

The Culmination: the Cross



Objective for Living - To Do God's Will (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious insights out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life—and can do the same in yours.

Our theme for this week is: Objective for Living. In our studies this week we have been taking Jesus as both the pattern and the inspiration for living. We've see that the supreme motivation of his life—the very purpose for which He came from heaven to earth—was to do God's will—as revealed in the scroll of Scripture. We've quoted more than once—which we'll quote again—that key verse in Hebrews chapter 10 put in the lips of Jesus by the writer of Hebrews, verse 7:

> "Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.'" (NIV)

Two vital points—first of all, the motive for which He came was to do God's will. Second, the part He had to play was already written in the scroll. And that should be true of you and me.

In our two previous talks we've looked at five specific results in the earthly life of Jesus that came through His commitment to do the will of God. First, physical restoration in a supernatural way. Second, a proper view of the situation that He was in, different from that from people round about Him. Third, just judgment or impartial discernment, never being gullible or deceived, always seeing just how a thing really is. Fourth, a channel of life to a dying world. And fifth, glorifying God on earth. Now, remember in all these Jesus was a pattern for us to follow.

In my talk today I'm going to speak about the culmination of God's will in the life of Jesus—the sacrifice of His own body. We'll return yet once more to that key passage in Hebrews chapter 10, verses 5–10. I hope that these words will be truly imprinted on your minds by the time we've concluded these studies this week. Hebrews 10:5–10:

> "Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God." First he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them.' [Although the law required them to be made.] Then he said, 'Here I am, I have come to do your will.' He sets aside the first to establish the second. [the second is the will of God.] And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (NIV)

You see, Jesus came to do God's will. In order that He might do God's will, God prepared a body for Him. And the outworking of that will demanded the sacrifice of His own body. This is the culmination, this is the ultimate goal of the life of Jesus is to sacrifice His body on behalf of the world.

I've pointed out also, especially in my talk yesterday, that there was this continual emphasis in the mind of Jesus—not merely on doing God's work but on finishing it, on leaving it not incomplete, on going right through to the very end with it. And the nearer He came to the end of His earthly ministry, the stronger this emphasis was in the life of Jesus.

Let's look at a statement in Luke chapter 9, verse 51:

> "And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, [literally His being taken up, and that of course was, His being taken up through His death on the cross.] And it came about, when the days were approaching for His ascension, that He resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem." (NASB)

Notice that key phrase—"...He resolutely set His face." He knew what lay ahead of Him. He'd already told His disciples, although they refused to believe it. But as it came nearer, He resolutely set His face—He was determined to finish it. And this reminds us of a portrait of Messiah from the Old Testament—from Isaiah chapter 50, verses 4 through 7, where by the Spirit of Christ in Him the prophet, Isaiah prophetically foreshowed the culmination of the life of Jesus on earth. And this is what Isaiah writes:

> "The Sovereign Lord has given me an instructed tongue, [or the tongue of a disciple. You see Jesus was the disciple of the Father.] to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, He wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. [You see Jesus was always in the school of discipleship with the Father. Day by day He received His directions for that day when He heard the Father's voice speak to Him at the beginning of the day. Then the passage continues.] The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. [It's very important to see that Jesus gave His back to those who beat Him. He freely gave it because it was the Father's will, the Father's direction. He heard the Father tell Him, 'That's what I sent you to do, My Son.' So He did not withhold Himself. He gave Himself. Then the passage continues...] Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame." (NIV)

You see Luke says, "He resolutely set His face." Isaiah, prophetically writing 700 years earlier said, "I have set my face like flint." He knew what He was going to have to endure. In fact, it's written in the previous verses of Isaiah—"I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard, I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. I've set my face like a flint. No matter what lies ahead, I'm going to go through with it because My purpose is to do the work that God has assigned to Me and to finish it."

Now we come to the actual culmination of the earthly life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. And I'm going to read from John's Gospel, chapter 19, verses 28 through 30. Jesus had been on the cross for three hours or more, He was near to His end and this is how the record reads:

> "Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.' A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." (NIV)

Notice, Jesus dismissed His own spirit. He had told His disciples earlier, "No one takes My life from Me. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up." Before He dismissed His spirit one of His last great utterances was, "It is

finished!" What was finished? His earthly task, His assignment. All through He'd been saying, "My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, to finish His work." And then in anticipation of this moment in His prayer in John 17 he said, "I've glorified you on earth. I've finished the work You gave Me to do." And here it was actually fulfilled. It is finished. That was not a cry of defeat. That was cry of triumph! "It is finished! Everything that was assigned to me I have done. I have done it completely. I've left nothing out. Now redemption is available through My sacrifice there on the cross."

I wish I could convey to you the fullness of the meaning of that simple phrase, "It is finished." In Greek it is just one word—tetelestai. It's the perfect tense of a verb that means "to complete something"—"to finish something"—"to do something perfectly." In groping around for a way to communicate it in English I thought of such phrases as—"it is completely complete"—"it is perfectly perfect"—"everything that has to be done for man's redemption through the sacrifice of My body has been done." Jesus would not release His spirit until He could say, "It is finished." Until He knew that He had done everything that was required of Him by the Father. That was the goal to which His life was directed. That was the supreme motivation. That was the thing that had caused Him to set His face like a flint. That had enabled Him to go through the shame, the pain, the rejection, the disgrace. Only one thing kept Him going.

We've often heard it said it wasn't the nails that held Him to the cross, it was His commitment to the Father's will; something from which He would not swerve, He would not turn to the right or to the left. That was His motivation. That was His purpose in living. God had given Him a body and He knew from the Scripture that God's purpose for that body was that He should sacrifice it on the cross on behalf of mankind. And so everything He did was directed to that, to the fulfillment of the will of God, the completion of His assignment.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. In my closing talk on this theme tomorrow I'll be explaining how we can follow the example of Jesus in doing God's will.

Radio Program

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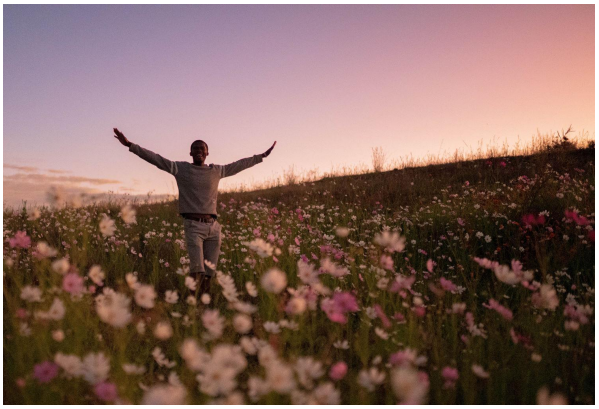

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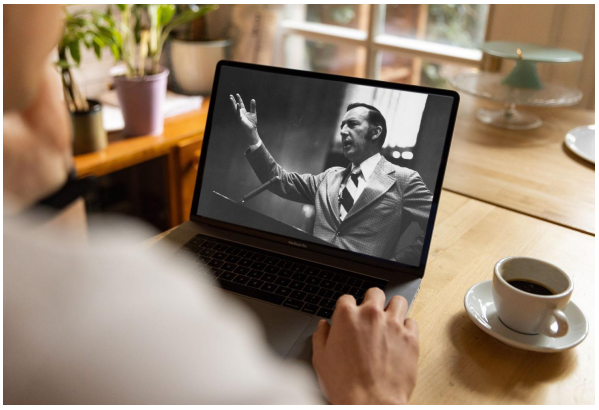

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