

Matter of the Will

by Ann Abernathy

Ann Abernathy's sermon emphasizes that holiness is a conscious choice rooted in the will, requiring faith and obedience to God.

Duration: 30:35

Scripture: John 3:16

Topics: "Will Of Man"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being holy and living a life that reflects God's love. He references John 3:16-17, which highlights God's love for the world and His purpose of salvation through Jesus. The preacher encourages the audience to recognize the treasure they have in God and to build their faith by memorizing Psalm 111. He also discusses the steps to holiness, including forsaking the ways of the world, showing love through self-giving service, and gladly obeying God's commandments. The sermon concludes with a prayer for guidance and understanding in living a holy life.

Transcript

We're talking about the strangest subject on earth for this weekend. And you got the brochure in the mail, and you still came. A quest for holiness.

And the very fact that you came into this particular seminar, knowing what I was going to talk about, tells me something about your character. It really does. Because on that little thing, that little blurb that was on it, it was just something about holiness is a matter of the will.

And so, since you came to this particular seminar, I think, well, perhaps we have some women here who are willing to be holy. And if that's so, girl, I think that you can take some of the things that I'm going to give you today, and you can run with them. You can use them when you get home.

Now, let's bow our heads, because this is indeed a thing that God has to be in charge of. Now, Precious Father, we come to your presence with thanksgiving and to your courts with praise. How could we come otherwise, dear Lord God, when we realize what you have provided for us, who you are, and the advantages that we have because of all of it.

And Father, now we're just a bunch of women. We're just here. And we really wonder, now, what are we supposed to do? How are we supposed to act? There's so many people here.

Does God even care? Does he know? And what can I be? And what can I do? So many questions. And then, Father, to sit down here and to hear speakers, and written books, and to hear lofty, noble things. And we realize that we've got to go home, and we've got scrub floors, and we've got to wash tissues.

And we've got to make sure that the bankbook balances, and this little nameplate thing, it just takes us back. And we wonder, now, can I really be holy in a circumstance like this? And Father, we're going to beg you, Father, please, Lord God, don't neglect anything we say that is contrary to your precious word. And I ask you, by your mercy and your grace, use this message.

And I ask it because Jesus died. There's no other reason. And there's no other reason for me to even say anything other than the fact that, oh, God made me just make me.

You make a difference when you can. But if you make a difference when the women walk out of here and they walk out into the sunshine and they go into their homes and they make a difference in their homes, which makes a difference in their husbands, which makes a difference in their children, and being in their work world, it's just not right. Father, can you really hear me, Andrew? Can you really hear something? Oh, Father, we pray for you just to teach us in the name of Jesus.

I've been really tickled when I think about the word holiness. We're going to start with that. It's a matter of the will.

And I know that it's a matter of the will. And how I know it, I just know it. Because I've known Christians that were holy, and I've known Christians that haven't the slightest inclination of being holy.

Nothing about them was holy. So I know that it is a matter of the will. But I want you to think now, in your own decision-making processes down through the years, of a time in your life when you absolutely set your face like a flint and you determined that you would do some things.

Perhaps it was marriage. Maybe it was to a man that your parents didn't even want you to marry. But you set your face like a flint and you determined that this you were indeed going to do.

And of course if you recognize that term, that is from the prophecy of Isaiah when he's speaking of the Messiah coming. And how the Lord Jesus would be when he comes with the goal before him of dying on a cruel cross for us. But he set his face like a flint.

As if it was chiseled out of stone as a sculptor would do, you know. A wonderful statue that lasts down through the years. Even time hasn't eroded it any.

Just very little. And it's set, but it's set in marble. It could be set in stone.

But it's like that. It is absolute concentration. It is inflexible resolve.

It is determination. Have there been some things in your life where you absolutely used your will? It was like setting your face like a flint? Have there been times like that? Okay, reminisce with me just a little bit more. About that time, with the matter of your will, when after hearing about who Jesus is, why he came to die, why he paid the penalty of your sin, and because he did that, you could have right standing with God.

