

Introduction

- 1 Have you, like many other Chns, asked what the will of God is for you and your life?
- 2 William Taylor recently said that his grandfather helped him to repent, believe in, receive Jesus
 - a Make sure you seriously read the Bible daily, think about it
 - b Pray on a regular daily basis
 - c Live out what you learn, deal with consequences, trusting God
 - d God did show him His plan
- 3 Have you/I done this? Peter shows us clearly/simply how we can live out God’s will in our live

I 4:1-6 Follow in Jesus’ footsteps**A 4:1-2; 3:18 Follow the attitude of the Lord Jesus**

- 1 **Finding and doing** God’s will in their lives, **should really be what motivates** Christians
- 2 Is **exact opposite** to **thinking** of this sinful world – “**human desires**” control life, actions
- 3 4:1 **Therefore** is a theme Peter again picked up from 3:18 where he told us the Lord died in people’s place on the cross, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring believers to God
- 4 He did this **willingly** and **fully obeyed** God the Father, because **He knew** it **was** the **only** way the price could be fully paid for God’s judgement on man’s rebellion against God
- 5 Jesus **did battle** with sin and **won**, **showing** Christians **how** to **overcome** sin in their lives
- 6 4:2 If they place God’s will **above** their own, **even being prepared to suffer for it**, they are saying **they are for God** and **not for self**-draw closer to Him, **further away from** sin
- 7 4:2 As Chns do we pray about **all** our **big decisions**, **career path**, **studies**, **friendships** etc?
- 8 Christians **find out** God’s will **as read** the Bible **daily**, **let** it change their thinking, actions.
- 9 This **replaces** sinful human behaviour/worldly ways, **with pleasing** God-Holy Spirit helps

B 4:3 Need to break with one’s past way of life

- 1 When person repents **and** believes in heart (not just head) becomes a born-again Chn,(s)he
 - a **Becomes** a new creation,
 - b Resulting in a **changed attitude** towards life, way of living
 - c **Now starts** to see things **through God’s eyes**
 - d **With the help** Holy Spirit **within gives**
- 2 They **have already sinned** enough during their pre-Chn days by ignoring God completely
- 3 **Chose** godless pagan life-style, satisfying sinful desires of heart-led to self-destruction **eg** Politicians, sports-people have ruined their reputations/careers thru’ sex, drugs, alcohol
- 4 They have been living such anti-God activities as
 - a The 1st 5 things - **Debauchery, Lust, Drunkenness, Orgies, Carousing** all relate to
 - (1) Living **without any moral** restrictions,
 - (2) **Especially** in sexual immorality, drugs
 - (3) **Excessive** drinking which leads to unlawful sexual acts, often with other marrieds
 - (4) **Violence** with drunken brawls-many are cut/injured with bottles; car drunken driving
 - b **Drunkenness, binge drinking**-youth/kids drinking younger-sportsmen bad role models
 - c **Idolatry** – in those days prostitution **was part** of temple worship, **but** today we worship many things and **these become gods** in our **lives** –homes, sport, family, money, work ...
 - d Anything that is more important than God in our lives, becomes an idol –**What is ours?**

C 4:4 Non-believers find their changed behaviour strange

- 1 As new Chns change their lifestyle, those around them are surprised, can’t understand
 - a Why don’t they want to join in and continue in the mad race after pleasure, as in past
 - b Becomes a threat as it implies a condemnation of those who continue in old ways, must bring these new Christians down to size – often with smear campaigns
 - c **Can lead to abuse** and **wanting to discover any inconsistencies** and hypocrisies in those who **no longer live** as they did in their pre-Chn days **eg** Colin B and Danelle

D 4:5 But non-believers will all be accountable and judged

- 1 However those who accuse the new Chns one day **will themselves be accused** and **will** have to give an account **when they appear before** God’s Judgement Seat at end of time
- 2 Although many of them act as if this world & life is all there is-**will find they’re wrong**

E 4:6 For this reason the gospel was preached to Christians before they died

- 1 **By contrast** Chns now physically dead, who heard/responded to gospel **have fate very different** to those who abused them on earth, **now** “live in the Spirit” as God does
- 2 Those who judged the Chns while they were alive, **will** one day **be judged themselves**.
- 3 God will accept at the final judgement those Chns who were falsely judged, condemned **by non-Chns in their lifetime because** they repented **and** believed in Jesus while alive
- 4 Chns have been **judged** in the **flesh** with **death** like every other person due to human sin

II 4:7-11 Living as though the end was near - “The Times should produce ...”

