

The Great Insurrection

by Steve Gallagher

The Great Insurrection is a spirit of lawlessness that is at work within the apostate church, leading to a rebellion against God's authority.

Duration: 47:46

Topics: "Apostasy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses four lies that rebels tell themselves, using the example of Saul, a professing believer. The first lie is that partial obedience is enough, where Saul believed he could pick and choose which commands of God to follow. The second lie is that rebels think they know better than God, questioning His expectations and thinking they can determine what is right for themselves. The third lie is that rebels believe they can have things the way they want them, obeying God only when it aligns with their own plans and desires. The fourth lie is that rebels think they can control their sinful behavior, when in reality, they are unable to do so. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and repenting of these lies, and seeking God's guidance and obedience in all areas of life.

Transcript

I have in my mind's eye, after singing those wonderful hymns about being controlled by God, being in subjection to God, living your life in submission to Him, we sing those songs. And they have such powerful and eternal truths represented in them. And I think of God's throne, God's kingdom that is alive and well in a different realm, in a different location right now, where everything and every person there, whether it's an angelic being, or if it's a redeemed sinner, every person there is living their lives completely in conformity to God's will.

How I long to make that place my home. And to the best of my ability, I will do that even here. But as Mike mentioned, we live in a world full of wickedness that is growing darker all the time.

2 Thessalonians 2 describes the Antichrist as the lawless one. And that, of course, is only because that man will be possessed by a spirit that is lawless. A spirit that rebelled against God's authority thousands of years ago, where everything was at peace and in conformity to God's will.

This spirit decided that he would make his will another option. And he brought discord into God's kingdom. This spirit that I'm referring to.

And in that chapter, it talks about the mystery of lawlessness. It's a mystery that began back in Lucifer's heart, somehow, that we don't understand. How that sin came forth.

We do know that there was a period of probation for the angels. And they had this period where they could choose to continue in submission and subjection to God. Or they could choose to go their own way.

And as the scriptures tell us, one third of them, however many millions that represents, or billions, I don't know, chose to follow Lucifer into self-will. And so what I want to talk about today is the Great Insurrection. And that's just another title for the apostasy, I guess, or at least an aspect of the apostasy.

It's the spirit that is at work within the apostate church. And I want to make a very bold statement. And I don't mean to be in the wrong spirit when I say this.

And I'm not saying it for shock value or anything like that. But I want to tell you, and I say it with much sadness, that much of the evangelical church as we know it is halfway there right now. Halfway there.

I think that's probably about right. It could even be beyond that. I don't know.

What I mean halfway there is where is there? There is Armageddon. There are all the world forces that the Antichrist will one day whip up into a frenzy of hatred for God's authority to the point that they will attack the forces of God, thinking they are going to overthrow God once and for all. And I'm saying that much of the evangelical church is halfway there.

If that doesn't break your heart, I don't know what can. It breaks my heart, the reality of that. Now I'm going to spend just a few minutes in 1 Samuel 15, only long enough to hopefully bring out some of the thinking that is involved with this spirit of lawlessness that takes hold in people's hearts, professing believers' hearts.

I'm hoping that I can articulate it with God's help in such a way that these lies that people tell themselves, the lies that Saul told himself, that they can be exposed for what they are. And when the enemy subtly introduces those thoughts into your mind and into your hearts, that you will recognize instantly where they're from and not let yourself become deceived like Saul did. So in this sense, Saul is a type of the end times apostate Christian.

A type. Now you know the story here, and I'm not going to go through it. We don't have time, and that's really not my focus.

But let me just recap it real quick. The Lord has spoken to Samuel, and Samuel brings a word from the Lord to Saul. Saul has been made king.

He's been king for, I don't know, 25 years or so. So he has really settled into his position by now. And Samuel tells Saul that God wants him to go down south to where the Amalekite tribes are congregated and to absolutely exterminate them.

