

Catechetical Sermon, June 22nd, 2025

Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 49 "God's Will"

Scripture Lessons: Matthew 16:21-28; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 5:15-21

Lesson Aim	To understand what it is to renounce our own will and yield to God's will. In addition, we will define God's decretive and preceptive wills.
Steps to Learning	Read the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 49 and the Scripture lessons above . Also discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may be best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>What is the human will? It is the capacity to make decisions.</p> <p>What is the problem with the human will? It has been corrupted by sin as has our heart, mind and soul. This means that we will make bad, sinful decisions. Therefore, we need to renounce the wrong direction of our will.</p> <p>How are we to renounce the wrong direction of our will and yield to God's will according to the Scriptures we have read? According to Matthew 16, Peter protests that Jesus must die. Jesus rebukes him and then tells him and the rest of the disciples that they must deny themselves (their wills), take up their crosses and follow him! According to Romans 12, we are naturally inclined to be conformed to the world, but we must instead present our lives as sacrifices to God. And, finally, in Ephesians 5, Paul says that we live naturally as foolish people but must instead understand the will of God.</p> <p>How should we summarize the process of renouncing our wills and yielding to God's will? We need to be humble enough to understand our sinful, wrong desires and seek to understand God's will.</p> <p>What is God's decretive will and his preceptive will? God's decretive will refers to God's will as a decree or a command. When God decrees something, the result will always be realized. Paul argues in Romans 9 that no one can resist his will by which he means his decretive will. Anything that has happened in this life, events that have come about, reflect the decretive will of God. God's preceptive will is the will of God for our lives as it has been revealed in the Scriptures; it is the law of God. This will is often resisted and violated.</p>
Bible Reading	1 Corinthians 14 – 2 Corinthians 4 (Reading through the New Testament)