

Understanding God's Will #4
My Will or Thy Will

We are in the final week of the series, *Understanding God's Will*. The title for today's message brings everything into focus. Will it be my will that I seek and pursue or will it be Thy will? **My will or Thy will?**

What are we going to be about, our own desires or the desires and the heartbeat of our God? Let's start with Isaiah 14, there we see the fall of Lucifer or as the NIV calls him the Morning Star, the angel who was very beautiful, who one day decided that he was jealous of all the attention that God was getting. If we were to summarize the mission, the heartbeat of Lucifer, I believe we can capture his essence in 2 words.

I'm going to read briefly from Isaiah 14 ... you see if you can figure out what two words describe Lucifer best.

***How you have fallen from heaven,
morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth,
you who once laid low the nations!***
¹³ ***You said in your heart,
"I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne
above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.***
¹⁴ ***I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High."***

Do you see the 2 words that describe Lucifer? I will.

Now, if you compare that with Jesus, when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, if you could capture the essence of who He was in two words, I believe rather than I will, Jesus would say, Thy will. Not my will but Thy will be done is how Jesus prayed.

Lucifer wanted everyone to worship him. Jesus wanted everyone to worship God. Lucifer wanted to make himself known; Jesus wanted his father to be made known.

And that battle between light and darkness still rages on today in the heart of every Christ follower. Will it be my will or will it be Thy will? Today to conclude our four-week study, we're going to study the three phases of a surrendered life.

The first phase is when **you want what you want NOW!** How many of you would say at least in some area of your life you battle with that? You want what you want and you want it now.

We see a great example of that in Genesis 16, when this married couple wanted what they wanted and when they didn't get it, they took it into the their own hands, they wanted what they wanted and they wanted it now. **Genesis 16:1-2.**

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children (And they wanted them). But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her (She is taking things into her own hands)."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

That story captures the essence of the philosophy, we want what we want and we want it now ... and because of this decision that this couple made, that one decision has brought generations to extreme amounts of pain and hardship; because this couple went outside the boundaries of God and they wanted what they wanted and they wanted it now.

When I examine my life, I see all sorts of examples where I try to take shortcuts; I try to get what I want long before it's the right time.

How? We all do in all sorts of ways. I want a new car and I want it now.

If you are in any sort of debt, unless you have some kind of freaky emergency, chances are you surrendered to materialism, bought what you wanted before you could afford it.

I want a new house, I gotta have it now, I've got to have a bigger kitchen or I've got to have a 4-bedroom house because all we've got is a 3-bedroom house if we are having our third kid and you know you can't raise Godly children when they share a room, right?

Some say, I'm not married, but I've got physical needs and I want those needs met now.

I want that piece of cake, no, I want the whole cake and I want it now.

So many of us live with what I call the “theology of happiness”. Basically people believe that the bottom line is that we be happy and if something makes us happy lets do it, even if it's before or it's outside of God's will and if we're happy God is good and if we're not happy, forget God and forget the church and forget all that stuff because happiness is the bottom line, but the problem is as I search scripture, I see that happiness is not the bottom line instead holiness is.

God calls us to be set apart, to be different, to be pure and yet so many of us settle for what we want, when we want it and we walk out of God's perfect will.

Proverbs 19:21. *Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*

What is it going to be for you? Honestly, are you going to pursue your plans or are you going to pursue God's plans? So many people live in phase I. We want what we want and we want it now.

Phase 2, You want what God wants, but. You honestly want what your Heavenly Father wants for your life; but you've got an escape clause or you've got some fine print, or you've got your own standards that God must meet.

In fact, I would argue strongly that every single one of us has a big ol' but ... and our but is getting in the way of God's perfect will. I want what God wants; but.

You can see a powerful example of this in Mark chapter 10. Jesus was having a conversation with a really rich, young entrepreneur, and Jesus realized this guy had a problem. Now, his problem wasn't that he had a lot of money because in

scripture we never see that forbidden. The problem is when the wealth has us and this guy evidently was gripped by material possessions, he didn't own them, they owned him, because Jesus said something to him that he said nowhere else. Jesus was trying to help this guy let go of what he held so tightly ... so that he could truly become a follower of Christ.

Verse 21-22.

Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

²² At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Don't miss this. This rich young ruler wanted to follow Jesus, but, he wanted to do it on his terms. If you ask me ... the number one problem in our self-centered, consumeristic, American church, which includes us, lies in that statement ... most of us we want to follow Jesus but we want to do it according to our own terms. We want what God wants, but.

And, can I just say lovingly, you will never ever experience the best of the of God when your "but" is in the way. All through scripture you see example after example. The very first story in the Bible, Adam and Eve. We want to enjoy intimate fellowship with God but we want to eat the forbidden fruit as well.

Jonah. We want to be a worshipper of God, but I don't want to preach to those nasty Ninevites.

David, in the Old Testament, I want to be a man after God's own heart and love God, but I want to love Bathsheba too.

New Testament, Peter, I want to be a follower of Jesus, but I don't want Jesus to die, I want Him to keep living.

The disciples. We want to be a part of the kingdom of God, but we want the kingdom of God to be on earth and not in heaven.

How does it play out in our lives?

I want what God wants and you can send me anywhere to do anything God, **but** just don't send me on one of those mission trip, don't ask me to evangelize, and don't ask me to tithe. I want Your will but don't ask me for THOSE things.

DEAN'S CHALLENGE - JANET'S LETTER HERE? OTHERS?

Too many of us want what God wants for our lives, as long as we can be comfortable.

So, I'm asking myself this week what is my 'but', and the list is so long it's scary.

