

"Lord's Will Be Done"
Pastor Wally Contreras
November 21, 2021

"And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home. When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done." After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge." (Acts 21:1-16)

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Pastor Wally asked if I were on a trip and stopped in some city along the way if I would look for other disciples of Jesus. And???

How would I respond to someone who knocks on my door one day and says, "Hi. My name is Paul, a disciple of Jesus. Can I stay with you for a week?" and why?

Pastor Wally also asked if I seek out other believers at work (or at school)? If so, why so? If not, why not?

Discuss Pastor Wally's statement that because God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) can not contradict themselves, then, if I believe Scripture is contradicting itself, that my translation or understanding of what the Bible says must be in error.

How readily do I accept the thought that I'm the one who is in error when confronted with something that appears to be a contradiction?

Deuteronomy 29:29 tells me that “[t]he secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Webster’s 1828 dictionary defines a secret to mean something that is “[p]roperly, separate; hence, hid; concealed from the notice or knowledge of all persons except the individual or individuals concerned.” Pastor Wally said that God’s revealed will for me is found in Scripture through God’s laws and commands. Do I expect God to provide me with some special revelation (e.g., a clap of thunder or a heavenly hallelujah) as confirmation of His will for me before I will accept what Scripture plainly tells me is God’s will for me? Explain.

People expend a lot of effort to try to “discern” what is plainly unknown and unknowable to them...like when the end of the world will happen. Matthew 24:36 clearly tells us that “... concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” According to a February 12, 2021 New York Times article, “Christian prophets are meeting a hunger for reassurance and clarity that can be observed in other corners of American culture. Astrology is exploding in popularity. More than 40 percent of Americans believe in psychics, according to Pew.” (Note: The New York Times does not say those saying these things are **false-prophets**, but rather attributes them to “Christian prophets”.) How do I respond to any “hunger for reassurance and clarity” in my life and why?

Romans 8:14-17 reminds me: “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” Wait a minute! What’s this “...provided we suffer with him” stuff? It must be a misprint or a bad translation, right??? Pastor Wally spoke of the “Agabus moment” when Agabus told Paul that he would be physically bound in Jerusalem as the Holy Spirit had told Agabus. Pastor Wally highlighted that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3, and Jesus in Matthew 26 had “but if not” moments where, if what they desired was not God’s will, then they would completely submit to God’s will, even if it meant their deaths. Pastor Wally asked if I want an Agabus moment in my life when it lands in my backyard. And???

Spurgeon, preaching on Romans 8:14 said: “The point mentioned in the text must never be matter of question, for if that be doubtful our filial relationship to God is unproved. We must be “led by the Spirit of God.” That divine Spirit who is ever with the Father and the Son must be evermore with us so that we are guided, instructed, impelled, quickened, actuated, influenced by him, or else we must not dare to think ourselves the sons of God... I do not wish to speak sharply, but I feel that I must speak plainly, and I feel bound to say that there is far too much hypocrisy among professing Christian people. Many wear the name of Christian, and have nothing else that is Christian about them. It is sorrowful that it should be so, but so it is: false professors have lowered the standard of Christian character, and made the church so like the world that it is hard to say where one begins and the other ends. We exercise church discipline as best we can, but for all that there is a seed of mischief which does not develop into open and overt sin which we cannot remove by discipline, for we are forbidden to root up the tares lest we root up the wheat with them. Men and brethren, we must be holy! It is of no use our talking about being orthodox in belief: we must be orthodox in life, and, if we are not, the soundest creed will only increase our damnation. I hear men boast that they are Nonconformists to the backbone, as if that were the essential matter: better far be Christians to the heart. What is the use of ecclesiastical Nonconformity if the heart is still conformed to the world? Another man will glory that he is a Conformist, but what is the good of that unless he is conformed to the image of Christ? Holiness is the main consideration, and if we are not led into it by the Spirit of holiness neither are we the sons of God.” (Emphasis added) In what way(s) has the Holy Spirit been leading me into holiness recently?

Spurgeon went on to point out: “We thank God for holy women who, at home, have been led into the darkest parts of this city to labor amongst the most fallen and depraved, to lift up Christ before them that he might lift them up to himself. Blessed are those men and women who are led by the Spirit of God into labors more abundant, for the more abundant shall be their joy. Methinks I ought to remind you all that if you are doing nothing for Jesus, the Spirit of God has never led you into this idleness. If you eat the fat and drink the sweet in the house of God, but never do a hand’s turn for the household, the Spirit of God cannot have taught you this abominable sloth. There is a something for everyone of us to do, a talent committed to the charge of every believer, and if we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, he will tell us what the Lord has appointed us to perform, he will strengthen us for the doing of it, and set his seal and blessing upon it when it is done.” What talent has God “appointed [me] to perform”?

In what way(s) have I seen the Holy Spirit strengthen me in the effort that has been appointed me?

What if my “Agabus moment” is to be “led into the darkest parts of this city to labor amongst the most fallen and depraved, to lift up Christ before them”? What in my life, if anything, will need to change in order for me to honestly respond, “nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:39b) and why?