



A False Assessment of God's Will

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Moses was a man trying to serve God. We are all people, I hope, trying to serve God. In this message we will look at something very practical for us. I'd like you to turn with me today to Exodus chapter two. It is very important that Christians run on God's plan. And as we begin here, we will look together at Moses. Now Moses has a real problem! Exodus chapter 2 and beginning with verse 11, "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well." (Exodus 2:11-15).

Moses -- the man up there on Mount Sinai communing with God -- Moses: the man whom God gave the law through -- and then we have Moses: he wants to deliver his brethren -- he goes out to be with his Hebrew brethren -- he goes out and he kills the Egyptian, and he winds up alone, sitting on a rock, hundreds of miles away from Egypt, and probably wondering, "what in the world has gone wrong? Because I thought I was supposed to deliver Israel." Well, what was the thought in Moses' mind? A favourite author of mine - E.G. White - wrote this concerning Moses, "He was constantly studying the

laws of God's government, and thus his faith grew. That faith was of value to him. It was deeply rooted in the soil of his earliest teachings, and the culture of his life was to prepare him for the great work of delivering Israel from bondage." (Letter 21a, 1893)

So in other words, Moses was working up to this thing: "I'm going to deliver Israel." This was what he understood God's will for him to be. And he was training, and putting into his heart and into his mind all these things that he understood would help him to deliver Israel one day. Now listen as I read further into this same quotation . . . "He meditated on these things; he was constantly listening to his commission from God." So it filled his mind, "I am to deliver Israel." But the quotation continues, "After slaying the Egyptian, he saw that he had not understood God's plan. And he fled from Egypt and became a shepherd. He was no longer planning to do a great work, but he became very humble; the mists that were beclouding his mind were expelled, and he disciplined his mind to seek after God as his refuge."

So first, he tried to deliver Israel. He thought that by killing the Egyptian, the people would see him as their deliverer. But instead, they turned on him and said, "well, what are you going to do? Who chose you to lead us?" And next he was running with his tail between his legs, and he wound up in the desert out there sitting on a rock. What went wrong here? Here we have Moses; he's trying to do God's will. He wants to do God's will. But there's just one problem: he has applied a false assessment of God's Will. He is not following God's plan. Because he understood after he slayed the Egyptian that he had not known what God's plan was. He had the wrong plan in mind--deliver by military force. But that wasn't the plan.

And so the question comes to us: how often do we run what we do on false assessments? Instead of God's plan, how often do we operate, measuring everything by a false assessment of the given situation? And here we have Moses, and he's using a false assessment of God's will. He wants to do God's will, but still he isn't going in the right way. And by no means is Moses the only example of this. We could turn to many others. One would be the disciples following Jesus. Remember how they were hanging back along the road, arguing over who would be the greatest? Well that's a false assessment of God's will. The idea in God's kingdom is the opposite of that. It's who will be the humblest.

Remember when they were gathered around there in the room and they had the footwashing service? And nobody got up or moved because the new kingdom was coming, and I wouldn't want to be known as one who was a little bit servile, you know; because I want to be "up there" in the kingdom. Wrong assessment of God's will. What about Peter? In the book of Galatians we discover that Paul and Peter had a little run in. Now remember, at the end of the gospels you find Jesus telling Peter, "When you're converted, strengthen your brethren." And so Peter has this experience; he preaches, he does mighty miracles. We read in Acts of all these mighty things that God did through the ministry of Peter. But in Galatians chapter two verses 11-14 we read, " But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

In other words, Peter, even after his experience and his conversion, and as he grew spiritually, and all these mighty things happened through him still, when this happened in Antioch, Paul stood up in front

of him before the whole church, and said, "Peter, you're all wrong!" Here's a converted man, a Christian, and yet here we find Peter separating himself now and he's limiting himself, and he's over there with only the Jews, with only the Hebrews. And they're sitting at a separate table. And the gentiles are here, and Peter's over there. You see, Peter, was running, again, on false assessment of God's will. He was using his thinking, his old ways, things that were built into his mind, that's how he was running his life.