Now before you, you know, rise up inside and think that you're more merciful than God and that you can put yourself in a position to second guess some of the things he does, you have to understand that God knows that when a people group crosses a line into such corruption and darkness that there is no longer any hope for them, that they have gone so far that the only merciful thing to do to the rest of mankind is to exterminate them and get them out of the way. And that was part of what went into all of this, and to show

the rest of the world that you cannot withstand Jehovah and His will. He had his reasons for what he was asking Saul to do, what he was telling Saul to do.

And so go down there and exterminate everything and everybody. Everything that has breath in it, I want you to exterminate. It was very much like when Joshua went against Jericho and the men were told, don't touch anything.

Why? Because it was being consecrated unto the Lord. And I'll just leave that at that. I don't want to get into it.

But there was a purpose in it. That's really what I'm trying to say. So I want to just real quick touch on four lies that rebels tell themselves.

And what I mean by rebels, I'm only referring to professing believers, as Saul was a professing believer. You understand that, right? Saul knew the Lord. He had been possessed by the Holy Spirit.

Had the anointing. He was called God's anointed. But something went wrong inside of him.

And part of it were these four lies that he told himself. And the first one is this, that partial obedience is enough. Partial obedience is enough.

Look at verse 13, kind of picking up in the middle of a conversation here. Samuel is coming up to Saul. After Saul has gone and exterminated every person except the king of the Amalekites and some of the best of the livestock.

But he did everything else right. And Samuel approaches him. And Saul comes bounding up full of this false bravado and positive whatever.

And Saul says to him, blessed are you of the Lord. I have carried out the command of the Lord. I mean, you talk about brazenness.

And just trying to put the best light on what he has just done. And that's what that was all about. And Samuel, though, has just spent all night laboring in intercession over Saul.

And God has spoken to him. And he's going to have none of it. He is not going to sit there and listen to this nonsense.

So Samuel begins to confront Saul with the truth. And verse 20, you know, Saul is not going to go down without a fight. Saul says, I did obey the voice of the Lord.

And went on the mission on which the Lord sent me. You know, yeah, I did bring the Agag back. But I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

Just like the Lord said. I did what I was supposed to do. You know, maybe I didn't do everything perfectly, but my intentions were right.

These are the kinds of things we tell ourselves. Now, just take a minute and think about Saul's life. Think back on his history as much of it as we know.

Saul had destroyed the Ammonites when the Lord sent him to destroy them. And he did exactly what he was supposed to do. He attacked the Philistines over and over again, putting his own life at risk.

He had banned all witchcraft, divination, and idolatry in the land. He encouraged the people to worship Jehovah. And in this case, he destroyed every man, woman, and child with the exception of the king.

And after the battle, he sacrificed to the Lord. You see what I'm saying? We're not talking about a full-blown rebel here. We're talking about a guy who did just about everything he was supposed to do.

Had a long history of that. And think about this as well. Compare Saul's reign to some of the other Jewish kings.

He didn't marry a Baal priestess like Ahab did and allow his wife to introduce into the people of God Baal worship. He didn't do anything like that. He didn't set up idol temples like Solomon did, right on the other hill, straight across from God's temple, and marry 900 and some foreign women.

He didn't do anything like that. He didn't make the streets run red with the blood of the prophets like Manasseh did. You see what I'm saying? Saul wasn't all that bad when you think about him in line with some of these other kings.

And it's not like he was purposely defying God's authority. You know, he wasn't standing before God and fronting him off like Nimrod had done sometime in the past. Now think about the church today in America.

We vehemently stand against the wickedness of our day. You know, just like Saul would not put up with divination and witchcraft and you could add homosexuality and that and whatever else. He would not allow those things in Israel when he was king.

You know, and if abortion was going on, he would have banned that. He would have banned pornography. He would fit right in with the evangelical church.

That's what I'm saying to you. You know, we hate what God hates. And we do far more right than we do wrong.

Are you getting what I'm saying? That's the church, the evangelical church. It does far more right than it does wrong. There are churches across the land right now full of people who do not have to get up on Sunday morning.

They could have went out partying last night, but they made the decision not to. They got up this morning. They got their kids up, had to fight with them and whatever else you have to go through with children that I don't know about.

