

It must be God's will

Shepherd's Grace Church

January 31, 2016

- This is the middle of a three week series on words we offer as comfort...they seem like scripture but they really are not. They are not even very good expressions of comfort!
- Last week we talked about "everything happens for a reason" and "God helps those who help themselves—by the way, did anybody find that in Hezekiah 6: 21? I haven't had a chance to look!
- Things don't happen for a reason. We would like to think they do but sometimes things happens. In our generation we say, "s_ _ _ happens" (No, Ashyton! You can't say that!) Say, stuff happens. I know the other is funnier! But you'll get me in a lot of trouble!
- The truth is there are accidents that happens. God is not a micromanager. If he were, we would all put on the same color t-shirts every morning and every one would wear loose fit jeans—cause let's face it, not everyone looks good in tight fitting jeans!
- Everything does not happen for a reason. There is no place in scripture where we can find that but "every one happens for a reason!" You can look that up in Jeremiah 2. Have you found Hezekiah 6 yet? Go ahead, look up Jeremiah 2. God says, "While you were still in your mother's womb I knew you. I created you and formed you. I have a plan for you, and it is a plan to do good for you and not to bring you harm!"
- Everyone happens for a reason. God does not form and make us and leave or abandon us! God has a plan for each person and part of that plan is to make all people aware of who God is. You can find that in Matthew 28 at verse 16. That is our mission! It is our work! It is God's will! **Remember that! We will say more about it later!**
- "God helps those who help themselves?" That does sound biblical doesn't it? Has anyone found Hezekiah 6: 21 yet? The truth is, there is no Hezekiah book in the Bible! There is also no place in the Bible where God says he helps those who help themselves. We say this to people who are looking for a reason to go on, to do things they want to do but they just can't find the reason to do them! That ever happen to anyone—anyone here a procrastinator? Do you put things off till the last minute or sometimes just say, "What's the use, what I do won't matter anyway?"
- "God helps those who help themselves is supposed to cause us to want to get off our butts (You should probably not say that either) anyway, it is supposed to motivate us to do our part so God can do God's part! The problem is, it just doesn't work that way!
- The truth is, there is nothing we can do on our own to make any difference in our salvation or in helping us have a better relationship with God! All God is interested in is having a better relationship with us so we can have salvation! **Let me say that again...All God is interested in is having a better relationship with us so we can have salvation!** That is God's will. **Remember that! We will say more about it later!**
- God knows we are unworthy of his help. He knows we are unable to keep from committing sin and doing wrong so God is not going to help us help ourselves to more mistakes! Instead, God wants to set us free from our mistakes by forgiving them and renewing a right relationship with him. We can't do that on our own and we can't help ourselves do that so God does it for us. That is called Grace! It is God's riches at Christ's expense. G.R.A.C.E. God does for us what we cannot and more correctly will not do for ourselves.
- We don't just sit back and enjoy the ride. Our work in all this is to recognize God's Grace and say thank you to Him for it! That's called worship! That's why we are here today!
- So then, what's so bad about saying, "It must be God's will?"
- To think about this let's look at what the Bible says about God's will. The clearest statement I have ever heard about God's will is found in John 6. That's not Hezekiah 6 but John 6. Let's read it. It starts at verse 37.
- ³⁷Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; ³⁸for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose

nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.” (John 6: 37-40)

- While we let that sink in, let’s take a minute to pray.
God, there are so many of our friends who need help with stuff that is hurting them. We want to have the right words to say to them. The problem is, we don’t know what those words are so we make up words and try to tell people they are your words. Today, help us to see that there are ways we can help and support our friends that don’t involve words and do lead to your will being done. Bring us closer to each other today and bring us a little closer to you. Let our words and our thoughts be pleasing to you today and remind us that you are our Rock! Remind us that we can always trust you! Thanks for being our God! You are Awesome! In Jesus’ name we pray! Amen!
- So, someone has a car wreck where no one gets hurt. We say, “It must have been God’s will.” We might be trying to say, “I hope a lesson was learned in this.” “I hope the driver learned to be more careful.” “I hope the city will fix that part of the highway.” What we say is, “It must have been God’s will.”
- We want to make the person feel better by taking the responsibility off their shoulders and putting it somewhere else. The problem with that is that people need to take responsibility. Sometimes people make mistakes and they really only learn from their mistakes when they admit they are their mistakes.
- It is not always possible to make a person feel better. Sometimes our job is to make a person feel cared for!
- Remember I said we would talk about Matthew 28 today? Well, here it is. God has given us a job to do. He has told us to go to all the world...that’s all the world...that’s the muslims, the blacks, the browns, the yellows, the reds and yes, the whites...all the world and make disciples of every person. Not all of us get to preach to them! God knows I don’t want to do this every day! But all of us get to live with them! All of us get to act like Jesus wants us to act with them. All of us get to care for them! All of us get to love them! All of them!
- People don’t care how much we know until they know how much we care. We show our care when we let them know we have done stuff we are sorry for or have had to learn lessons from and we are no better than they are! Sure we feel terrible at the time we do the dumb stuff, but our parents don’t kick us out of the house or send us off to Australian prisons. Australian prisons might not be so bad now though. It’s summer down there you know! Anyway, we were forgiven and while we remember how bad we felt, we also remember unconditional love. That’s how we show we care.
- We don’t offer words, we offer to walk with them for awhile and let them know we are their friends! Let them know we will be their friends no matter what!
- What does all this have to do with God’s will? Good question! Have you ever thought about that word, “will?” What does “will” mean
- One way we use the word is to ask a question. We say, “will you do something?” Will you go to the dance with me? Will you walk in the cancer walk with me? We say “will you” instead of something else. What else could we say? We could say, “Can you?” Can you go to the dance with me? Can you walk in the cancer walk with me?
- What is the difference between will and can? Can asks, “are you able to?” “do you have the ability to?” Of course, I can go to the dance with you. I am able to go. I don’t have any other plans. Of course I am able to walk in the cancer walk. My legs are not broken. It is only a couple of miles. I have the ability!
- “Will” on the other hand leaves a choice. Will allows you to think about what you really want. “Will you go to the dance with me?” When someone asks that, I can think about it. I can wonder if I really want to spend time with that person. I can wonder if I want to be seen at the dance with that person. “Will” gives the person you are asking some options. “Can” limits a person’s response to yes or no. “Will” invites an openness.
- Another way we use the word “will” is in a legal sense. People often leave a will to let others know how to let others know what they want done with their property. “Will” used this way is a kind of instruction. A will tells people what we want.

