

THY WILL BE DONE

Many of the things we want are not best and some are bad. I'd like to introduce you to Bob Bretail. Lives in California and has the largest collection of comic books. Over 100,000 comic books and averages 120 new comics per month. Most are displayed in a large room in his home in California, and the rest are stored in a 3 car garage. The comic books weigh more than 8.5 tons - bigger than a large elephant. If comic books average 3-5 it's easy to say he's spent more than half a million dollars on his collection. And we could get real judgy couldn't. I cannot believe you would spend that much time and money and space on comic books. But then again, judge not unless you be judged, he might disagree with your hobbies. A closet full of clothes or sports allegiance. Bob said he doesn't watch sports and if he did, watching 2 ballgames is the equivalent of reading 35 comic books. He also says this is something that draws his family together, his kids like it and his wife even catalogues the collection for him. Still is this best? I'll let you debate. I still pick the cast of characters on the Cubs over what DC/Marvel come up with. Although I think the Cubs heroes win less. Many things are not best. I've been debating the value of the TV lately.

And some of the things we want are bad. I was reading a study that correlated screen time and brain development in young children. And they found that as screen time increases so white matter in the brain decreases. If children ages 3-5 use a screen for more than the recommended 1 hour a day without parental involvement white matter decreases - and that is the important part of the brain for language, literacy, and cognitive development. Yet, how much do our young ones want screen time, parents too. I was at a basketball game this week and saw an argument between children over who could use mom's phone. I want screen time. I would love to say this dilemma is just going on in our children, but do you ever want something that is outright bad for you? I invite you to turn to your neighbor and tell them...just kidding. I always want to eat the whole bag of Jewel chocolate chip cookies. Never do I want to stop.

You've come during our series called Dangerous Prayers. Wanted to welcome you if you're new the church family - you can belong here before you behave a certain way. And something we realize about prayer is the tremendous privilege to talk to God and ask for things. The Bible says, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence." (Heb 4:16) God wants us to talk to him, promises to listen and answer. But during this series we are considering what should we talk about? And I believe a limited perspective when it comes to prayer - is to use prayer as a pipeline for what we want. God I know you hear me, I know you're Almighty. So please give to me.... And like a cosmic coke machine - I can hear it coming - wall ah! And sometimes God gives us what we wanted. And to be honest that's fun - really God you wanted what I wanted this is so great! But consider if God only gave us what we wanted? I was terrified when I saw the movie Wall-E. Because Pixar had just summed up my childhood dreams. Slurpees, loungers, video games and absolutely no work. And ahh that's all I want! But then showed me that was not best and even bad. As the guy took an epic leap just to walk again.

And what if were possible to use God like a cosmic coke machine. Then sometimes we wouldn't have what's truly best, and sometimes we would have what is really bad. At this point perhaps we should praise God for the times God said no. And when they broke up with us, when we didn't get that thing, when he not only closed the door but he put like nails in it sealing it shut. Praise God for the times he acts better than the best parent saying - nope that's not good for you.

But then the question remains. If what we want is not always best and sometimes bad, what should we want? And that is exactly the question I'd love to consider with you in these few moments together. And the basis of this discussion will be led by our Jesus. We consider him to be not only our example but more importantly our Savior. The one who is the ultimate love at Valentines. For your love might have given you flowers, a card, chocolates or candy hearts. But Jesus gave you his life, that you might truly know love. And he is praying in our lesson today and he directs us to what is truly good. Our reading is from the disciple Luke's account who was with Jesus as an eyewitness of what occurred. There it is. Can you turn to your neighbor and say, "His Will is better."

Have you ever seen the game show Let's Make a deal? People are all dressed up in silly costumes and the host is Wayne Brady. The idea is that whoever is playing has choices. You can take 1 of two envelopes. You continue to play and let's say you pick an envelope with \$500 you can keep that or take whatever is behind door #1. And the frustrating part is you never know what's behind door #1. Wayne Brady does a good job of play coy, but he doesn't let on. And not that you could play the game this way, but it would be great if you could say. You know what's in them can you pick for me. You see it better than I do. Show me which one I should pick because you know best. There are areas of life where you do this. It's why you have financial advisors, doctors, and people who know cars. You see it better so just tell me what to do.