But just getting them together and getting them to church, they don't have to do that, but they do. But you know, one of the worst mistakes a hypocrite can make is to compare himself to the wicked of his day. That's one of the worst mistakes that can be made, and that's what happens in the church today.

We compare ourselves to the wickedness of our day, and we don't look so bad when we do that, right? We don't look so bad when we do that. The second lie that rebels tell themselves is this. The standard of obedience is established by the many.

God's view of what is right behavior, what is to be expected of a believer, what God's grace covers, and all that sort of thing. The best place to get a gauge on that is the many. This many people can't be wrong, right? I mean, that's kind of how it is, isn't it? Think about it.

That's where we get our bearings. Well, you know, you've got these fanatics over on this side, and they're all legalistic and everything, but over here on this side are these professing Christians that are into homosexuality and everything. I mean, just really giving over in it.

Don't see anything wrong with it. Somewhere in between there is, you know, the right place. Look at verse 24.

Saul is explaining to Samuel, I have indeed transgressed the command of the Lord in your words because I feared the people and listened to their voice. You know, it's that fear of man thing, but it's also the same thing that I'm talking about. Determining our level of righteousness by what the many do.

It's a terrible propensity that people have. Rather than going to the Word of God, rather than comparing ourselves to the life of Jesus Christ, rather than looking to Scripture and just determining what God is expecting of us, we find the middle ground in public opinion in the church culture, and that's where we want to be. As long as we're in the middle ground, we don't have any glaring sins.

See, the problem is this whole thing of looking to the masses to determine God's perspective, it can be very deceiving. Let me back out of our situation for a minute. Let me try to paint it in a different way.

Think of the Taliban. There's a culture in Afghanistan, Pakistan, this Taliban culture, and they live by Sharia law, and in the culture that they have established there, if a young girl says to her parents, I will not marry that old man that you're trying to get me to marry, it would be completely acceptable for a father to kill his daughter, or for the Taliban to slice her nose off, or throw acid in her face. Those kinds of things would be acceptable in that culture.

Now, we're outside of that culture. We're in the American culture, completely different culture. And we look at that, and it's like, man, that's just crazy.

Where do they get that thinking at? But if you grew up in that culture, it wouldn't seem crazy. It would seem normal. When God looks into the culture of the American church, He sees attitudes that have become entrenched in the church that are evil, that are wrong, that are sinful.

And what we have to do is get God's mindset on it. See what I mean? We can't trust what the masses say. In fact, there's even a verse somewhere in the Old Testament that says, do not follow the multitudes in sin.

I mean, you know, it's there. Okay, the third lie that rebels believe is, I know better, I know better. You know, the reality is Saul wasn't defying God's instructions.

He was just modifying them a little bit. You know, think about it. He wasn't openly flouting God's rule.

He was just kind of sidestepping it a little, kind of working around it a little bit. And I'm sure he had some very sensible reasons for the decisions he made. But the problem is, self-will sets up an alternative to God's rule in our lives.

That's what the problem is. Matthew Henry said, Nothing is so provoking to God as disobedience, setting up our wills in competition with His. And that's the reality of it.

Just get it down to the bare facts of it. That's what it is. We're establishing our own will as an alternative to His will.

You know, Jesus was dealing with some people one day, and He just turned to them and He said, Why do you call Me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? You know, He's emphasizing it, Lord, Lord. Why do you do that? Why? Why bother? The frightening truth about Jehovah is that He will let you go your own way. He will allow you to go your own way if that's what you desire.

You know, we have a free will, and we have a right to self-determination. We can choose to be in rebellion, to do our own thing, to go through life the way that we see fit, and so on. We can do that.

But I want to tell you something. When it comes to a relationship with the Almighty, liberty from His rule equates with death. It's the same thing, because that's where it's headed.

I know better, Saul says to himself. You know, I know God said this, this, this, this, and this, and I did this, this, this, and the other things. Well, you know, come on, Lord.

I mean, you can't really expect me to do all that stuff. Everything, really? All right, the fourth lie that rebels tell themselves is, I can have things the way I want them. The problem with Saul's situation wasn't that he didn't want to obey the Lord.

