

God's Will is that ALL be Saved

I Timothy 2:1-6, Advent Sunday IV

December 20, 2009

Beloved of the Lord...It is the undeniable teaching of Scripture that though Christ gave His life a ransom for all, though the Lord is not willing that any perish but that all come to repentance, more die in unbelief receiving damnation than die in faith receiving life everlasting. Jesus said, "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction and MANY there be which go in thereat" and "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it." "Many are called, but few chosen". In relation to this truth, the question has often been asked: if God really wants all to be saved, why then are the majority lost? The famous contemporary of Luther, John Calvin, tried to answer this questions with human reason. He concluded with what we call "predestination to damnation." Putting God's sovranity and irresistible will at the top of his theology Calvin falsely concluded it must not really be God's will that all be saved. Calvin reasoned God must have chosen some for damnation, and some for heaven.

Needless to say from God's Word we know John Calvin was wrong. His "predestination to damnation" is contrary to Scripture, a horrible doctrine, a devilish lie. Worst of all it robs a believer's heart of all comfort so that he is cast into the mirey pit of despair, plagued with the thought that perhaps he is not saved after all! Ultimately Calvin's teaching denies that Christ is the Savior of all, and makes him only the savior of some. Predestination to damnation then is a devilish error of the highest caliber which directly contradicts the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, that God is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe. Today's text proves there can be no doubt God's sincere and true will is that "ALL men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth!" Jesus gave His life "a ransom for all."

I. Pray for kings and all in authority. St. Paul now begins strongly urging all Christians to pray for all men. The first word, supplication, means petition or request. The second word, prayer, means earnest worship. The third word, intercession means to meet with or converse, namely talk with God. All the original words in Greek here describe different aspects or attributes of prayer. Namely in prayer we earnestly worship God through the prayer of faith. In the person of Jesus Christ, through the cross, God and

man are reconciled. Wherever there is faith in Jesus' merit alone, in prayer we happily stand before our heavenly Father without fear because Christ is our robe of righteousness. For Jesus' sake our Father loves us, hears us, and readily answers our prayers. As for those who deny the deity of Christ, denying that He is the ONE Mediator between God and man, the Lord will not hear their prayer nor accept their petition. God does not hear the prayers of the Jews, Muslims, Jehovah's Witness, or Mormons for they all deny that Jesus is True God equal with the Father. I John 5:20 says, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

This one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, is therefore our Lord, our Savior and King. We therefore bring before our Heavenly Father both small and large petitions, all our heart's desire. Psalm 37 says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." When we pray we literally talk with God, converse with Him, speak with Him as if we are standing there before His heavenly throne. We are His children by faith and through Christ we are confident of His love. As we pray our Father looks upon us earnestly, hearing every last word, giving us His full and complete attention. His mercy and love through Christ allow nothing less. When we pray then let us give Him our full attention and firmly believe. We should pray sincerely with penitent hearts, according to His will, in the name of Christ with believing hearts. It is always a sin to doubt in prayer, yet by faith in Christ God hears and answers all. "All things whatsoever ye shall as in prayer believing ye shall receive."

Who do we pray for? "All men", but especially for kings and all in authority. We might pray, "Lord please give this nation good and godly rulers who will govern with godly wisdom, punishing the wicked and rewarding the good." We pray our rulers will govern so that our freedom's of religion and speech are secure, that the Gospel be freely preached without hindrance of the state, that "we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." But what if our rulers are ungodly? Then what? We pray all the more. We first acknowledge that by way of our sin we don't deserve better, but then we implore God's mercy that for the sake of His Son He would deliver us from evil. Perhaps God will grant them repentance! Jesus said "Love your enemies", and "Love thy neighbor as thyself." If we hate our

neighbor and wish them evil, God might well punish us with the same evil we wished upon our neighbor. Moreover if we do not forgive them, God will not forgive us. And if God placed an ungodly ruler in the scales next to us, we both would fall short of God's glory. God is not a respecter of persons. We are just as dead in our sins as any evil king or ruler, and Christ alone is our glory. God's will is that ALL be saved, even ungodly rulers. Whatever then happens with those powers that be, let us rejoice that God through the Gospel will continually preserve His Church to the end of time. Do not forget dear believer Christ is yet King of kings in the heavens above. God always knows what He is doing even if we do not understand. We are the child. He is the Father.

II. The will of our Savior is that all be saved! He also desires ALL be saved! How sad to think this Christmas so many will not come to church even once to worship Christ the newborn King, nor will they take time on Christmas Day to reflect and ponder in their heart as Mary, the glorious mystery of the incarnation: how the God Almighty of heaven so humbled Himself, that He became also Man, of flesh and blood. When Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, even as He grew and developed in the womb of the Virgin like any other child, God Almighty now had flesh and blood. The Son of God now had fingers and toes, arms and legs. God now had a face that Mary, Joseph and the shepherds would soon see: two eyes, a nose, a chin, a mouth, holy lips, even hair. What color were Jesus' eyes? What color was His hair? Joseph, Mary, and the shepherds gazed in wonder at Him the night He was born and the holy angels above gazed in wonder. There in that manger was their Lord whom they adored. There in the arms of the Mary was the Messiah God had promised the world! "God so loved the world", and here in the manger was the proof. Who could deny His love?

When our soul then wrestles with the dilemma that more are lost than saved, we must again and again return to these two noble truths of Scripture: 1) It is NOT GOD'S WILL that any soul be damned, and 2) Jesus gave Himself a ransom for ALL. You see then from the Scriptures what a terrible thing it was John Calvin did, teaching God does not really desire to save all but only some! That false argument of John Calvin flies in the face of the Gospel - yea it contradicts the very passage of our text: that "God our Savior will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Here in God's

Word, God's will FOR ALL MEN is that ALL be saved! To the Calvinist we must then respectfully say: Why then dear Calvin was the Son of God moved to also become the Son of Man? Why did God Almighty enter the womb of the Virgin Mary? Why was He born into the darkness of this world as the Light of the WORLD to deliver ALL from the power of darkness! Why did He live dear Calvin? Why did He die? Why did He rise again for our justification? "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? Who shall [dear Calvin] lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth" and "He that believeth on Him is not condemned!"

Oh the wonderful joy we have in knowing that in Christ Jesus God and man are truly reconciled and at peace! "In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins!" Oh that only all would believe! As to the question why so many are lost? It is there own fault. To the Jews who refused to believe Jesus said, "Ye do always resist the holy Ghost." When God works through the Means of the Word, man can resist God's gracious and pardoning hand. Their damnation is just. God doesn't force faith by an irresistible will, but tenderly invites all men to believe saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!" But what about our faith? Do we receive any credit? Absolutely not! Christ died for our sins before we were born! He conquered our sin, our death, our devil, before we were born! He rose from the dead for our justification before we were born. Likewise our own faith is also His own work, "By grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the GIFT of God!" Thus dear believer if you've ever wrestled with the question, "Why me", and "Can I be sure I am one of the few, the chosen the elect?".....God's answer to you is clear and unmistakable, "Fear not little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." God's will truly is that ALL be saved and Jesus truly gave His life a ransom for ALL. May His peace be your true peace this Christmas season. Amen.