There are several more examples. Remember the twelve spies? Two of them had correct assessment of God's will. Do you remember the 12 spies? They all went out, and ten of them came back and said, "No. It's a wonderful land, but we just can't do it." And Caleb and Joshua said, "No, we can do it. God said we could do it. We're up here to possess the land." Different thinking. They were almost stoned over that. Or how do you like Hezekiah? Do you remember Hezekiah in Isaiah 38 and 39? He becomes ill, he prays and asks God to give him deliverance. And what happens? God says, "O.K., I'll give you 15 more years to live." And Hezekiah asks, "What sign are you going to give me?" And so He says, "O.K., let's have the sun go back in the sky a little bit." And, you know, this must have shocked the whole world! When the Babylonian ambassadors came up there, they said, "Hello. We've heard that your God made the sun go back, just for you. And we're quite impressed by that, and we'd like to hear more about your God." What about it?" So Hezekiah says, "Come back here, let me show you my treasure chest." Do you remember that? And what did the prophet come to him and ask? "How much have the Babylonian ambassadors seen?" "Oh, I've shown them just about everything." "Well, you'd better take another look at it, because it will be gone before you know it. It will all be carried away to Babylon." What was happening? Hezekiah was running on a false assessment of God's will. He had a wonderful opportunity to share the greatness of his God with them, and instead, he showed them his treasure. And so, how often even God's people find themselves running on a false assessment of God's will. -- walking through our lives and yet weighing things against a wrong value system.

How can revival come to God's people in these last days? We often talk about prayer or having the Holy Spirit, and absolutely, you cannot have a revival without prayer and the Holy Spirit. But there is something else that is important as well. We're going to read it here in a moment in Isaiah 58. It's about restoring the law. But first let me share with you a quote from a wonderful book entitled *The Great Controversy* p. 478, "It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people." What does this quote refer to? It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position. We can talk about revival all day long, but unless that law is restored, there will be no revival of primitive faith and godliness. It just will not happen.

We want Jesus to come, we look forward to the second coming. But what has to come before the second coming? Why, before that, the work has to be finished. And before the work can be finished, God's people must be revived. But before God's people can be revived, the law has to be restored to its rightful position. How can we restore the law to its rightful position? We have to become "restorers of the breach." And how can we do that and not find ourselves falsely assessing God's will and winding up sitting out there on a rock next to Moses, saying "nice desert you've got here."

So how can the law be restored to God's people? In Revelation 14:12, after the three angels speak in the previous 6 verses, we find God's people described as having these qualities: "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." The word "keep" in the Greek language actually means "to keep - to guard." It includes the idea not only of "doing" - that is keeping, but "guarding" - that is preserving. Now what did we just hear a moment ago:

"It is only as the law of God is restored to its rightful position that there can be a revival of primitive faith and godliness among His professed people." And then we just read in Revelation 14 - "Here are they who keep the commandments of God."

We have been positioned by God as the keepers of His oracles -- we are to keep God's law and be the guardians of it. Is there anyone out there shall we say - in the street that is going to randomly be assigned guardianship over God's law? I don't think so. Friends, no one out there is going to randomly become the guardian of God's law. It is always the people of God that are responsible to be the keepers of His oracles. It is never anyone else. And only because God makes it that way, not because we somehow would make it that way. Somehow this law of God's love has to become such a part of our lives that we are changed and we are enabled to keep and guard this law that Christ gave up there on Mount Sinai. If we do not correctly assess God's will, we will inevitably come to a false assessment of God's will in the living of our lives from day to day. Listen to Isaiah 59:10: "we grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men." Where is that wall? There's a whole world out here that needs to know where that wall is.

But if you go back in your Bible to Isaiah 58, you will find there are wonderful things recorded there. Let's start in verse 11-12: "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." And then we read about the Sabbath, and God's plan in the very last days to restore the Sabbath -- the breach -- the hole in the wall. God calls His people to stand up and to rebuild the wall. You see, Jerusalem was a city that had its walls broken down. And God wanted His people to build up that city and restore the walls. The walls were protective for that city. But as long as there was a hole in the wall, anyone could go in through there. And so God's people are called to build up the walls, so that it will be safe inside the city.