Get your but out of the way. Okay, it's sin. Confess it, repent of it, get cleansed. If it's a fear, let God's Word deal with it and overcome that fear. If it's a pet peeve, if it's some dream that you just want to happen and it's obviously not God's, you're gonna have to surrender that. Whatever it is, get your but out of the way because you will never know all that God wants for you as long as you have a but in your statement.

Titus 1:16, They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him.

Let's make sure THAT is not US. I pray that verse never describes us!

Phase #1, I want what I want and I want it now. Phase #2, I want God's will, but, qualifications exist.

Phase #3 is where I pray that we will all live. **This is when you want what God wants period.** No ifs, no ands, no ors, no maybes, no perhaps, no if onlys, no buts, I want what God wants period.

Now, I want you to watch when Jesus invited some people to follow Him, look at the standards that He put upon them.

Luke 9:23, Then he (Jesus) said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. That's how you qualify!

The word deny is the key. It means to reject. We reject our own will so that we can experience His will. To deny ourselves, sometimes means to refuse ourselves.

If we want to be followers of Christ ... it's not a one time event that gives us a "get out of hell free" card and then a get into heaven free card and then we go about our life as we want.

It is a fully surrendered life saying, you know what, my life no longer counts. It's not about me. I surrender. Jesus, you lead, I will try to follow. When you do that, when you don't just pray it but you live it and you mean it and it becomes you and it's no longer about you ... let me promise you, Jesus will lead you somewhere you'd never be able to go on your own.

But you can never experience His will when it's all about you or there's a but in your statement.

Look at Jesus. He's in the garden of Gethsemane hurting like I can't even explain. He's in so much pain in anticipation of what was to come that sweat mixed with blood was pouring out of his brow in agony. Jesus, for a moment, who is God and man mixed ... Jesus had a moment when He was really close to slipping into phase 2 ... He began to say, "I want what you want God, but."

Matthew 26:39 - "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me.

Sounds like Phase 2, right? 'If there is any other way I really don't want to hurt like this,' and then within the next breath, and let this encourage you ... because you'll have those moments when you say but this isn't what I want. It's that kind of moment when we see Jesus surrender and say ...

Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Not as I will because it's not about me ... it's all about You, God. Let me explain it this way ...

For years of my life, I have worked out with weights. I know what your thinking, you could never tell, right? Well, it's been awhile.

But, a regular part of my workouts was the **bench press**. And you really need a partner to bench press properly.

About once a month we would do something called a “burnout”. We do a regular routine and then at the end we just exhaust our muscles to where there's nothing left. We’d take a low weight like 135 pounds and try to do as many reps as possible.

And we just went as slow as we could, being very deliberate, feeling the pain, focusing on the muscles; and so the first 10 are easy, the next 5 are easy, the next 5 are pretty easy, and then it starts to hurt, so my spotter moves in close and does the typical guy thing. Come on, Tim, “You got this!”

So I keep going, and finally it gets a little harder and my arms start to get wobbly and so he put his hands under the bar. Come on Tim, and it's all you baby, it's all you!

At this point it's not all me, it's about 90% me, 10% spotter, but he still says “it's all you baby”. A few reps later, it's about 80% me, 20% him.

Before long, my triceps are on fire! They're shaking like you wouldn't believe. I mean, they are shot. He's like, it's all you baby, it's all you. Going up and down. Finally, I just let go. He doesn't notice because he still lifting away. It's all you baby, it's all you. I did five more reps without even having my hands on the bar. It was amazing.

In your own life, you have to come to the place where you have completely exhausted your own strength, and it becomes all God. Let me just tell you, if you're not convinced that the way of Jesus is best, keep on doing it your way.

Man, pursue it with everything you've got. Try it. Run after material things. Try to make as much money as you can. Hoard it. Consume it. Go through people. Use and abuse them for your own pleasure. Make a name for yourself.

One day your going to wake up empty because you know you are not in God's will.

If you're on that road, that is your destination and you must come to the place where you say you know what, my way is never going to get me where God wants me to go and you surrender. *Not my will, but your will.*

Let's close with this verse. **Psalm 37:4**. The Bible says, ***Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.***

What's God's will? Let me tell you. God's will is to give you the desires of your heart.

Delight in God FIRST. That means you lose yourself in Him. That means you know Him. You listen for His voice. You follow Him.

Then after you have delighted in God ... after your heart has been shaped by His heart ... then He gives you the desires of your heart.

Does that make sense? You delight in God ... He reshapes how you view the world.

Let me wrap it up this way. I'm just going to be open with you this morning.

Talk about Dean Trune weekend how he was able to discern what the one church needed by spending time in prayer. He told 2 elders that they needed to step down.

I was worried that he would come back from praying and say, Tim you need to step down. They need a new spiritual leader.

Okay. Just being honest. I did not want to show my fear ... gotta be strong for the family, suck it up, don't show weakness ... then last week 27 people responded in 2nd service ... and I left thinking it was an US thing, and not just a me thing ... but I was totally wiped out after church. I got home, went in and Charity who is struggling with sickness is sleeping. Anita checks on her, and tells her that Daddy is home, so Charity wants to come downstairs. She not usually a snuggler, but last week I got to hold her for a few hours while I watched Nascar.

I mean, I'm lost in this beautiful father/daughter moment. I felt this uncontrollable love as an earthly father for my child.

And that's when I sensed it. God has this same kind of love for me ... and I pictured Him holding me ... the way I was holding Charity and I delighted in Him and I just said, okay God, if this is the road we're going to go on, it's Your road, I will follow it. Not my will. I want to grow in You.

Invitation