A 4:7 Prayerfulness

- 1 Unlike some, Peter & co feel Lord’s coming return **motivates them** to live all out for God
- 2 Last act in human history was ready to take place **a** God had finished all His major events
b His plan to **save and reconcile** man back to Himself **through** Jesus’ death/resurrection;
c The sending of His Holy Spirit on the church **d** All complete, awaiting His perfect time
- 3 Jesus return can happen any time **Big question -How can we prepare ourselves for this?**
- 4 As Chns pray, **remember** the **end** is **near** and the Lord could come at any time-Should be
a Clear-minded (serious) – Thinking thru’ the issues sensibly, about which they are praying, free from emotionalism – will lead to their prayers being more intelligent & so more effective **eg** Pray for **God’s** plan for **your** future-job/studies/friend choices; church
b Self-controlled (disciplined)
We can pray at any time about anything, mostly come from ordinary daily living –work, family life, friendships, relationships, church affairs, study, leaders, media matters

B 4:8 Deep, unconditional love for fellow believers – John 13:34-35

- 1 Love is distinctive mark of Chns in their relat’ns with one another-shows discipleship
- 2 Loving every fellow-believer is **not** an **option**, it is a **definite** command by the Lord Jesus
a At full stretch, trying as hard as we can - must be done deeply and intensely-Like athlete
b Doesn’t rely on **feelings/choices**, but **extends to those** we find **hard to like naturally**
c Does not say **like**, but to **love** without conditions- Rom 5:5 Holy Spirit will enable Chns
d It is ready to forgive again/again-try to shelter wrongdoer from exposure, condemnation
- 3 **How does this remarkable ability to love one another, cover a multitude of sins?**
a Its **strong commitments** to others, means it **can** overlook many small things that irritate
b Can go a long way towards dealing with **larger relational** breakdowns **eg** Les Habber...
c When **love is absent** in people’s dealings, **even the smallest misunderstanding** can **quickly** become a major problem **eg** 2 girls, sharing room one tidy, 2nd untidy
d Math 6:14-15 only those who **forgive** others **may continue to expect** God’s forgiveness

C 4:9 Hospitality

- 1 A very practical way of showing love is to open one’s home to others-visiting evangelists important for early Chns to do this-no motels, church often met in homes –gospel spread
- 2 Must offer it with a **willing** spirit, **without** grumbling/moaning – need love, right attitude
a Can be fun with friends we get on with **but**, **b** Also very **inconvenient/frustrating** with those who are **awkward**/overstay their welcome-African at Morgans came at mealtime

D 4:10-11 Christian service – Serve church and community by using spiritual gifts

- 1 God gives every Chn at least 1 spiritual gift, not for personal use, but for benefit of others
- 2 God has given Chns’ gifts by His grace - come in many forms **eg** many faceted diamond
- 3 Chns should be good stewards by putting their gifts to work in, strengthen lives of others
- 4 As parable of talents shows that **if gifts lie idle**, they **will eventually** be **taken away**.
- 5 As God’s gifts are by grace, free and undeserved, is essential they be shared in the same spirit - **not necessarily** among those who **deserve** such gifts, but **those** who **need them**.

6 Peter only mentions 2 gifts - that of

a Speaking God's word to people – Take serious care in preaching, teaching, counseling.

People are not looking for opinions or advice when they have a spiritual need—but Bible

b Many may not think they have speaking gift! **What about prayer**, encouraging, sharing

c Serving by **deeds**, using the gifts and physical strength and practical help which God supplies - **eg** supply cooked food to a neighbour who has just returned from hospital;

eg Norman Johnson used to cut the lawns for the older church people, who couldn't do it

d Ministry in deeds, **acts of practical** kindness **eg** showing hospitality/do maintenance

7 **a Right word** spoken can **often** come at just right time to help a person facing problems

b Deeds can become powerful non-verbal communication where God is equally present

8 Motivation for all kinds of service - "God may be glorified in all things thru' Lord Jesus"

9 **a** We bring glory to God when we serve each other in building up the local Chn church

b Peter closes with the words "**To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever**"

Example-Operation preceded by prayer in Mish hospital – Prayed for living God's help in Jesus' name-Patient never heard such a thing, came back like hypochondriac

III Chns will suffer persecution (4:12-19), but Peter gives encouragement, warning in 5:6-11

5:6 "Humble yourself under God... cast all your anxieties upon God because He cares for you

5:8 Be.. alert your enemy, devil goes around **like** roaring lion .. **resist** him, **stand** firm in faith

5:10 God... after you have suffered a while ...will Himself restore you and make you strong..