And when we consider this verse in this light, we think about the wall going up, and God's people being protected. "Thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach." He has His people in these last days, and they are called to lift up the gospel, to lift up Christ, and to lift up God's law too. Because it is only as God's law is restored that there can be this final revival. The great trouble of the Jews was their rejection of Christ. They thought that they understood the law pretty well, but they were rejecting Christ. But in the last days the great sin of Christianity in general will be the rejection of the law of God. They will say good things about Jesus. But they will reject that which is the very transcript of His character. But God's people are called to restore and to build up. Notice again what it says in Isaiah 58: "the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." That is restoring the streets -- making the cities streets safe -- making Jerusalem safe to dwell in.

Now let us take a look at the blessing in Isaiah 58 and verse 13: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

What does it mean there when it says that we can "ride upon the high places?" Come with me to Deuteronomy 32. What is this blessing of riding on the high places that God wants His people to have?

In Deuteronomy 32 comes the song of Moses as he recounts the history of Israel. And it speaks about what God did for His people. Starting now in verses 10-13: "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and [there was] no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock. Deuteronomy 32:10- 13

And so Israel is described there, in the wilderness protected by God. Christ is with them there as they go through. And they ride on those high places. These blessings come to them. In verse 12 it says that they have no strange gods with them. They are instructed by God in verse 10, they are led by God in verse 10, and He keeps them as the apple of His eye. He protects them. He surrounded them and He went with them through the wilderness on this journey. This is the riding on the high places, so that in verse 13 God wants to pour out all these rich things upon us. But we can't receive it unless we are ready to follow our God. Because there is something that might block us from receiving this. We have to make sure that we do not falsely assess God's will.

What happens when a person is converted? We can't be exhaustive here, but let us take some time and turn to Luke chapter 4 and verse 18. One thing that happens at conversion that we can all praise the Lord for -- just like Israel riding on the high places in the wilderness, there is a release from bondage! Notice what 4:18 says: "And the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Do you see, by the way, that each time we read about deliverance we tend to read about a restoration of sight? Very interesting when we think about Revelation three and the call to the Laodicean church that says that your problem is that you can't see, so anoint your eyes with eyesalve. But here we see that when there is a release from bondage there is also an opening of the eyes -- a potential now opens up to us which before had seemed sealed away.

You can read about this new birth experience in John chapter three. We are being reborn from above. Now there is a life that comes into us. It illuminates and opens the way and gives us power for victory, power to follow Jesus that we didn't have before. And then again, there is another item that we can find in Romans 12:2, so let's turn there. Not only are we released from bondage when we are converted. Not only do we receive new life from God, but now we are called to something. Notice what the verse says: "Be not conformed to this world." In other words, don't lay by passively and let this world just seep into you. Don't let this world sell you its false assessment of God's will. But instead of just being passive and letting this stuff come into our lives, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." So God calls us not only to be released from bondage, not only to have new life, but now we are called also, in this new experience to a deeper submission to God, to let God place His will in our minds.

Friends, when a person is converted, does everything magically change? Does your past suddenly disappear? We'd like to say so, wouldn't we? God says He will not remember our sins. He will separate them from us as far as the east is from the west. He says that we each become a new creature in Christ. In all those things we can truly rejoice! But I want to tell you, that when we are converted, all the old ways of doing things don't just drop away. Instead, now with God's help we must revisit the way we do things -- to rebuild our "Correct assessment of God's will." Now we continue our journey through life with a new value system. Notice this little statement from E.G. White concerning this: "When a man is converted to God, a new moral taste is supplied, a new moral power is given, and he loves the things

that God loves But those who are waiting to behold a magical change in their characters without determined effort on their part, will be disappointed." 1 Selected Message 336 You see? We are renewed, we are released from bondage. But have you heard of these people that go to prison, they spend x number of years in prison, they get out and commit a crime, and they're back there in prison, right? And for some people, I believe the reason for this is that they are used to that structure, they're used to what happens in that environment. They have their habits, and they know how to function in a prison environment. They know how to function in bondage, but they don't know how to function as free people. And so, back they go.

Do you remember this in Israel's experience? How they threw up their hands and said, "Let's make us a captain and go back to Egypt." And all those things that happened to Israel are examples for us, aren't they? We must be wary. It is so easy to go back to where the leeks and the onions are. To where the flesh pots are. It's so much more convenient to just live with the things that we can remember.