- I said earlier I would talk about what God wants. I said, "All God is interested in is a better relationship with us so we can have salvation." Now, I want to clarify that. The thought I used is not my thought but that of John who wrote the Gospel of John. He said," ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day." These are Jesus' words and they express the "will" of God. They say what God wants!
- All God wants is for us to have a better relationship with God so we can have salvation. God says that in John 3: 16. For God so loved the world! John helps us understand it in chapter one. "The Word was with God and the word was God and the Word came into the world so we could know God!"
- Can God force us to know him? Of course, but that isn't the way God works. God gives us freedom. God gives us choice. God's word is "God's will." God says, "will you believe me?" Will you trust me? God could say "can" but that would be different. God does not dictate or give us a yes or no question. God wants us to think, to reason it out, to choose.
- God's will is not to be forced on us but to be made known so it can be chosen by us. That's why the prayer in unison this morning is so important. It invites us to be open to new information. It invites us to realize every day that God gives us a choice.
- When someone is hurting or something bad has happened to them we can say "it must have been God's will," and they can accept that with us, but maybe it would be better for them and us to simply say, " I love you and care about you. Let's stay together for awhile and see if we can see what God has in store for us!"
- Remember God's will is for us to choose Him and to be redeemed and raised up on the last day!" I guess that must be God's will! Amen!

Dear God,

Today we come to you and those who are speaking are often silent. We are watching. We are learning. We are waiting for our time. Sometimes we get a chance to practice. Sometimes we get a chance to imagine what it would be like for us to have responsibility. Sometimes we get a chance to dream about how we might do things differently.

Worship isn't practice though. Worship isn't a dream. What we do here, what we say here is real, God! We may not do and say things in the same way as others but our hearts and our hopes are true. We have come to worship today and we pray that you will hear our voice!

We pray as those who taught us. We give you thanks for them, for their willingness to spend time with us. We thank you for their faith and we pray that you will strengthen ours! Thank you, God for letting us worship you today!

Thank you for the chance we have to do real work that you have given us. Thank you for sending us on mission trips so we could see the struggles other people have and help them even in just a small way. More than that, thank you for letting us see the different ways others try to help. We do learn from those experiences. Maybe some day we can even use those lessons to help right here in our home town.

There is so much to do here, God. There are people here who are hungry and homeless and cold and afraid. You have given us the chance to see these same things in other places and to see ways that other people are working together to love those who are in need. Help us to use what we have learned to do your work here at home.

Today, let us realize that we still have so much to learn. Some of us are young but we are eager to serve. Some of us are older, like Wanda or pastor Jack. Even they are still eager to serve! Help us all to work together, to walk with those in need and love them. Today we pray that we can show your love to them! Let us serve you while we learn to serve you more.

Let us also remember those who serve us today. There are so many. They are not much older than we are and they have been willing to put themselves in danger for us. They are fighting so we can be free to believe as we want. They do not even know us and they are willing to risk their lives for us! Keep them safe today. Return them home safely to us and let us say thank you to them. Then let us remember to say thank you to You!

Help us also to remember that You tell us we need to pray for our enemies. God, those who would hurt these young people would also hurt us. They would say bad things about us! They would point guns at us! They would keep us from living the life You are calling us to live. It would be easy to hate them. It is harder to love them! Today we pray for them. Keep them safe and let them go back to their families so they can be loved and cared for too.

Then, when You are ready, God, bring us all together and let us put down our weapons. Let us join together our arms and arm in arm, let us walk to a place where you lead us. There, let us learn from you to put aside our differences and live together. Let us learn to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks. Together let us learn to quit doing war. Together let us learn to live in peace. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen!

Now, together let us pray the words Jesus taught us!

Children's Time

Can and Will

Chris—

Will the children please come up to the front?

Chris—

Chance and I are glad to see all of you today! We hope you have had a great week!

Chris—

Chance, can you say hello to the kids?

Chance—

Yes

Chris—

Chance, I said, "Can you say hello to the kids"

Chance—

I answered, "Yes"

Chris—

Can you do it then?

Chance—

Yes

Chris—

Will you say hello!

Chance—

Why didn't you say that in the first place? Hello, Kids!

Chris—

I did say that!

Chance—

No, you said, "Can you say hello and I answered your question." I can say hello. I said yes.

Chris—

You know what I mean!

Chance—

I know I answered the question you asked. I know you wanted me to say hello, but I like to have a choice.

Chris—

I guess we all like to have a choice. Kids, there are lots of things we can do. When our parents ask us to do them, we should. But it is good to know that we have choices. God wants us to have choices so we can know there are things we should do and things we should not. God likes it when we choose Him. He likes it cause he knows we don't have to!

When we come to church and pray and sing and laugh, God knows we have chosen to love Him. Amen!

Chris—

Chance, can you pray?

Chance—

No

Chris—

OK. I will!

God, there are many things we can do. Some let us love you! Some cause you pain. Today, let us love you more!

In Jesus' name. Amen!