And with an act of your will, you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember that time? Can you see that even though there was a building up of your faith on the inside of you that indeed this is the Son of God? Yes, he did die on Calvary for my sins. Yes, he is interceding for me at the right hand of the

Father right now.

You were persuaded. You were convinced on the inside of you, no doubt. That's faith.

Being absolutely persuaded and convinced that God is able to do in you exactly what he has promised. That's faith. But it's also, with your volition, it was a matter of your will.

Do you see that? Smile back at me, nod at me, let me know that you're with me. And because of that, now girls, I want you to see that you not only have earthly life possibilities today, but you have heavenly life possibilities. Which means that if you have heavenly life possibilities, you can be what God has willed for you to be.

But don't we want to tiptoe around that word holiness and godliness? I couldn't believe the theme of this conference when I saw it because when I think holy, do you think hush and subdued and maybe black and long hair back in a bun, no makeup, no red fingernails, no shiny things. Do you think that on holiness? Outward things? Well, I think that if we were all really honest that we hadn't done any Bible study that we'd say yes, I do. Because that's what I've seen.

People that I consider holy, that's what I've seen. Well, in some people now, that may be involved. But that's not involved in all people's lives.

All people do not react to the Father in the same way and are not required to act in the same way. Because we come to the Father with different things in our lives, different areas in our lives that we commit to Him that are sin. And so some things we take out not because they are sinful but because to us they are as a God to us, they have a position in our lives that should not be in our lives.

So we do have to rid ourselves in some things. But I want you to see in Scripture that God exhorts you to be holy and He just simply says it this way. And He says it several times in the book of Leviticus.

In Leviticus 11, 44 and 45. Leviticus 19, 2. Leviticus 27. 11, 44, 45.

19, 2. 21, 7. And 1 Peter 1, 16 just simply, Be ye holy. For what reason? I don't know. I want you to put under those verses Psalm 40, verse 6. Because we also see in Scripture that when God has a requirement on us He also gives in Psalm 40, verse 6. You have given me the capacity to hear and obey.

Don't forget that. You have given me the capacity to hear and obey. Now, when we bow before God and we attached ourselves to Him in a father-daughter situation.

I mean, we are His. We are His. When we bowed our wills before the Father and we were indeed born again, we are spiritually God.

Okay. We were given the position of holiness. You've heard in Scripture that we have everything we need in Christ Jesus.

And we will stand before God someday because of Jesus in holiness. But it's because of Jesus. But what I want you to see, the Father still His requirement on us.

We saw today, Beverly LaHaye mentioned it, be sanctified, be set apart, be separated. We have a practical holiness to be lived out in our lives. I mean, that's where the water hits the wheel, so to speak, because we're going to be out in this world.

People are going to be looking at us. And there needs to be practical holiness for this reason. The Father is holy.

Be ye holy, for I am holy. We belong to the Father. We need to be like our Father so that those around us can see that.

Now, I want to illustrate it this way. Do you remember the crucifixion and the two thieves that were crucified with our Savior on either side of it? Do you remember one of them railing against the Lord Jesus, ridiculing Him? And the other one saying, listen, we suffer justice. And then he turned to the Lord Jesus and he said, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

And you remember Jesus' words back to him? This day thou shalt be with me quick in paradise. Did he have, was he given, because of Jesus, the position of holiness? Well, let's look at another scripture. Without holiness, it is impossible for us to see the Father.

I can't remember where it is. Do some Bible hunting when you get home. I can't remember where it is.

And that may be Ann Abernathy's paraphrased version and you may have to look. But look for holiness and it seems to me like it's in it. Okay, so the thief is given the position of holiness.

You agree with me? Because of Jesus. What did men down on the ground think about the thief on the cross? Why do you think they thought about him? Do you think that he was winsome? Do you think that he was presenting good works to the men that were walking around? No. No one could applaud the Lord Jesus Christ or the Heavenly Father because of that man's life.

