

"GET ON BOARD & SET SAIL!"

TEXT: Acts 13 (Stop now and look up this passage and read it.)

INTRO.: A. This is not a message about sailing or boating. It is a message about **God's will**. There are over 23 verses in the N.T. alone which specifically use the phrase **"the will of God."** This reveals the importance God places on knowing His will. These Scriptures run the gamut from knowing God's will concerning **service**, to **suffering** w/in the will of God to **dying** in the will of God.

B. Under the metaphor or symbolism of sailing I would like to give some principles concerning knowing & doing the will of God in general, & go beyond that to reveal how to react to circumstances (good & bad), and to temptations & testing w/in the will of God.

I. DETERMINE YOUR DIRECTION:

A. Be Sure the Lord Is on Board! (v.1-5)

1. They had fellowship w/the brethren (you are out of God's will if you are out of fellowship w/His people!). v.1
2. They were engaged in spiritual activity. v.2a
3. They were sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading. V.2b
4. They were willing to obey God's direction. V.3,4
5. They began to do what they were sent to do. v.5

B. Choose Your Traveling Companions Carefully: 12:25; 13:1,2,5

1. You can't be in God's will while traveling w/the wrong crowd!
2. You can't expect God's blessings while traveling w/the wrong crowd!
3. You will be like those you run with!
4. Your crowd will either encourage you or discourage you from doing right!

B. Expect Opposition To God's Will: vv.7-12

1. A direct emissary of Satan shows up to oppose them & their ministry.

ILLUS.: They had been led by the Spirit of God to an important man, a "deputy" which means he was a procounsel of Rome, or a Governor. But his "court magician" was demon-possessed & he was present to oppose these soul-winning missionaries.

There is always Satanic opposition to any God-directed ministry! What soul-winner hasn't seen it? You are about to witness or win someone & the telephone rings, company arrives or during an invitation people begin fidgeting, talking, putting on coats, looking at their watches, etc.

2. Since we live in a Satan-controlled world - "God's Washpot" - we can expect opposition to anything we try to do for God.

II. CHART YOUR COURSE:

A. Decide Your Destination: Acts 14:26-28

1. Where do you want to be spiritually next week, next year, next decade?
2. What is your goal as a believer?
3. How do you want to be used of God: soul-winner, teacher, bus worker, giver, helper, etc.?

ILLUS.: Mrs. Feeley makes more visits than most anyone in our church. Paul Jones & George Delgado visit the shut-ins regularly. Penny Temple & Tammy Delquadro are faithful in soul-winning, as are Don Gardner, Steve Smith, Sandie & Steve Yarnall, etc.

I would never **GET ON BOARD & SET SAIL** without a specific destination in mind. You need to know where you are headed!

B. Make Course Corrections As Needed: Acts 15:38-41 (27:4)

1. Even good Christians & co-workers can have sharp differences.
2. It is better to part friends than to stay together and become enemies.

ILLUS.: It is NEVER God's will (nor ethical) for an asst. Pastor or co-worker to leave one ministry & start a competing ministry in the area!!!! And it is never right for other believers to follow some asst. to go start or take another work in the area! If you must leave, leave w/out trying to influence others & go far enough away where you will not hurt another work of God. You should NOT leave unless there is a proven doctrinal or moral problem or unless you are going into some ministry yourself.

3. God often USES splits & divisions to start other good works, but never works which are in competition!

ILLUS.: The best way to start other ministries is for the main church to mother other works voluntarily, as a ministry, loaning or giving away members to help get the new work on its feet. The area often dictates the need for satellite works.

III. LEARN TO FUNCTION ON 'AUTO PILOT': Acts 15:37,38

A. Determine Your Response Before an Emergency Occurs.

ILLUS.: When at sea you need to have emergency equipment ready & available or when the situation arises, you will be in trouble. You don't need to respond in panic or you may lose your life & your friends & your vessel. The same is true in the Christian life.

You shouldn't have to think or make decisions about how you will respond to right & wrong. As Pastor Delquadro said in staff devotions, he doesn't get up on Sunday to decide if he will go to church that day or not. The decision has already been made. When tempted to sin, you need to have a pre-made decision to say no!

B. Decide Your Non-Negotiables Ahead of Time:

1. There are certain areas about which you have convictions which do not change with the circumstances.

Eph. 4:14 *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

2. Your concept of right & wrong as a believer will pre-decide your response to areas of temptation; since right & wrong are clearly non-negotiable.
3. Areas of Christian liberty & preferences offer varying responses, but those doctrines and convictions that derive from the Bible are not included here.
4. This is why every believer needs to think clearly about his or her convictions & decide in advance what their response will be.

ILLUS.: Carol Mohr has decided to move to Colorado to be near her daughter & grandchildren. But she chose NOT to move to her daughter's home town because there was no sound local church available there. She is moving 2 hours away to a larger town where she had already checked out the availability of sound local churches & has narrowed down the prospects among 4 or 5 to 1 or 2 based upon non-negotiables of doctrine, standards & convictions.

5. Operating on 'autopilot' eliminates agonizing over most decisions in life.
6. James speaks of "**meekness of wisdom**" & Pastor D. defined meekness as "strength under control."

ILLUS.: Christ was meek, but not weak. He operated w/"strength under control." Did he get angry? Yes, but not w/out cause & did not "lose his temper" but when He drove the money changers out of the Temple, he DECIDED that was the appropriate response. It was based on non-negotiable principles which were pre-decided. When he rebuked the Pharisees, He did so based on those same principles of sound doctrine. We need to be like Him & learn to function on 'auto-pilot.'

CONCL.: The will of God is critical to the life of every believer. These are just 3 simple guidelines or principles which will enable you to decide on His will & to stay in His will. **"GET ON BOARD & SET SAIL" & STAY ON COURSE!**

God's will is for every unsaved person to receive His only begotten Son and what He did on Calvary's cross and subsequent resurrection and invite Him to be his personal Savior.