Which leads me to the first point of why this is such a good prayer. *We should pray thy will be done because God sees everything.* He sees what is behind door #1, #2, and #3. He knows the difference between better and best. In the book of Jeremiah we hear, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (29:11) He knows now and into the future. Which is why I've come to a point where I don't even want my will, I want his for my life. Like if what is behind door number #1 is bad, burn the door and don't let me open it. And maybe you've been there to. You see it, you know it, so lead me to the right path.

But our walk can be at times frustrating. Because while many Christians have confidence in the superior will of God, they don't know always know what it is. You may even be like yes, I want God's will - what is it? Who should I marry, what car should I buy, what job should I take, and what path should I pursue? It reminds me of how leadership feels. If you've every been in a position leading a company or leading people. The best phrase I can think of for how it feels is navigating the gray. Which is to say there isn't always a clear path and the one right choice. It's gray. It be easier if it were black and white. Parenting is sometimes black and white - like don't stick your finger in the socket. Do your homework. But then gray comes which school, which neighborhood, which activities. Lord what is your will? Our lives as Christians is often gray. Lord in the myriad of options I have today what should I do.

Which brings me to a man named David. He was known as a man after God's own heart. Which means he knew what it was to look at the world, or try to at least, through God's vantage point. To trust in God's superior will. To use his life to pursue the things that pleased him. And we first see him navigate the gray when Israel was fighting the Philistines. He was bringing a lunch to the older boys who were in the army, when he hears the other side namely Goliath taunting Israel. And this is what leads David to action he says, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 sam 17:26) Now what is he concerned with? The glory and renown of God. It happened another time. He had just built for himself a great palace but looked at what God had and he said, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." (2 Sam 7:2) What is he concerned about? The glory and renown of God. So how do we what God's will is? *We pursue God's will when we pursue God's glory.* And this is what helps us navigate the many options available to us. It's what led a man named Joseph to say no to adultery - how could I do such a thing and sin against my God. What led David here against Goliath. The pursuit of God's renown and glory. So when I go somewhere - does this help me pursue God's glory or not. When I say something - does it give God glory or not. When I buy something - God's glory?

You know it's been a privilege of mine to be in a coaching network called Crosstrain. It reminds me how much we are built for community. And one of the things we do often is set goals. There are goals for ministry, personal health, spiritual development and pastoral ministry. And whenever we first set the goal the idea is to visualize the end result. As we do so we ask the question, "How will this goal help me glorify God?" So if it's working out why would the goal of working out 5x a week glorify God - well it will make me healthier and give me more energy. Why would praying for and with your wife be really good? It would help me be a spiritual leader for her and the family. Why would it be good to read my Bible everyday? Well this is my walk with God out of which my ministry is an overflow. This is my primary relationship. You can navigate a lot of gray areas through visualizing why this goal would give God glory.

I consider navigating the gray as a church. We are discussing a 2nd pastor here at Amazing Love. In a world of freedom why might this be a good Godly thing? Because of how this goal might give him superior glory. There is both excellence we can bring as we represent him, and expanded ministry we can provide for his people. We will be discussing more but there are exciting things we can do together with this choice.

But what is it that could side track us or stand in the way of pursuing God's glory? What so interesting in our lesson is what is standing in Jesus way. Jesus. It's incredible to consider that God's Son, who knew the plan said, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me." (42) And why does he say this? Why does his sweat become drops of blood or actually turn into blood as some commentators suggest and is humanly possible? Because Jesus knew what was behind door #1. Jesus knew that to do the Father's Will came at a cost. And that's true for us *Pursuing God's will comes at a cost.* That's true of David as he went up against Goliath - we have the benefit of hindsight. David didn't - imagine his anxiety going against a nation's hero as a teenage boy. That's true of Joseph and he left Potiphar's wife - he was thrown into prison right after that. It was true of Paul the great evangelist and the disciples.

