

## What We Think about Life

### . . . and God's Will

*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

**Scripture Readings:** Ephesians 5:15-21 & Colossians 3:15-17

Speaker Carol Helland

**Introduction:** When life closes in, our best move is to trust the Lord, stand firm on our shaky legs, and take a firm grip on the Bible, even when our hands are weary.

### **Be Careful How You Live**

The apostle Paul writes in **Ephesians**, rather than being foolish or unwise, we are to understand what the will of the Lord is. *"Make use of every opportunity."* Whether by what you say or how you live, give thanks to God in the name of our Lord Jesus.

And then in **Colossians**, if you want to know what it's like to be filled with the Spirit, let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. The Word of God in your heart is the handle by which the Spirit of God turns your life, if you let Him. When the Word of God is inside of you, it comes out of you.

### **How content are you with your life?**

*"Contentment is not the fulfillment of the things you want but thankfulness for the things you have."*

**We can put on a pretense of contentment.** We wish things were different and can't help to compare ourselves with others who seem to have it better. And it's not uncommon. Many are not content with their life. We want more. But the bigger lie we tell ourselves—we deserve better—and that's where we get into deep trouble. So when we are feeling at our worst, God shows us His mercy and grace which we don't deserve. And there's the answer. We deserve nothing BUT God has given us everything in Christ by His grace.

*"The secret of contentment and inner peace is found in letting go of the need to control and resting in the confidence that God is in control." ~Israel My Glory, July 2018*

Contentment is to rest in Christ, and trust He is in control. Contentment is not passive, or uninformed, or uneducated. And it's not anxious. If our contentment is based on getting, or keeping, we become slaves to circumstances, living in fear that the improved situation will turn sour again.

**Do not worry about your life.** ~Matthew 6:25

The more we believe worry has a place in our lives, is useful, or provides us benefits, the more we will worry. **The opposite of worry is God's peace.** "You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You." ~Isaiah 26:3

When you study peace throughout the Bible, the most consistent fact is its connection with Jesus Christ. When Jesus greeted people, He would said, "Shalom," the Hebrew word for peace. *Shalom* is a major descriptor throughout the Bible for salvation, but it centers on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

In Jesus Christ we experience peace *with God* (Romans 5:1) and the peace *of God* (Colossians 3:15). We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus established a lasting, eternal peace for us through His death and resurrection, which is available to all.

**Will we live in peace (*shalom*) or worry?** Will we unleash peace in our life, mixing the promises of God with faith in both God's character and God's promises?

**The promise of the Lord Jesus' peace is sure and steadfast.**

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.* ~John 14:27

**Jesus Christ is our *shalom*—our peace.** The Lord knows your circumstances better than you do, and He says you must not think about these things to the point where they become the primary focus of your life. Whenever worry is competing for your heart, be sure to take that thought captive.

**Taking Every Thought Captive:** *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* ~2 Corinthians 10: 4-5

To break the worry habit, as soon as you identify the worried thought, counter the thought with the confidence that Christ is with you, so you can handle the uncertainty or problem of the moment.

Thoughts come—and it is what we do with those thoughts that matter. The problem comes when worry or temptation or discontent or bitterness finds a place at home in our thoughts. If we don't take our thoughts captive, they will take us captive. It is so important to tell ourselves the truth, to break the cycle of worry and other harmful thoughts." *"For the Spirit of Truth will guide you into all truth"* ~John 16:13. **I can replace worried thoughts with worthy thoughts.**

### **When Life Is Unfair**

*[She] will have no fear of bad news; [her] heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD. [Her] heart is secure; [she] will have no fear; in the end [she] will look in triumph on [her] foes.* ~ Psalm 112: 7-8

**Living a life of peace requires an acceptance of life's uncertainties.** There are things beyond our control that no amount of worrying will ever change. You may be in a situation right now that is unjust, and you have been severely wronged or taken for granted or taken advantage of. That happens. All of us have faced situations when we think, *"This isn't fair."* And in these moments, we acknowledge that disappointments and griefs happen, and hurt and pain are there.

All the promises of God are there, and they're real, and they're true, but right now you're hurting, you're raw, and you have to hang on to those promises even if they don't seem to work for you at the moment. As you go through the pain, it will lessen. Then you will look back and see how far the Lord has brought you.

