

The Father's Will

Scripture: John 18:1-14

1When Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. **2**Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. **3**So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. **4**Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" **5**They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. **6**When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. **7**So he asked them again, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." **8**Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go." **9**This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken: "Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one." **10**Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) **11**So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

12So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. **13**First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. **14**It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

Context: We've arrived at the climax of the story of the life of Christ. In this account, Jesus is arrested and will be put to death less than 24 hours later. The events that we will read about that took place over those three or four days are the center of human history. This plan of God, to reconcile sinful human beings to Himself, is awesome. It is drastic! Jesus Christ, God Himself, died on the cross so that you and me, human beings, could know Him. It is the greatest act of love conceivable. Romans 5:8 says, "but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." 1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit." God the Father and God the Son are both seen in these verses as putting together this plan, so that we could be saved. In other Gospels we are told of Jesus's struggle as a man asking God the Father to take this cup from Him, sweat pouring from Him as drops of blood. Though Jesus as God the Son knew and planned to go to the cross for us, Jesus in His humanity did cry out to God the Father. Yet, He said, not my will, but yours be done.

Jesus has already had His struggle with what will happen, and as Jesus is arrested, beginning the way to the cross, let's look at the different characters in these verses.

- Judas- Judas spent three years with Jesus. He followed Him, saw all of His miracles. Yet, he betrayed Him. Judas recruited 600 well-trained soldiers to come and arrest Jesus. Obviously Judas was familiar with the power of Jesus. He intentionally went, ensured there were enough soldiers, at least in his mind, and brought them to a meeting place. This is treachery to the greatest degree.

- But notice the response of Jesus; He came forward. He did not run, hide, or stand back. He had submitted Himself to God the Father, to the plan that He had all along.
- The soldiers- After saying they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth, heard Him say “I am He” (ego eimi in greek) I am; the name that God used for Himself. And they drew back and fell to the ground. Why? John does not give us an answer. But Jesus is God, and He was not hiding His identity as God. The soldiers either saw something or heard something that caused them to draw back and fall down - and whether knowing or not they were doing Him homage - for every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- Peter- You can never tell what will happen with Peter. He says the greatest things, and he says the worst things. He does amazing things, and he does inexplicable things. Here we see his zeal and passion for Jesus. He loves Jesus and wants to protect Him! He said he would lay down his life for Jesus. That’s a good description of what he is doing; he is about to go up against 600 soldiers! He got as far as cutting off one ear.
 - He is rebuked by Jesus. Jesus asks him, “Shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?” Jesus was ready to take the cup. He had worked through that struggle in the garden and had set His face toward the cross. Peter was trying to do good, but was in fact going against what Jesus had set out to do. He was going against the will of God. As Jesus requested, the soldiers let the disciples go, and took Jesus away.
- Annas- the father-in-law of Caiaphas, whom John reminds us said that it is better that one man should die for the people. Caiaphas was worried about the Romans coming and taking away the nation. He was willing to sacrifice Jesus for his own ends.

The crux of this passage is Jesus saying to Peter, shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me? Think about a movie - the bad guys, way outnumbering the good guys, come for the final battle, and the good guys win! That is what Peter was looking for!

But, we see something different here. We see Jesus, God and man, submitted to the eternal plan of making a way of salvation. So let’s work this out for us today.

- First, understand His will. Not so much what exactly the will of God the Father is, but understand what He is about. Out of Who He is we can know what He desires.
 - God loves you. He wants good for you. Romans 8 says this, “31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”
 - God wants good for you. He wants good for you more than you want it for yourself. He is a good Father. As Jesus points out, if a child asks for bread would his father give a stone? Or if he asked for fish would the father give him a snake? How much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him?
 - Foundational to knowing and doing the will of God, is to know Him, to know His love, and that His desires for you are good.
- Then, submit to His will.

- Jesus submitted to the will of God, as the soldiers came to the garden. He did not run. He did not fight it, as Peter did. He submitted Himself to the will of God.
 - Let's do the same. You may be facing a health struggle, hurting from recent events, or questioning why God has allowed certain things to happen. Remember the first principle - that God loves you and wants good - and submit to His will.
 - One way God's will manifests itself is that you and I are living through this COVID-19 pandemic. Even as those living 100 years ago encountered the will of God in their lifetime to live through the Spanish Flu, we have been given to live through this. We don't know how it will turn out - but know that this is the will of God, for you to live through it, for His glory and your good. This has been a struggle for me. I've wanted to just go back to normal. I've longed for all the masks and restrictions to just go away. But, I need to see this not as a roadblock in life, but as a way that He is at work in His kingdom, and to be submissive to Him that He may work in me through it.
 - Submit to His will, make the most of where He has you, knowing that God promises in His Word to work all things for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.
- Finally, pursue the Father's will. And while this doesn't come directly from the passage, it is borne out of the life of Jesus Christ as He lived on this earth, and as we've looked at His life over the last year. Jesus lived every moment of every day according to the will of God the Father. He was pursuing the will of God the Father every moment of every day.
 - He did it by loving God with all His heart and mind and soul and strength, and loving His neighbor as Himself, fully and completely.
 - His life was dedicated to the glory of God. He revealed God by caring for others, by proclaiming the Good News of God and His love, by showing in His life what it meant to live a life of love.
 - So pursue God's will. It is easy to think of God's will as what we should do in the big questions of life - where to live, what job to pursue, who to marry. These of course are important questions. But God's will is revealed to us in His Word, through His good commands.
 - It is God's will that you know Him. If you have not believed on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for your only hope to know God, that is what He wants from you. Turn from your self, your sin, and turn to Him.
 - Do you know Him already? Pursue His will for you by loving Him. How is it that you need to love Him better? How is it that you sense His prompting to love Him more, in ways that maybe you've been neglecting? Maybe you need to do something you don't want to. Maybe you need to stop doing something you are doing. To love Him better. To love Him more. To do His will.
 - Pursue His will for you by loving others. How is it that you need to love others better? How is it that you sense His prompting to love others more, in ways that maybe you've been neglecting? Again, maybe it is something to give up. Or it might be something to begin.

Follow Jesus by submitting yourself to the will of the Father

We're living through a difficult time. Let's look to God and His Word. Let's look to the Lord Jesus. Let's let Him carry us. And let's remember that Jesus took our sin upon Himself, that we might know God.

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