He did want to obey the Lord. And he would obey the Lord so long as it fit in with his overall plan, so long as it fit into what he wanted. He was willing to obey God.

That's what he desired in life. We're not looking at an outright rebel, you know, with tattoos and nose rings and, you know, just out there totally giving over to rebellion. That isn't what Saul was.

It was the desire of his heart to obey God on his terms. He did want to obey God, but he would only do it if it fit in with his desires. And what were his desires? He wanted his men to like him.

You know, he didn't want to cross his men. He wanted to bring the king of the Amalekites back as a trophy. He wanted to build a monument to himself instead of giving the glory to God.

He wanted to pounce on the livestock. Yes, he wanted to obey the Lord up to a point. In the New Testament, the word for desire and the word for will are the same word.

Thalo, I think it is. And when you're saying about the desires of the flesh or someone, it's basically saying the will. You know, if you are unwilling, it means that you won't go against your desires.

And we know that the world lives in a spirit of lust, don't we? I mean, you can just go to a mall. You can open a magazine. You can go on the Internet.

I mean, it is everywhere. Go after what you want. That is the message of the world out there.

That's the message of the American culture. That is the American dream. Fulfill your desires.

It's the spirit of I want it. I want it. Now, take a look at apostate Christians for a second.

The attitude that they have is so long as they obey some outward rules that are associated with the evangelical cause, you know, certain things that we're not supposed to do and so on, as long as I obey those rules, go to church, fit myself into this evangelical culture, as long as I fit in there, kind of in the middle somewhere, I can basically do what I want in life. God doesn't mind, you know, if I just kind of make my way in life, take the kind of job I want to take, take the wife I choose to take, you know, things like that.

And you know what? The church is full of decent people who live moral lives, who are in church services every Sunday, who identify with the cause of Christ, but are doing what they want to do in life.

There's an underlying attitude when it comes to rebellion. Rebellion is really just a form of pride, isn't it? That's really all it is. It's just a form of pride.

You know, you have know-it-all pride, and you have self-exalting pride, and all the other kinds. Rebellion to authority is just another way of being big in our own thinking. Look at what Samuel said in verse 17.

He said, Isn't it true when you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed you king over Israel? Let me read that in a couple of other translations. The Net Bible, when you were insignificant in your own eyes. The Living, when you didn't think much of yourself.

The New English Bible, time was when you thought little of yourself. In other words, there was a time in your life, Saul, when God was big in your thinking, and you were small. Your desires were held in check because you saw the reality of this great Jehovah.

You had a right perspective of Him at one time, and you were little in your own eyes. But this is the problem with things going your way, with prosperity, with getting things that you want, and so on. The problem with that, when you go down that path, you become bigger and bigger and bigger, and God becomes smaller and smaller and smaller, to the point that before you know it, it's nothing to flout His rules.

You know why? Because He's just a tiny little icon a couple of miles off in the sunset somewhere. You can hardly even see Him. It's not a problem to say no to someone like that.

But when He's seen as He really is, you know, front and center, in your face, and you get a sight of who this God is, it becomes very difficult to say no to Him. Samuel was describing a time when Saul was humble. And one aspect of humility, just like rebellion is one aspect of pride, well, one aspect of humility is meekness.

Meekness is the opposite of rebellion, the opposite of self-will. Now, let me throw out a couple of disclaimers real quick. Meekness is not a quiet and reserved nature.

That's not meekness. People who are quiet by nature, they've always been quiet by nature. And some of the most arrogant people I've ever met, some of the most stubborn-hearted people I've ever met are quiet by nature.

That's not meekness. And meekness isn't weakness either. You see some weak-willed, kind of wimpy guy, and, oh, he's so meek.

That's not meekness. Some of the most fearless men the church has ever seen have been men of meekness. Actually, I could say every one of them because you can't be fearless against the throes of hell in your own strength.

But there's something about a man who lives in subjection to God and God's authority. You know, there is a holy boldness to such men. Like John the Baptist, for instance.

