

066 - "If God Will" - Acts 18:18-23 2013-03-21

Call to Worship: Psalm 111:1, 9

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 16:4-9

Sermon: "If God Will" Acts 18:18-23

Benediction: Lamentations 3:24

I. What good things Paul was doing in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ

A. He began a great work in the city of Ephesus (18-19)

1. Ephesus was a large, important city
2. God had made Paul bypass it before, sending him over to Macedonia and Greece; now God is allowing Paul to go there
3. as usual, Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue
 - a. the Christ had to suffer and die on behalf of sinners
 - b. the Christ had to rise from the dead the third day
4. he left Priscilla and Aquilla there

B. He greeted the church in Jerusalem (22)

C. He spent some time in Antioch

D. He strengthened the disciples in Galatia and Phrygia

II. What he had to say about his plans: "I return, if God will" (21)

A. He is talking about the God's will in one sense, which may be called God's secret will

1. in the sense that God does whatever He pleases; He has always known what He will do, and He always does it
2. in the sense that He is God and we are creatures, and He is the ultimate cause of everything that happens, and everything we do and don't do
3. in this sense of God's will, God does NOT tell us what to do; He gives us no command; we are not trying to follow God's will in this sense
4. we are tempted to sin regarding God's will by presuming that our will trumps God's will
 - a. Proverbs 27:1 Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth.
 - b. see James 4:13-15
5. we are tempted to seek special knowledge of God's will
 - a. right: Lord, please help me to make a wise judgment so I can do what is best
 - b. right: Lord, please guide my steps, so I will accomplish the good that I am trying to do
 - b. wrong: Lord, please
6. we are tempted not to accept the possibility that God's secret will may not be what we want it to be

B. Other times the bible talks about God's will in another sense, which may be called God's revealed will

1. in the sense that He gives us commands
2. He is God, and we are creatures, so He has the right to command us
 - a. some commands are given to all mankind
 - b. some to His church
 - c. some to certain categories of people
3. He has made these commands known in writing
4. We are tempted to sin regarding God's will in this sense by not caring to know or obey God's commandments
5. God has commanded all people everywhere to repent of sin and believe in Jesus Christ!

C. We are tempted, then, to disobey God regarding His will in both of these areas; a prominent example of this is King Saul

1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance.

D. Let us, then, be content not to know God's secret will, but instead strive to obey His revealed will