**Saying Good-Bye to Perfect:** Life is never perfect, but the Lord Jesus is. And He takes our imperfections—the unfair experiences, the broken pieces and the mistakes and messes—and turns them into hope. Faith is knowing that troubles do exist, but it is also the trust knowing God never wastes our experiences. *You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.* ~C.S. Lewis

**God's Light on Dark Clouds:** *"Let not your heart be troubled . . . you believe in God, believe also in Me. . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am there you may be also."* ~John 14: 1-3

*The fourteenth chapter of John ever gleams with such a celestial brightness as when we read it under the cloud. No cloud can be big enough to shut out heaven if we keep the eye toward the Throne. And when we reach heaven and see the cloud from God's side, it will be blazing and beaming with the illuminations of His love. The Lamb which is in the midst of*

*the throne shall be our Shephard, and shall guide us to the fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from our eyes. ~Thomas Cuyler*

## **Knowing God's Will**

*"Be not unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is." ~Ephesians 5:17*

## **God's Four Unchangeable Wills**

1. **Believe in Jesus Christ as Savior:** *This is the will of my Father that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." ~John 6:40*
2. **Give thanks in everything;** *In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.. ~1 Thessalonians 5:18*
3. **Submit as citizens in doing right:** *Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men . . . ~1 Peter 2:13-15*
4. **Abstain from sexual sin:** *For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you should abstain from sexual immorality. ~1 Thessalonians 4:3*

**A simple question to ask when making a decision:** "Is this decision consistent with the character of Christ? Is this in keeping with His Word? Will this honor the name of Jesus?" *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. ~Colossians 3:17*

**The Trinity** is involved in leading your life today—the entire Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is there together collaboratively to work everything together perfectly. **God the Father** through the plans He has for you; **God the Son** who guides your way; and **God the Holy Spirit** implementing the Plan day by day.

**PowerPoint** *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."*

**That's why I am not afraid of God's Will.** God's goodness and mercy are traveling companions on my path of life, protecting me. That's why I cannot stop. Nor will you. Trust the Lord with His will for you. He cares for you.

**What is my source of life?** The Lord Jesus is your source of life.

*Your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. ~Colossians 3:3-4*

**Outward appearance is not our source of life . . . but it can be an overflow.** Let your joy, your strength, your hope come from that inner beauty . . . *the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. ~I Peter 3:4*

**Money is not a source of life.** When we worship the blessings rather than the One who blesses us, we will never be satisfied. *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also . . . you cannot serve both God and money. ~Matthew 6:21 & 24*

**Children are not our source of life.** *"Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from Him."* ~Psalm 127:3 Yes, we all love our kids, but if we find them as our source of joy or reason for living, we will be disappointed. Only the Lord Jesus can fill our hearts that way.

We all fail as mothers, at times. That's why Christ came. That's why we have the Bible and those principles to live by and encourage us. We need to realize that we can admit our failures and be able to put them aside by **God's grace**. *"Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."*

- **Grace** is the answer for our guilt and failure.
- **Grace** is the strength we need to cope with life.
- **Grace** is the promises that give us hope.

### **God Isn't Finished with Us Yet**

God is still working on you and in you *"to will and to do of His good pleasure."* He is the artist working on your life and is more concerned about your inner life, transforming or renewing your mind with His Word and Himself. We (or others) do not realize the intentions or abilities of the Creator in our life. That's why we trust the Lord. He is doing all things well.

*"I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly."* ~John 10:10. **Grab a hold of that life.** And some day, we will *"see life"*—our eternal life in Christ.

## Until Then

But until then my heart will go on singing

Until then with joy I'll carry on

Until the day my eyes behold the city

Until the day God calls me home.

## HOW TO KNOW CHRIST

*The Bible, as God's Word, proclaims how a person  
can come into a living and vital relationship  
with Jesus Christ.*

### **Your Condition before God**

#### **You are a sinner.**

While some may think they are "good people," everyone has committed sin. *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* ~Romans 3:23

#### **You Deserve Death.**

Because God is holy, He must judge sin. The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God. *For the wages of sin is death.* ~Romans 6:23

### **The Good News**

#### **Christ died for your sins.**

The good news of the Bible is that God graciously supplied a substitute for the penalty you deserve. *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* ~Romans 5:8

#### **God demonstrated His love to you.**

God proved His love for you at Calvary. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* ~John 3:16

#### **Place your trust in Christ as Savior.**

God invites you to come into a relationship with Him through faith in Christ's death on your behalf. *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, let anyone should boast.* ~Ephesians 2:8-9

If you place your faith alone in Christ alone, you will come into a loving and eternal relationship with Christ. *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may **know** that you have eternal life.* ~1 John 5:13