He was a man of meekness, and yet he didn't have one slight hesitation to call out Herod for all the wicked things he was doing. He didn't have a hesitation with it. He did not fear man.

Look at, by contrast, Saul who was shivering and quaking in fear about what his men thought of him. The opposite of meekness. He fears man instead of God.

It would have been better for him if he would have feared God, wouldn't it? Things would have went better for Saul. Meekness is utter compliance with God. Meekness is subjecting oneself to the will of God.

Meekness is the attitude of the disciple to the teacher, the son to the father, or the servant to the master. That's what meekness is. Rebellion is willfulness.

I mean, that's what it really boils down to. Rebellious Christians would never think this thought that I'm going to express here. It's not that they would actually think this, and they certainly would never say it because it's too brazen, but I'm telling you it's an attitude that's buried deep in their hearts.

I'm willing to do this Christian thing, but I want what I want. When it comes right down to it, I will not be ruled by another. That's the ugly reality of a Christian rebel.

All right, so I'm going to wrap things up here. We all have two paths in front of us, and the days of being able to have one foot on one path and the other foot on the other are coming to an end. I mean, there's never that way anyway.

Whether you have to face up to it in your time on earth or you have to face up to it in the hereafter, the reality and the truth is going to come out and you're going to have to face up to it eventually. So people who have had one foot in both have really been completely on one side anyway in rebellion. But let's just take a quick look at these two paths as I wrap it up.

Let's look at the path of self-determination. I want to live my own life, and I don't want God or anyone else. I'll go by His rules in life, but you have a right to live your life that way.

God gives you that choice. But I suggest you take a look at what happened to Saul before you decide to go down that path. When this occurred, God didn't strike Saul down.

Isn't there something inside of you that's like, man, Lord, why didn't you just exterminate him on the spot and install David as king right then and there? But that isn't the way God operates. He allowed Saul to continue on for 15 more years. 15 years! He allowed Saul to just continue on as king for all those years.

That's the way the Lord is. He lets you have what you want. And of course, it all fits in with what Solomon would say later, when the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.

And man, that's the truth. You know, when you don't face justice for what you're doing, it's very easy to just continue on that path. But I want to tell you something, a change came about in Saul.

Really, it had already started some time back. It set him on a path, and he was becoming someone else than what he had started out as. You know, you can't control this thing.

That's the problem. You think you can control it, but it's a lie. You can't control it.

It's not possible. That germ of self-will inside of Saul flourished after this. It flourished, and it became something very ugly and hideous.

In fact, the Lord pulled back his spirit from Saul, his anointed king. He pulled back his spirit, and he sent an evil spirit to torment him the rest of his life. I want to read something out of my book here, *The Time of Your Life in Light of Eternity*.

And I'm basically making a point in this chapter about, you know, you need to make your decisions for the Lord now, today. Today is the day of salvation, and so on. So that's the point, but let me just cut into this, because the way I said some things here would be good to hear.

One of life's great deceptions is that tomorrow will be the same as today. The very mundane nature of life seems to confirm its changelessness. One day seems to roll into the next in one long, weary blur.

Now, even if life outwardly remains the same from day to day, an imperceptible inner transformation occurs over time. Little by little, the heart grows colder to the things of God. Life in a fallen world has a way of gradually changing even the nicest person into someone who will eventually become incapable of responding to the Lord.

Incapable. Kairos experiences, Kairos is a Greek term for time. It means an experience where God moves in and deals with you, or, you know, whatever.

Kairos experiences only serve to heighten the stakes. The person will either have a marvelous spiritual breakthrough, or their rejection of God's offer will hasten and deepen the hardening process occurring within. The person may only mean to delay his answer to the divine summons, but even inaction is a response.

Each time a person ignores such an appeal, the heart grows increasingly more calloused. A person's character is forged by such experiences. The truth is that the hardening of the human heart is the culmination of years of satanic deception and self-delusion, but eventually the day of reckoning must come.

Now, my point was a little different on what I was writing there, but it's the same process that you see happening in the life of Saul. And, you know, I want you to think about apostate Christians, all those nice little apostate Christians that are sitting in churches today and are singing all those nice little hymns and listening to all those nice little sermons. Nice people, upright people.

