't learn the lesson of, "Thy will be done, not my will be done". If we constantly push against Him and insist on doing our own way, what we are doing is pushing away or resisting the Spirit of God and that has devastating consequences.

To see that this is exactly what was happening in Saul's life look over at Chapter 16 in verse 13. But let me summarize the context of this because we're coming to the end of a story; it's not totally relevant to where we are going.

In the first half of Chapter 16 Samuel is going to anoint David to be Saul's successor, as the next king. Notice what it says happened with David and then compare that with what happened with Saul. It makes it very clear to us what Saul was doing. He was resisting the Spirit of God.

**1 Samuel 16:13** *Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So, Samuel arose and went to Ramah. (NKJV)*

Notice what happens with the Spirit of Yehovah in regards to Saul.

*14) But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. (NKJV)*

Notice this is something that, we too, can have happen, if we constantly want to put our will above God's. What we are doing is resisting the Spirit of God. We're going to come back to the example of Saul and more details in his life in just a minute. But to follow this chain of thought, turn over to Acts 7. A lot of this chapter focuses on a sermon that Stephen gave to a group of Israelites which does not go over very well. They are not fans of what he has to say and they wind up killing him—stoning him—for it. One of the things he points out to them is their rebellion, even though they had received the law of God and have God's instructions. It's not like it's unclear how they should be living their lives but they knowingly refuse to do it. Notice how Stephen describes this and the terminology he uses.

**Acts 7:51** *You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.*

*52) Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,*

*53) who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.” (NKJV)*

He is saying, you are resisting the Holy Spirit by resisting what you know are God's instructions to do. You received the law, you knew how you were supposed to live, even though this was a physical letter of the law of obedience, you knew what the instructions were. You knowingly violated it, you knowingly went against it and you killed the people that came to you to point this out to you. You are fighting against the Holy Spirit is what he is telling them.

One of the lessons we need to learn from this is that when you are fighting against the Holy Spirit, two things happen. It affects our personal behavior and it affects our understanding. The reason being that the Holy Spirit is what gives us both of these. We are going to see that the Holy Spirit enables us to fully submit to God's will and to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. It is also the Spirit of truth which leads us into understanding. If we insist on having our own way and, by definition in doing that, it becomes a trend in our lives—we are resisting the Holy Spirit. Naturally these two things are going to go in reverse. You are going to be pushing away the source that enables these two things to happen.

Notice the foundational concepts in Galatians 5:19. We're going to read what I like to refer to as the good list and the bad list. You have the lists of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the spirit. It gives you the criteria for comparison.

**Galatians 5:19** *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,  
20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,  
21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.  
22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.  
24) And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.  
25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.  
26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*  
(NKJV)

As it clearly tells us, if we are submitting to God's Spirit and doing our best to submit to it and utilize it in our lives, what is going to happen? We are going to see more and more of the fruits of the Spirit developing in our lives. When we start off our Christian life in conversion, we get a small amount of the Spirit and we have to grow, develop and mature. The more we submit our will to God and utilize His Spirit, we're going to show more patience, more kindness, more love, we'll be less short-tempered, and we'll be more giving and caring about other people. That's what is naturally going to develop in our lives because that's the fruit of the Spirit. We're going to make mistakes, fall down and get it wrong along the way but as long as we are following that path, we are going to see a growth in the fruits of the Spirit.

If a person is resisting the Spirit and going in the other direction, you are going to see the opposite. You're going to see more contentions and jealousies and outburst of wrath and selfish ambitions—you are going to see all of these fruits of doing it the evil way, the works of the flesh. These will develop more and more in a person's life.

There is also something else that this will affect. It affects our understanding because the Holy Spirit leads us into truth. John 16:12.

**John 16:12** *I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.  
13) However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.  
14) He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.  
15) All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.* (NKJV)

Christ is telling them that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth; it's the Spirit that leads us into all truth and enables us to understand the Bible. The fruits of our behavior and our understanding correlate together because they both come from the same source. If we are yielding and utilizing that source, we'll grow in these things. If we are pushing that source away then naturally both of these are going to decline. As we're going to see in a minute in what I love to refer to as "The Biblical Criteria for Assessment", tells us to look at the fruits because often times the fruits of the behavior are easier to see. To pick up these same concepts in Samuel's life, turn back to 1 Samuel 18. You can see, as we saw in Chapter 16, the Spirit of Yehovah went away from Saul. Notice what started happening in his life as a result.