At this point some might be saying wow pastor you're not selling this concept so well. That's ok. I can't sell you into anything spiritual anyway. The Spirit has to take hold of your heart, illumine your understanding, and strengthen your resolve.

But what can the Spirit work through? The Gospel of Jesus Christ. When we dwell deep in what Jesus did. That though it was a dangerous prayer he prayed anyway. Not my will be yours be done. Though he knew the cost - he goes anyway. Though he wishes the cup could be taken, he gladly accepts the Father's will. I was reading from Pastor Craig Groeschel and he put it this way and it's what I love about Jesus. "Jesus never asks us to do something he wouldn't do himself." So he goes and further than we can know or imagine. Past the Garden into the courtroom, before Pilate and to the cross. The will of the Father and the Son was that he would be the sacrifice to pay for all sin. And pay for sins he has. Not with gold or silver, but with his precious blood. If you're new to Christianity or watching online. The good news is that salvation and a right standing with God isn't about how well you pursue God's will. It's about how Jesus fulfilled the Father's will for us. A right standing with God is 100% on the shoulders of Jesus Christ and his work for us. This is the good news of the church, and the reason there is such joy. Yet we learn from our Savior.

This past week shared with me was a great story of a shoemaker. In this story the shoemaker had a dream that Jesus was going to visit him the very next day. So the shoemaker got all excited and ready - decorating his store and preparing himself to meet with God. As he was waiting an old man came to his door, wondering if he could come inside for a bit to get warm. The shoemaker let him in and saw that his shoes were worn out, so he gave him a new pair. Then he waited some more to see and old lady carrying firewood and worn out. Invited her into rest, and learned she hadn't eaten for 2 days so he made her a meal. Do you see where this is going. Finally as the day came to a close a crying child came by telling the man he had lost his way and needed to get home - so the shoemaker guided the child home. Three visitors but seemingly no Jesus. So the Shoemaker asked why he didn't come. And the response from God. I was the man with the bruised feet, the woman you gave food to eat, and the child on the homeless street.

When's the last time you realized in a world where many things do not matter - love matters. So much so he says to us that faith that pleases him is to look after orphans and widows. So much so that he tells us in the Bible that whatever we do for the least of others, we have done for him. So much so that if you sum up the whole of God's law it is love, and that is how God said people would recognize us. I can say to you confidently, *God's will for you is to love, and love matters.* Do you have opportunities to love today? Sure you do. Now here again there is freedom - you can love by giving, and love by caring. Love by serving or love by listening. All around you are endless opportunities to show love - and this is I guarantee it is God's will for you. It is ours to wake up to the people God has set around and show them love.

Because you think of all the things that come and go. You won't remember half of the cars you drove, or the houses you lived in or the vacations you went on. On your death bed you won't be asking for the trophies you won, or the certificates of achievement you got at work. No at the end of your life it will be crystal clear. You will want to have around you people you love. You will want around those who care for you. And what people will remember of you is the acts of love you shared with them. Love matters.

So why do we want thy will be done? Because I don't know what we've been talking about seems better than collecting 100,000 comic books doesn't it. What we've been talking about seems more weighty than a weekend hobby. Pursuing his will is what leads us to not bad or better, but truly best.

But what happens if this is still way too much freedom and we still get it wrong? We know to give God glory and to love other people, but man it's still kind of gray. You know here I love technology. I especially love Siri and how she directs me in traffic. And you know what she tells me she is doing when I drive the wrong way or in the wrong direction. Maybe you've been there. She re-routes. She finds a different way to the same destination. And it doesn't matter how many wrong turns I take with the destination in mind she always knows how to re-route.

Is our God better than Siri? Amen. And what we know is that *if we are pursuing God's will and take a wrong turn, he can always re-route us*. He knows the destination and how to get us there. The final destination is forever by his side, and in the meantime it's working all for our good. So boldly make plans to give him glory, plans that speak of his fame and wonder. Boldly love and don't give up on it. And though it may cost may it draw you to the cost he paid for you and remind you it's worth it. Amen.