The kind of people you want as your neighbor. The kind of people you want to work around. But I want to tell you, if they don't submit themselves lock, stock and barrel to the will of God and to His authority and all that it means in their lives, one day they are going to be on the side of Satan.

And they are halfway there now. You know why? Because in their heart of hearts they have been unwilling to submit to God's authority. Where are you at? You better take a good hard look at your life and your heart.

But there is, praise God, another path. And I know many of you have entered this path and you are on your way down this path. You understand, Pastor Steve is a really nice guy.

You know that, right? Who else would love you enough to get in your face like that? There is another path. It's the path of utter surrender and utter submission. And it's a wonderful, wonderful place to be.

I can tell you from much hard knocks and difficult lessons that I've had to learn over the years, you know, you grow into this. I'm not saying that you just suddenly make a decision and you're suddenly meek. It's something you grow into.

The point, you know, with Saul wasn't that he made a mistake. You know, he's a growing believer and, you know, he made some mistakes. And man, Lord, you're being so hard on him.

But no, that's not it. It was the willfulness in his heart. Samuel couldn't see it, but God saw it.

And I'll tell you something, men, you better learn how to say yes to Jesus about everything, small and big. Not just the little outward rules the evangelical church has told us we have to live by, but I'm talking about the issues of your heart. You better learn how to say yes to Him.

Because as the days grow darker, it's going to be harder and harder to do that. If you don't have it settled inside that you're going to obey Him no matter what. The real issue is what is the ruling spirit of your heart? What is the ruling spirit of your life? What is the direction you're heading in? You know, that's what we're talking about.

Now, if you're sincere and you want to go down that path, and man, Pastor Steve, listen, I've made some terrible, horrendous mistakes, and I shudder to think of the possibility that I would go down that path. What do I do? Okay, I'm going to give you some things real quick. Number one, take a fresh look at the one you are calling Lord, Lord.

Get a new sight of Him. See Him on His almighty throne and see yourself as a speck of dust in front of Him. Get a fresh sight of it, man.

Don't minimize God down to your size, you know, a little step above you or something. You need to get a fresh sight of this God and who He is and what He is. Second, repent of all the pride, all the rebellion, all the forms of self-will in your life.

Lay it on the altar once and for all. Make a commitment to go the other direction. And that is, number three, is to make a commitment to the Lord that you are going to obey Him in all things, small and large.

And fourth, don't make any important decisions without God's clear-cut approval. You know, this is something you have to learn. How to seek Him for an answer on the issues of your life.

You've got to learn this. You've got to know what it means to wait on God for an answer. To have the determination in your heart that you will not do something unless you know it's His will.

You have to get to that point. That's where the Lord's wanting to take you. Let me give you a couple of examples out of my own life.

About a year ago, Kathy and I got it in our heads that, you know, with gas prices going up, we were going to buy a new car. You know, it would have been nice in some ways. And we certainly had some good reasons for doing it.

It made a lot of sense. And most importantly, we had the means to do it. But, you know, we've learned.

And we sought the Lord. And we had that determination inside, Lord, we will not take one step in the direction. We won't even go down to the car lot unless You give us a clear sense about it being Your will.

And, you know, we had to wait. He doesn't just throw out the answer. It took a few weeks, if I remember right, or at least a couple of weeks.

And then one day He spoke to us. And we both knew it. No, is the answer.

I don't want you to get a car. All right, well, whatever His reasons, I'll tell you what, we were rejoicing. Because we don't want to pay the price of self-will.

We've paid that price too many times. I'll give you another example, a positive example. A few months ago, we decided we wanted to go on a trip to California.

And same deal, we started praying about it. And actually, I was ready to book a flight to a certain city out there. Because we had been feeling like it was the Lord saying, yes, go ahead, go ahead and do it.

And so this one particular day, I was ready to book the flight. I had it all laid out, figured out. And all I had to do was push the button on the computer.

And I felt the Lord say no. I mean, it was so real to me. And I just backed right off.