And the fourth item in conversion, God wants to put His law in our inward parts. The new covenant promise, "I will write My law in their minds and in their hearts." God begins to write now, inside. Before He influenced us, when we weren't committed to Him. But now as we're committed to Him and we're renewed, now the writing begins on our heart on the inside, in an altogether different way. And I treasure those promises as I'm sure you do as well. Conversion is but the beginning of a life-long process of growing in Christ.

Now let's stop and think about Moses again. Moses wanted to deliver Israel. This was his plan. But he went about it in the wrong way in the beginning. And yet we saw that he was thinking about his commission from God. He knew it was God's plan. And he did have some good values there. If you read in Hebrews 11 that he forsook the pleasures of sin for a season, he forsook all the things and the values of Egypt. He was willing to discard that. And we praise God for that. But still Moses killed the Egyptian on his way out. He fouled it all up. He had been instructed in the Egyptian courts. Nothing was left as unnecessary to train him to become a general of armies. The false theories of the idolatrous Egyptians had been instilled into his mind, and the influences surrounding him and things his eyes looked upon could not be easily shaken off or corrected. Thus it is with many who have had a false training in any line. If we are to correctly assess God's will for our lives then all the idolatrous rubbish of heathen lore must be removed -- bit by bit, item by item. When I think about how I grew up, I'm concerned about all the junk that must still be in there! I need to be willing to let Jesus clear the pathway- remove those things in my life that hinder my walk with Him so that I can really live His law of Love! I invite you to take a look at your life as well - to take stock - and choose to allow Jesus to transform you!

A quote now from the book Patriarchs and Prophtes concerning Moses - "Moses had been learning much that he must unlearn. the influences that had surrounded him in egypt -- the love of his foster mother, his own high position as the king's grandson, the dissipation on every hand, the refinement, the subtlety, and the mysticism of a false religion, the splendor of idolatrous worship, the solemn grandeur of architecture and sculpture -- all had left deep impressions on his developing mind and had molded, to some extent, his habits and character." So even though he was trying to study the law of God and do God's will, still the surroundings of Egypt had led Moses to be filled with these strange things that were not of God. The false assessment of God's will was there. Implanted. Operational. Distorting. Distorting what even a Moses saw!

Fortunately, we read this continuing in the same quote, "Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God could remove these impressions." Aren't we glad for that? You know, we talk

about these things, and it seems impossible to get to the bottom. But still, there is hope. All these can be shaken off and removed. They can. Time, change of surroundings, and communion with God can remove them.

If you have ever watched TV you will have inevitably watched TV Commercials. Ever wonder why people remember a certain product. Many times it is the result of these commercials. You see, advertisers use the concept of sales impressions. When you pile these "sales impressions" up within the space of a certain limited period of time so that people get these impressions over and over again; There will then be a greater impact upon mind and the resulting action - namely- buying their product.

I found that information to be quite interesting -- the "sales impressions." Each day we live we are repeatedly exposed to many "sales impressions" that come into our mind. And I'm just going to share a few of these from my experience with you.

I didn't grow up in the church. And I know that there are many watching that did not grow up in the church either. One of the major influences on my life was rock music. I could sit for hours listening to the same record over and over again. What type of influence would this have on a young mind. On the other end of the spectrum - what would happen if you spent hours in the word of God! Obviously one influence is better than the other!

Not only that, but the earliest TV shows that I remember watching like Charlie's Angels, a show about three beautiful detective ladies, they drove fast, and they carried guns. And they got the bad guy. I also remember watching the original Star Trek series. Even though this show did portray some good values it also portrayed not so Godly things as well. And then I use to watch movies starring Charles Bronson, Clint Eastwood, and of course, the James Bond series. I used to read science fiction books and war novels. And I want to tell you, that if in fact reality was like what I was watching and listening to back then - then every woman would have this plastic Hollywood beauty - every man would look like some action star, everyone would drive fast, and everyone would carry guns or maybe phasers. And everyone would - within about 60 minutes of time - solve whatever was wrong with this world and fix it just in time for the commercial. Do you see how unreal and absurd that sounds? It is an unreal experience, and it most certainly is falsly assessing God's will. Before I accepted Christ in my life - my life is built on these things -- an truly unreal experience. And I'm sure there are many watching who can relate! But I am glad that God loves people, aren't you? Because God's will is always better! He's not going to leave us there with a view of life that is Charlie's Angels. He's not going to leave us there with a view of life where we have all this good and evil and it's resolved in 51 minutes, and we carry a gun around, and we just go "bang, bang," and we fix it. God's not going to leave us in a Nintendo reality, where all the bad guys get smashed and you just go to the next level.