**1 Samuel 18:6** *Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.*

7) *So, the women sang as they danced, and said: Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."*

8) *Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?"*

9) *So, Saul eyed David from that day forward.*

10) *And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So, David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand.*

11) *And Saul cast the spear, for he said, I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice. (NKJV)*

Notice what has happened here. What is upsetting Saul is something that really shouldn't be bothering him at all. Saul is king and David was one of the commanders in his army out fighting the battles at the instruction of the king. If he is successful in battling and killed his ten thousands, that's a win for Israel; that's a win under Saul's command. He can take that as good for the nation in general, but that was not his focus. His focus was, I need to be the center of attention and all the glory should be coming to me and not to David. What do we see in his actions? Selfish ambition, jealousies, outbursts of wrath—these were all on the wrong list. You see what is happening here? He is self-willed, he is pushing aside the Spirit of God and his behavior is showing all the things on the wrong list. His behavior is declining and so is his understanding.

Notice 1 Samuel 28:3.

**1 Samuel 28:3** *Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put the mediums and the spiritists out of the land. (NKJV)*

Notice Samuel had pointed out previously there was a time when Saul was small in his own eyes, when he was trying to follow the will of God. This is directly telling you that previously Saul had followed God's instructions, kicked all the mediums and spiritists and people who worked with the occult and got them out of Israel just like God instructed. Turn over to Deuteronomy 18 and we will notice the instructions that Moses recorded on this subject. Saul previously was aware of these because he acted in accordance.

**Deuteronomy 18:9** *When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.*

10) *There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,*

11) *or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.*

12) *For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.*

13) *You shall be blameless before the LORD your God.*

14) *For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you.*

(NKJV)

Obviously based on Samuel's prior actions, he was familiar with what God's instructions were and had done accordingly. As king he had run all these people off, got them out of the land and had nothing to do with them—he behaved exactly right. But now let's notice what happened. As I mentioned before, we see through Saul's life that he winds up making a descent into madness. Think about how this affected not just his behavior but his thinking and his understanding. A guy who went from clearly understanding that you should have nothing to do with spirits, mediums that deal with demons—he then winds up actually going to one and thinks it is rational to believe that he can bring Samuel back from the dead somehow. It shows you how far down his understanding went. But how did he get here? He got here by thinking that he could force his own will; continually, doing his own will is what basically got him to this situation.

Pick up in verse 4.

4) *Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at Shunem. So, Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at Gilboa.*

5) *When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.*

6) *And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.*

7) *Then Saul said to his servants, Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor."*



- 8) So, Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.”
- 9) Then the woman said to him, Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?”
- 10) And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.”
- 11) Then the woman said, Whom shall I bring up for you?” And he said, Bring up Samuel for me.”
- 12) When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!”
- 13) And the king said to her, Do not be afraid. What did you see?” And the woman said to Saul, I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth.”
- 14) So, he said to her, What is his form?” And she said, An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle.” And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down.
- 15) Now Samuel said to Saul, Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” And Saul answered, I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore, I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do.”
- 16) Then Samuel said: So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy?
- 17) And the LORD has done for Himself as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David.
- 18) Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day.
- 19) Moreover, the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.” (NKJV)

That's exactly what happened. Saul winds up getting himself killed in this whole situation. Notice his thinking throughout this whole process. This is someone who originally was small in his own eyes, was trying to follow God, and who had run all the spiritists and mediums out of the land. So, he obviously understood we shouldn't be having anything to do with them. If he understood anything about God's plan, it was a ludicrous idea that he could literally bring Samuel back from the dead to talk to him. He was literally making a descent into madness in terms of his thinking. How did he get there? It all started by having an attitude of "my will be done, not Thy will be done" and resisting God's instructions. It wasn't like he was doing what Jonah did and saying, I'm just not going at all—I'm just going to get on a boat and go to Tarshish and forget going to Nineveh and going to totally resist—he didn't do that. He kind of obeyed but insisted on doing it his own way. He always had a twist with how he was going to force his own will and justify it by saying it was for the good of the people, it was what I needed to do at the time, I felt compelled; he was always forcing his own will and resisting the Spirit of

God. He goes from being someone who is small in his own eyes, who is following God to doing things so totally irrational as going to a medium and thinking he can actually bring Samuel back from the dead. That just shows you what can happen with that thinking.