And we went back to the drawing board on it. Because we both still had this feeling like we were supposed to go. So it didn't make any sense.

So we knew we had to go back to prayer. And we did. We went back and started praying.

And we started asking the Lord to give us some sense and give us some signs or whatever. And he did. Just little by little, he started making it clear what he wanted us to do.

Well, as it turned out, he did say we could go. He just didn't want us to fly into that particular city. He had a different plan.

And it all worked out beautifully. And the trip was such a blessing. This is what I want to leave you with.

A positive word about being in God's will, finding his will. If we would have just pushed forward on doing what we wanted to do, I'm sure we would have had some good times or whatever. I don't know.

But when God does it, man, it is such a blessing. Everything just goes the right way. When you know that you have heard from the Lord.

First of all, there's such a freedom in that. Such a peace involved with that. When you know that God has spoken to you.

You know? And then you can just go and enjoy yourself. You don't have to be all wrapped around an axle about whether you're doing the right or wrong thing and all that stuff. And we did, man.

We had a great trip. You know, here's the problem. Apostate Christians want the blessings.

And since they have the means to make it happen, they do it. They bless themselves and never even think to ask if it's God's will. They may say, God, bless my will.

You know, they may do something like that. Put your blessings on what we're going to do. They may do that.

But you know what? I've made decisions like that at times. And I want to tell you, it's always empty. You bless yourself, it's always empty.

It's always empty when you bless yourself. But if you will have the determination inside, I want God's will, whether He says yes or no. When He gives you something.

When He blesses you. It's not empty. It's wonderful.

It really is. So here's the choice of your life as it lays before you. You can go through life pursuing the things you want.

Or you can go through life pursuing God's will. You can go through life trying to bless yourself. Or you can go through life leaving the blessings up to God.

You know, the choice is really yours. How you want to live your life. Do you want to be a rebel? Do you want to go down that path? Or are you willing to consecrate yourselves to obey God in everything in your life from here on out? Those are the two paths that God is putting before you today.

Let me just close in a word of prayer. Lord, you know the reality of our hearts. That we are prone to wander.

We have such a natural disposition towards self-will and doing what we want to do. And that doesn't change overnight. But Lord, I know that I speak for many of us here today.

That it's in our hearts, God, to go against that current. It's in our hearts to obey you. It's in our hearts to live in true submission to you.

To get your mind on things that we encounter in life. To look to you for direction. Lord, it's in our hearts to be led by your spirit.

And not to be self-willed. And all of that. Lord, we don't want that.

And I just pray, God, that every sincere person here who has that desire in his heart. Lord, that in the days ahead you will just empower them to say yes to you. And to look to you for your will.

Whatever the matter, whatever the case, whatever the situation is. Lord, we thank you for the privilege of serving you and following you. In Jesus' name, amen.

I just have it on my heart to say this to you, men. Be very careful not to walk out of here with just the end of this message. You know, it was an encouragement.

But be very careful not to walk out of here with just this general, yeah, okay, I've been self-willed and I want to do God's will. Okay, where are we going to go to eat? Don't do that. But I want to tell you something.

I needed this message. We all need this message. And I want to encourage you today.

You need to consider those four lies today. You need to get before the Lord. And ask the Lord to search your heart.

And say, Lord, show me in my heart where these things are true. All four of those lies are lies that I have believed in the nine years that I've been at Pure Life Ministries. The Lord has had to deal with all four of those lies in my own heart.

And still does at times. I see those things creeping back up into my life. And the Lord has, over the nine years after graduating the program, has had to deal with me very severely on a couple of them.

You know, because maybe at one time in the program I heard it and I thought, well, yeah, Lord, that's true. And He dealt with me. Then a year or two would go by and it would rise back up in me.

And the Lord would have to deal with me again. And it would go deeper. And my commitment to allow the Lord to do that work in my heart would go deeper.

What I'm saying to you men is don't slough this message off. You need it desperately. And you need to get before the Lord and let Him search your heart.

And let Him deal with these things in your heart. Alright? Amen? God bless you. You're dismissed.

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