

“Transformed By Love”



“That You May Discern What Is The Will Of God”

Talk #3

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EPHESIANS 1:3–10

EPHESIANS

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

God's Plan

- God wants us to share in His divine life. To draw us into the Trinitarian love where we flourish and celebrate His goodness and are perfected in His grace and grow in the great commandment of love of God and love of neighbor.
- Everyone is searching for God. G.K. Chesterton said, “Every man who goes into a brothel is searching for God.” Many people are led by disordered desires but the search for happiness and truth are there.
- We must seek the Lord with our heart believing that the Holy Spirit will guide our feet into the way of peace (c.f. Luke 1:79).
- Discernment isn't always between good and evil but between two goods.

Discerning God's Will

- To walk in freedom as children of God (Romans 8)
- To overcome fear and trust that all things are working for our good.
- To recognize objective truth and steer clear from moral relativism.
- To do everything for the greater glory of God.

Desolation & Consolation

- There are moments when the road gets weary and we can't quite perceive what God is doing and what direction He is calling us to go. (Lord of the Rings scene)
- Comfort and instant gratification (avoiding the Cross) often take us off the path but we can always retrace our steps with the help of God's mercy and experience the joy of returning to the Father's house. (The Silver Chair)
- Understanding of God's will often comes much later. This is why returning to the inner self is of critical importance.

Interior Freedom

The most important and most fruitful acts of our freedom are not those by which we transform the outside world as those by which we change our inner attitude in light of the faith that God can bring good out of everything without exception. Here is a never-failing source of unlimited riches. Our lives no longer have in them anything negative, ordinary, or indifferent. Positive things become a reason for gratitude and joy, negative things an opportunity for abandonment, faith, and offering; everything becomes a grace.

(Interior Freedom by Fr. Jacques Philippe p. 58)

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7–10

2 CORINTHIANS

Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Plan A or Plan B?

A second example of how God sometimes says no to one request of ours so that he can say yes to a deeper request is found in the prayer of a man whose wife was killed in an accident. And although his daughter also died and he himself went blind, he was still able to address God in this magnificent way: I asked for health, so that I could do great things for you. You gave me sickness, so that I could do greater things. I asked for riches, so that I could be happy. You gave me poverty, so that I could be really wise. I asked for strength, so that I could fight for you. You gave me weakness, so that I could rely on you. I got none of the things I asked for, but all the things I hoped for. (Author Unknown)

God's timing differs from our timing. God's timing may not be ours, so we may think that God is refusing our prayer. Eventually, however, we have to admit that God knew best after all.

Tobin, Eamon. 13 Powerful Ways to Pray . Wellspring. Kindle Edition.

A Prophetic Warning & Challenge

How many winds of doctrine have we known in recent decades, how many ideological currents, how many ways of thinking. The small boat of the thought of many Christians has often been tossed about by these waves - flung from one extreme to another: from Marxism to liberalism, even to libertinism; from collectivism to radical individualism; from atheism to a vague religious mysticism; from agnosticism to syncretism and so forth. Every day new sects spring up, and what St Paul says about human deception and the trickery that strives to entice people into error (cf. Eph 4: 14) comes true.

Today, having a clear faith based on the Creed of the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism. Whereas relativism, that is, letting oneself be "tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine", seems the only attitude that can cope with with modern times.

A Prophetic Warning & Challenge

We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one's own ego and desires.

We, however, have a different goal: the Son of God, the true man. He is the measure of true humanism. An "adult" faith is not a faith that follows the trends of fashion and the latest novelty; a mature adult faith is deeply rooted in friendship with Christ. It is this friendship that opens us up to all that is good and gives us a criterion by which to distinguish the true from the false, and deceit from truth.

We must develop this adult faith; we must guide the flock of Christ to this faith. And it is this faith - only faith - that creates unity and is fulfilled in love.

A Prophetic Warning & Challenge

On this theme, St Paul offers us as a fundamental formula for Christian existence some beautiful words, in contrast to the continual vicissitudes of those who, like children, are tossed about by the waves: make truth in love. Truth and love coincide in Christ. To the extent that we draw close to Christ, in our own lives too, truth and love are blended. Love without truth would be blind; truth without love would be like "a clanging cymbal" (I Cor 13: 1).

....Our redemption is brought about in this communion of wills: being friends of Jesus, to become friends of God. The more we love Jesus, the more we know him, the more our true freedom develops and our joy in being redeemed flourishes. Thank you, Jesus, for your friendship!

A Prophetic Warning & Challenge

All people desire to leave a lasting mark. But what endures? Money does not. Even buildings do not, nor books. After a certain time, longer or shorter, all these things disappear. The only thing that lasts for ever is the human soul, the human person created by God for eternity.

The fruit that endures is therefore all that we have sown in human souls: love, knowledge, a gesture capable of touching hearts, words that open the soul to joy in the Lord. So let us go and pray to the Lord to help us bear fruit that endures. Only in this way will the earth be changed from a valley of tears to a garden of God.

In Summary

- We all must seek to sharpen our discernment skills and recognize the spiritual warfare we are confronting right now.
- Discernment isn't done in a vacuum. Have good spiritual friends and surround yourself with resources that help you stay in the Truth of your dignity as a child of God.
- We can't put our finger on everything God is doing right now. Appearances are deceiving. Just look at a crucifix.

Nothing Is Wasted

- <https://youtu.be/536GqWYOHdl?si=QOL0ztHzuJTqCxAf>

Victory is Ours!

- <https://youtu.be/9w1CERDHztE?si=l8k9UDmszLo8otv1>