If you look at the principles we have looked at, you can understand why Christ gave us the instructions he did in Matthew 7. Christ gives us what I like to refer to as “The Biblical Criteria for Assessment”. The reason I word it like that is, I have worked as a recruiter for the last twenty years and my job is basically to interview people and try to make assessments as to who is going to be a good match to work for a company and who is not. One of the famous sayings in my line of work is, *the best predictor of future behavior is past behavior*. You look at the track record of someone’s behavior and that’s the best indicator of what kind of employee they are going to be if you were to hire them. Christ gives us a similar principle here and tells us that this is the criteria for assessment.

**Matthew 7:15** *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*

16) *You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?*

17) *Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.*

18) *A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.*

19) *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

20) *Therefore, by their fruits you will know them. (NKJV)*

Christ was giving us his criteria for assessment and it’s a good lesson for all of us to know. If someone is being led by the Spirit of God, God’s Spirit gives us two things. It helps us show the fruits of the Spirit in our behavior and also gives us proper understanding of His word. As He is pointing out, often times the behavior is the easier thing to spot. If you are seeing the behavior go wrong and you are not seeing love, kindness, patience and caring for others, instead seeing selfish ambitions, outburst of wrath and jealousies and contentions—if you’re seeing that, then question the understanding because they both come from the same source. This is why Christ said, if you want to spot the wolves, look for the fruits of behavior. Look who is submitting to God’s will and showing the proper fruits and who is not. That’s the best indicator of who you should follow.

In the time we have left, what I would like to do is look at some examples of individuals who did a good job of following God’s will. We looked at several individuals who fought God’s will and insisted on doing their own way. Now look at a couple examples of individuals who were in situations where God’s will for them was not something they were really excited about. It wasn’t something they were jumping up and down about, “Pick me, I want to do it.” But they had the attitude of “Thy will be done, not my will be done.” This is what makes them the heroes in the story.

The story of Esther 4 is a particular favorite of mine because I had an instructor at Ambassador College who loved to quote from this story. To this day I can't read Mordecai's words without hearing his voice in the back of my head because I heard him quote it so many times. To give some of the background to this story, Esther becomes the Queen of Persia. She is part of the Jews who are in captivity to the Persian empire and through a series of events (that we won't go through, it's covered in the first several chapters) she is married to the king. There is an individual named Haman who starts a plot of trying to literally annihilate the Jews who are in captivity; he's trying to destroy God's people. Esther isn't even really aware of this at the time this is taking place. She is in a unique position because she is the wife of the king. But it's not quite as simple as that as she points out in the story. It's not just like husbands and wives today where she can just go up to her husband and have a conversation. In her situation, if the king hadn't called on her to be in his presence, she could get herself killed by forcing the subject. So, what happens is, Mordecai, who is a distant relative of hers and who raised her from childhood, becomes aware of this plot that Haman has and the decree that he cons the king into signing. It will result in the annihilation of the Jews. As a result of this, Mordecai reaches out to Esther to show her that she is in a unique position, because of who she is. She is in a position where she can speak up and try to stop the annihilation of God's people. And he tells her she has a responsibility to do something about that, he tells her she can't just sit there and be quiet about it. We can pick up the story in chapter 4:1.

**Esther 4:1** *When Mordecai learned all that had happened, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He cried out with a loud and bitter cry.*

2) *He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.*

3) *And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. (NKJV)*

This is because this decree is going to result in their annihilation.

4) *So, Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would not accept them.*

5) *Then Esther called Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this was. (NKJV)*

She doesn't realize what's taking place, she is out of the loop.

6) *So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that was in front of the king's gate.*

7) *And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews.*

8) *He also gave him a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people.*

9) *So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai. (NKJV)*

What Mordecai is trying to tell her is that she is in a unique position; she can speak up and try to stop this. Notice when Esther responds, it's not quite that simple. She is taking a big risk to do this because of the circumstances.

10) *Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai:*

11) *All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into the inner court to the king, who has not been called, he has but one law: put all to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been called to go in to the king these thirty days." (NKJV)*

So, they told Mordecai Esther's words. Esther is looking at this saying, this is risky for me. It's not hard to speculate that Esther is looking at this saying, I don't like conflict, I don't want to risk my life, I'll just shut up and remain quiet and stay out of this whole situation because I'll be safe in the palace and I can just let the situation unfold and not risk my life. Mordecai responds back to her that, this is not that simple. He tells her, let me paint a clearer picture for you. If you negate your responsibilities, God is going to hold you accountable for that. You are in a unique situation where you can speak up and try to prevent the annihilation of God's people and you have an absolute responsibility to do that and if you negate that, you will suffer the consequences. Notice the message he gives back to her.