His life brought no applause. None at all. Do you see that? Why? Because his body was hanging lift on an old cross and he would never be able to bring any honor, any glory at all to the Holy Father.

I want you to see in Psalm First, let's see, Psalm chapter 93 verse 5 Another reason for us to be holy. And in the King James it says that we see that holiness adorns the house of God because it says holiness is becoming to your house O Lord, forever. And in the Amplified, if you see it in the Amplified, it would say that holiness is becoming to your house.

Now girls, when you adorn something, you add to something, you add something that is non-essential to enhance the appearance or the beauty of it. When you're adorning something. Now let me ask you, I never will forget Dr. R.G. Lee preaching one time, can you make the ruby more red? Can you make the sky more blue? Can you make the grass more green? He said for us to think that we can add anything to what the Lord Jesus Christ has done is for us to think in terms like that of making the ruby more red and all.

And that stuck in my head, you know, down through the years that stuck. But there is nothing that we can do as far as changing the beauty of all that the Lord Jesus' life was here on earth. But we can adorn it.

Do you see? We can adorn it. We can just add a little more beauty to the beauty that he already did. That's the reason why you put on a beautiful dress and then you search for accessories.

And if you don't get just the right adornment for that dress, you can tacky up that dress with the wrong adornment. Do you see that? And it's the same thing with our Christian lives. We can tacky up what God intends for our lives if we adorn our lives in the wrong fashion, in the wrong fashion.

Now go with me to a dress shop and look at all those designer dresses hanging on a rack. And we might admire the beauty of the fabric or even the beadwork or the little fancy things, you know, that the designer has worked into that dress. But it's hanging limp on that rack, right? It's not adorning anybody.

But you let the right size woman come in. And you let that dress be her color. You know, we're so into color these days.

Or we were. I think we kind of passed over it and decided, oh shoot, I'm going to wear what I have. You know, I can't.

I buy what's on sale. You know, it doesn't matter. But you put that dress on the right size and that color is particularly good on that person.

It's becoming. You come up to me and you say, Ann, that dress is becoming to you. I know what you mean.

And that enhances your appearance. It ought to be. If it's in your thinking, then.

Holiness in your life, your personal holiness, enhances the life of the Lord Jesus. It brings glory. It brings honor to your holy thoughts.

Now, I want you to keep your definition down. And we're going to use the same scripture, Psalm 93, 5. And if you have an Amplified Bible, you'll have it. If you don't have an Amplified Bible, you probably won't see it because it was in the brackets of my Amplified and I could find no better definition for this word holiness.

And I know you're wondering what it is because our speakers have used it in different ways. I think we look at holiness thinking in different ways. But I want you to see really what it is.

It's a wonderful definition. We see three elements in holiness in the brackets of the Amplified Bible. Okay, number one.

Separated from sin. Where there is holiness, one will be separated from sin. Number two.

You'll have simple trust in the living God. Number three. You will have hearty obedience to the living God.

Now, this is your how-to list. Separate yourself from sin. Simply trust in the living God and heartily obey Him.

And Beverly said that this morning when she was talking to me. Dr. Helen Rosefier has been my teacher, my spiritual leader for some years. She didn't know it.

She still doesn't. She doesn't know me. She doesn't even know that I'm on the face of the earth.

I'll see her someday. But I don't know if it will ever be here on earth. But Dr. Helen Rosefier wasn't you remember the tape girls that were in my Sunday school class here? Remember why does the God of love allow suffering? And remember how that I had that for years even before Jerry Jr. took his life, remember? And then how it prepared me.

Now she did that in my life and she doesn't know that because she spoke it at a conference somewhere else. But she's also got several books out. One is the Living Sacrifice.

Another is Living Holiness. And she's got a couple of more out and I can't recall them. But this, Four Steps to Personal Holiness I have gleaned from Dr. Helen's book.

