

I WILL

Today we are going to consider the phrase “I Will” in an attempt to launch off into a new year with excitement and enthusiasm. I want to begin with the little children’s book entitled Pig Will and Pig Won’t. It is a story about Mama and Papa Pig having two baby pigs named Pig Will and Pig Won’t. As you expect, Pig Will was agreeable and willing to do everything Mama and Papa Pig asked him to do while Pig Won’t never did. Pig Will was willing to do task around the house while Pig Won’t refused. Pig Will was willing to go to the store while Pig Won’t stayed in bed, etc. These are the two attitudes we see in life as well as in the church. It’s been truthfully said that 10% of the people do 90% of the work.

As I look around I don’t think the 10% rule applies to Blodgett but in 2020 we want to improve even more on that statistic. As we consider our involvement in the Lord’s work and our willingness to get involved, let us understand that the term “I will” is a Biblical subject. I did a word search and found that the term “I will” 197 times in the New Testament. So it is certainly a Biblical subject. In our time together I want us to consider the different attitudes people have toward getting involved.

First there is the impulsive “I will.” We see this illustrated for us in Matthew 8:19-20. ***Matthew 8:19-20 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I WILL follow thee whithersoever thou goest. (20) And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*** Here we see a scribe who was caught up in the moment and said that he would follow Jesus wherever he went without really considering the demands of such a statement. We see people like this today. They like the idea of serving Jesus but when the rubber meets the road and demands get a bit rough – they back off. When serving the Lord interferes with their personal schedule they balk at their willingness to serve.

Jesus us told a parable that we call the parable of the sower that there would be people like that in. In that story Jesus likens the word to seed that falls on different kinds of soil, which represents different kind of hearts. Two of those are described as soil where the word takes root but soon dwindles away. This is an illustration of the “impulsive I will” person. ***Luke 8:13-14 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. (14) And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.***

As a person considers serving the Lord, they need to count the cost because serving will cost you something. It will certainly cost you time and may even cost you some money. So before you jump into something, give it some thought. There are several stories told by Jesus that’s recorded in Luke 14:25-33 where this point is made. He mentions there how foolish it is for a man to start building a tower without enough money to finish it, or a military leader taking an army into battle without knowing the strength of the enemy, So it is with the servant that says “I will” without counting the cost.

Then there is the “I Will” with conditions. It’s the “I will – if” person. ***Luke 9:59-62 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. (60) Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. (61) And another also said, Lord, I WILL follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. (62) And Jesus***

said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God. In this passage we see two individuals who were willing to following Jesus but first they wanted to care for some personal matters. Now the things they wanted to do were not bad things. It's reasonable to go to the funeral of you father and it's just as reasonable to want to get you family together and bid them farewell. What they wanted to do was not sinful. The problem is the word "first." They want to put those things in front of serving the Lord and he expects to be first. This is a hard lesson for each one of us. We all at time put our personal interest in front of serving the Lord. So we have those who say I will follow Jesus so long as there are no hindrances or sacrifices. I'll help so long as it doesn't take up too much of my time. This is the "I will" person with conditions.

Then there is the "I will" person with no conditions. This is the person that we need to become. This person is willing to pay the cost and get the task done. In Luke 10 we see this in the Good Samaritan story. You remember how the religious people of the day stepped aside of an injured man on the road who had been robbed and beaten. But the Samaritan came along and cared for the man. *Luke 10:33-35 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, (34) And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. (35) And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

Here we see a man who gave time, possessions, and money. He was going somewhere but he interrupted his trip to extend help. He used his personal supply of bandages and supplies to render help and then he took the wounded man to an inn and made arrangements for the inn keeper to take care of the sounded man. This cost him some money. *And said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I WILL repay thee.* This Samaritan was willing, without conditions, to do whatever needed to be done to serve.

We see the submissive "I will" in the life of Jesus just hours before his agonizing death. In the heart retching pray that he said in the garden of Gethsemane we see this submissive attitude. *Matthew 26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I WILL, but as thou wilt.* If we would but have this mind of Christ in us.

Finally there will be the "I will not's." These are the people that outright refuse to serve the Lord. *Matthew 21:28-29 But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. (29) He answered and said, I WILL NOT: but afterward he repented, and went.* There are some that simply refuse when asked to do something. Sometimes they will say, "It's just not talent" or "It's not my cup of tea." Growth and maturity will require you to stretch a little bit and do the uncomfortable until it becomes comfortable.

Sometimes before "I will" there needs to be repentance. This was the case of the prodigal son in Luke 15. You may recall how the younger of two sons requested his inheritance from his father. Once he received it he went off into the foreign country was wasted it on riotous living. It wasn't long until he found himself destitute, hungry and lonely. It was at this point he realized his condition and made the decision to change. This illustrates what repentance really is – it is a change. *Luke 15:17-18 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with*

hunger! (18) I WILL arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.

The following verses tell how the father welcomed him home and restored him back to his rightful state as a son. This illustrates for us that before some embrace the “*I will*” attitude of serving, they first need to get their life right. This is why repentance is a prerequisite to baptism.

The late great Bobby Duncan, preacher at Adamsville, Alabama said, “*What if we had a worship service where everyone was willing to do ONLY what you are willing to do? Would we have anyone to lead prayers, singing, study?*” That’s a sobering thought isn’t it?

I’d like to add to that thought. What kind of Bible class attendance would we have if everyone attended like you? What kind of worship attendance, Sunday morning, evening, Wednesday? What kind of financial budget can we depend on if everyone gave of their means just like you?

In closing I want to read a few pages from the children’s book that I mentioned earlier entitled “Pig Will and Pig Won’t.” This little book has a message that goes along with our thoughts today. I hope you are not offending or insulted by such reading.

excerpt

What is good about the story is that Pig Won’t became a Pig Me Too. In the coming year, which will you be, Pig Will or Pig Won’t; understanding you can become Pig Me Too.

It may be that you need to make some spiritual decisions that require a public response to the Lord’s invitation. Invitation.