Instead, God has a better way for us. And the basis of our new values -- our new things that we measure by -- has to be Scripture. We go to our Scriptures, and this is our guide. We go to the teachings, the life of Jesus, and we see -- all over the place -- "blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." That's backwards from the world's standards, isn't it? But this is the right standards - God's standards!

I want to close by suggesting some action-steps that we can take, so that we can think about that. So that our minds can be changed and that our lives can be lived, not on a false assessment of God's will. So that we can be keepers of the law, restorers of the breach, and the revival can come and the work can be finished, and Jesus can come, and we can go home to heaven. No, I don't want to live in a

world of Nintendo, and of Star Trek and James Bond, and all these toxic things from a culture that is morally broken and poisonous. I don't want to be an unreal person, I want to be a real person as God designed for humanity to be real. I'm sure you want the same thing as well.

What steps can we take? Just a few of them now as we close.

Actively wash our minds in Scripture. Actively wash your mind in Scripture. "Oh, brother Stephen, you're talking about brain-washing." My response would have to be "Is there anybody who's brain doesn't need washing?" I mean, the world has already washed our brain; we need to wash it out! So let's wash our mind in Scripture. Ephesians 5:25-27. Notice what it says: "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." That's what we need. And then He says, "That He might present it to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, that it should be holy and without blemish." Actively washing our mind in God's Word. Now maybe you're not a good reader. Some of us read better than others. You can get a CD of Scripture or listen to the Bible online at the website indicated on your screen. Many are the means by which you can put Scripture into your mind. Plead with God in prayer. Go to Psalm 139. These changes don't just happen. We think of these surface things, but there are all these patterns of decision-making that we habitually use that are beneath the surface. And those things don't change magically, we need to cooperate with God, acting our part while receiving His help. Notice the last two verses of Psalm 139 - verses 23 and 24, the prayer of the Psalmist. The false assessment of God's will is loose among us. Listen to one way that I think we can find help from our Redeemer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Another words - don't just show it to me, God, but now help me to go that way. I want to ride on the high places. Search me and lead me in the way everlasting. Show it to me O Lord. And how about another one? . . . Turn off as much as possible the inflow of media that presses you into its worldly shape. Romans 12:2. You are shaped, I am shaped, by all these things we see on the TV or hear on the radio or view on the internet. This is just a sample of some of the things that are poisoning us. How can we eliminate this poison from our lives? By driving straight ahead with God's word. Listen to Bible CD's. Watch bible-based programming. Talk about God's Word- Reflect on God's Word. How I rejoice with my wife when we spend time alone together, and we just talk about the Bible, we talk about God's things. Those are the things that we need. Because there is too much unreality in our lives. No one says that this will be easy. Is it going to be easy to overcome in this way in the end? It won't be easy. But we have to be constant and continuous in God's grace.

Friends, I just want to appeal to you. The false assessment of God's will is everywhere. Every one of us has been influence by this false assesement. But God has given us the means to know His true will for our lives. I'm not just talking about reading the Bible and getting rid of sin in our lives. Although that is a good thing and I can say a hearty Amen to that. Absolutely. But I am also saying, there are deep things that we value that we base decisions on, and that we don't think about immediately. And those things don't change the moment that we are converted, and so we need to actively ask God, "Please, come now, and reveal this rubbish point by point, so that you can change me day by day and use me, and we can finish this thing and we can all go and see the face of Jesus. There isn't anything false going into heaven. God is going to measure us by His great standard and by His grace, He's going to say, "Come on in." So its time to be about our Father's work.