12) *So, they told Mordecai Esther's words.*

13) *And Mordecai told them to answer Esther: Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews.*

14) *For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (NKJV)*

It turns out, if you look at this whole story, Esther was brought to the kingdom for such a time as this. Mordecai is not saying that he received these words from God and was giving them to her. If you put them into the context of the whole story, he is obviously telling her God's will because the whole point of this book is that she did speak up and said something and the Jews were delivered. Keep in mind that when these words are coming to Esther, she doesn't know how this movie is going to end. She doesn't have a copy of this book and knew that it all turns out well for her. I become the hero and Mordecai becomes the hero and Haman gets killed and the Jews get delivered; she doesn't know that's how this movie is going to end. All she knows is that she is being told she has a responsibility and God's going to hold her accountable for that and she

might lose her life if she speaks up and does something. That's the decision she is facing; she has no idea how this movie is going to end. She just knows she is risking her life if she opens her mouth and says something but she makes the right decision. She looks at this and realizes, I have to follow God's will; "it's Thy will be done, not my will be done". Notice her reaction to this and exactly what she is thinking.

15) *Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai:*

16) *Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so, I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!"*

17) *So, Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded him. (NKJV)*

She has no idea how this is going to end. She is not looking at this and going, I'll just do this and it will all work out; I'll be the hero and they will write a book in the Bible about me. She just knows she has to do this. She does not want to do this, it's scary and she could lose her life, everyone is going to turn on her, but she has a responsibility to do something and she is going to act accordingly. She was willing to say "Thy will be done, not my will be done" and as a result she protected God's people from being destroyed.

For the ultimate example turn over to Matthew 26. When it comes to the issue of putting God's will first, even if that is very painful for our own lives, the ultimate example is Jesus Christ. In Esther's situation, she is looking at it like, I'm taking a big risk, I could face some ugly consequences for doing this but she could also look at it and think maybe God will work this out—maybe God will work this out and protect me and as we know that is how it ended. Christ's situation was very different. He knew exactly how His situation was going to work out because He was familiar with the book of Isaiah. He knew that what was going to happen to Him was going to be ugly, brutal and painful and the only relief was going to be death. He knew on the other side of that that things work out well but His immediate future was going to be very ugly and He knew just how ugly it was. Notice His struggle through this. Notice He doesn't want to do this and is pleading for a Plan B but His attitude through the whole situation is, if it's Your will, I'll submit to it. To work off my title, what He was saying was, "I'll willingly go to the beach in Nineveh". I would rather go on a boat to Tarshish, that sounds like more fun but if you want Me there, I will submit to Your will because it's Thy will be done.

**Matthew 26:36** *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, Sit here while I go and pray over there."*

37) *And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.*

38) *Then He said to them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."*

39) *He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* (NKJV)

He does not want to do this; He knows how brutal and ugly it's going to be. He's not excited and going, "pick me, pick me, I want to do this". What He says is, is there a Plan B, is there some way to avoid this? But in the process, He says, if it's Your will, I will submit to it.

40) *Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?*

41) *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

42) *Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, your will be done."*

43) *And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.*

44) *So, He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.*

45) *Then He came to His disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

46) *Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."* (NKJV)

Through this is whole situation—this is not something Christ was excited about doing. It's very clear that, as a physical human being He did not want to go through something so brutal and difficult as what He was about to face and was literally begging for a Plan B. Is there some other way that we can fulfill the plan and I do not have to go through this? But the entire time His attitude is, if that is Your will then I will voluntarily submit. Again, to play off the title of my sermon, He said ok, if you want me on the beach in Nineveh, I will willingly go. It's not what I prefer, but I am willing to follow Your will and You are always right and it always works out better in the long run for all parties concerned if we do it Your way. I am willing to submit My will to Yours. That is the ultimate lesson of Christianity that we all have to learn. It can take a lot of different ways that it applies to our various circumstances, but that's the bottom-line lesson of Christianity. We always have to be willing to put God's will ahead of our own. That can be required in a lot of different ways and in lots of different circumstances. It could be not working on the Sabbath and losing a job if we refuse to work. We may experience other various examples where if I obey God, life is probably going to get painful. God purposefully puts us in these situations because we have to be willing to put His will first.

We have to learn from these examples and realize that throughout our Christian lives, we always need to be willing to put God's will first. So, as we go forward in our lives, let us always be "Willing to Go to the Beach in Nineveh".