And I thought you might be interested in those steps to compare them to the steps that I just gave you that came from our definition that we're using for this. She said, number one, there must be a radical break with sin, a deliberate forsaking of the world and its ways. That's right on target.

I already said that to you, didn't I? Number two, the true love of God will show itself in the life of each Christian by a self-giving service and a compassionate caring for those among whom we live. It will be, a true love of God will show itself in the life of each Christian by a self-giving service and a compassionate caring for those among whom we live. Number three, obedience will be given gladly to every known commandment of God.

I'm going to repeat that. We're going to look into that. Obedience will be given gladly to every known commandment of God as the way by which we manifest our love of Christ.

And number four, she gets from Hugh Morgan's book, The Holiness of God and His People. And number four, in steps for personal holiness, I think is really a result of personal holiness. Holiness is the most effective way of influencing unconverted people and creating in them a willingness to listen to the preaching of the gospel.

Can you see? You remember the song where the beauty of Jesus is seen there. All His wonderful, what is it really called? Wonderful passion and purity. Can you see that? Because why? Holiness adorns it.

Holiness makes us become it. Another place in scripture we are exhorted to be winsome. Not ugly, belligerent, pesky little dudes.

We're supposed to be winsome. Now, do you need more reason for being holy other than John 3, 16 and 17 where it says, For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Do you need more reason than that? You know, sometimes I think we really have to take the time to see what treasure we have. And I think we need to build our faith up in all that God is. So I want you to commit yourself to memorizing Psalm 111 just so that you'll be reminded of what God can do in your life.

It just tells you what He's done. Psalm 111, and I'll be quoting from the Amplified so your King James may be a little different. Praise the Lord.

Hallelujah. I will praise and give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart in the counsel of the upright and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out by all those who have delight in them.

His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness enters forbearance. He has made His wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious, merciful, and full of loving compassion.

He has given food and provision to those who reverently and worshipfully fear Him. He will remember His covenant and imprint it on His mind. He has declared and shown to His people the power of His works in giving them the heritage of the nations of Canaan.

And it just gets better, because the works of His hands are absolute truth and justice, faithful and right. And all His precepts are sure, fixed, established, and trustworthy. They stand fast and are established forever and ever in absolute truth and uprightness.

And then look, He has sent redemption to His people and has commanded His covenant to be forever. Holy is His name, inspiring awe, reverence, and godly fear. Listen, when I was really willing and willing to teach Him, I was reminded of where it comes from.

The reverent fear and worship of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and skill, the preceding and the first essential, the prerequisite, and the output. A good understanding, wisdom, and meaning have all those who do the will of the Lord. Their praise of Him shall be forever.

Now listen, I have given you something right there that I hope some can, but I'm going to give it to you again just in case. In this life, and this life isn't easy, and the longer you live, you think, I cannot, I wonder if I can endure, I wonder, what difference does it make anyway? You know how cynical, that after events happen in our life, we can become so cynical, and hard, and even cruel in our thinking. But look what you have, and you need, in this old life, a good understanding, wisdom and meaning.

Who has it? Those who do the will of the Lord. Now, do you need to pray? Do you need to do like Jeremiah 10, 23 in this area? I mean, do you really want to be holy, but you know you want to, but you've wanted other things before in this life. You've wanted to be godly, and then all at once, like in me this week, it surfaced, and you weren't holy at all.

And then you had to call a bunch of people, and apologize for your godliness, and your unholiness. Has that happened? Well, I was really comforted when I saw Jeremiah 10, 23, and he's praying for the people of Israel. And look how he prays, and I think, God, this is my praise.

This is how it's got to be about holiness. Oh Lord, please Jeremiah, in the name of the peace, I know that the determination of the way of a man is not in himself. It is not in a man, even in a strong man, and a man at his best, to direct his own steps.

Oh Lord.

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