

Sermon Draft

Text: John 10:22–30

Sermon: “God’s Will and Wishes”

What’s one word that we don’t have to teach our children? “NO”

Because of our fallen human nature we learn to be inwardly focused and selfish at a young age. It doesn’t get any better as we grow up.

Look around us it’s all about what I want, my will not God’s. Yet we pray as Jesus did not my will, but your will be done. So maybe the question we should be asking more often is this God’s will?

In our text from John’s gospel, Jesus is aware that his final confrontation with his enemies and his appointment with the cross are on the immediate horizon. He is confident and prepared. He seeks to prepare his disciples and further instill their confidence in him and his gracious promises. This is always timely and makes this Gospel applicable to many seasons of the Church Year. It certainly is in accord with the purpose of John’s Gospel as stated in 20:30–31:

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

We all have hopes and dreams. The Bible says that God desires all people to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).

Today’s Gospel shares an encounter of certain religious people and Jesus and their different hopes and strategies for the expenditure of one’s time here on earth. Which do you wish for? What do we want? Do we often ask God for something and of course know how we want him to answer? Do the words “thy will be done” stick in our throat or maybe we just don’t include them at all because we really want or desire what we are asking. We’ve all been there but let us resolve to humble ourselves before God and recognize his will and wishes to be the best for us and all of his people. Let God’s will and wishes be done in our lives. Jesus’s enemies had a problem with this also.

Jesus' enemies once again confront and challenge him with their will and wishes. They knew that God's will, which they saw in Christ but they weren't to happy with it because they had made quite a life for themselves, usually on the backs and wallets of others. Jesus' message, God's message would cut into their livelihood and power.

God's will put them in a bad place and on the wrong side. So, they surrounded Jesus, attempting to intimidate him. His message was resonating with the people. They challenge Jesus and try to trap him into saying something they can use against him in a court of law. They knew Jesus' will and teaching are different from theirs. They did not want to repent but rather to maintain their self-importance.

They pretended to ask for information. They act like they are interested but Jesus knows better. All they wanted was to discredit Jesus and his will for people. They had tried this before with him and his followers, like in John 9:22 after Jesus healed the blind man, the blind man's parents were afraid because the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be Christ would be put out of the

synagogue. All these attempts are precursors to their questioning at Jesus' trial.

“If you are the Christ, tell us. But he said to them, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe.’” (Luke 22:67–68) and *“And the high priest stood up and said, ‘Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?’ but Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, ‘I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.’”* (Matthew 26:62–64).

They sought to teach rather than be taught. They sought to be their own lords rather than submit to God. Their wishes were focused on this passing world instead of the eternal kingdom God offers.

The Gospel of Jesus is challenged still today, both inside and outside the church, because of wills and wishes different from God's.

The Gospel is challenged and replaced with other wishes of what to do with one's life. Some promise temporal healing. Some guarantee material prosperity. Some seek to impose their will through pressure, legislation, or court actions (for example, abortion or same-sex marriage). Many trust their own will rather than the source by which God gives his Gospel: the Bible.

They may pay lip service to the authority of the Bible, but they read into the Scripture their own ideas, or they ignore major Bible teachings and emphasize minor ones. They may discount the Bible altogether. They prefer their preconceived wishes and ideas to the revelation of God.

But what the Father wills and wishes his Christ to do for us, no one can foil. Jesus' enemies not only disobey God, but they try to snatch us out of the Father's hands too. But Jesus shepherds us through adversity. He does not stand behind us and drive us like a ranch hand does for cattle. He goes before us and cares for us like a shepherd tends his sheep. That means laying down his life for the sheep!

Jesus assures us of our victory in and through him. He promises eternal life. He guarantees us protection from enemies who would snatch away this gift. He speaks as *“very God of very God.” “I and the Father are One.”*

As God, he knows better than we or the world what’s best for us. As God, he loves us and even his enemies more than we could ever understand. As God, he has power to do his will wiser, more loving than we or the world could do.

The hostility of the world against the will of God will continue until our Lord Jesus Christ brings human history to its conclusion and inaugurates his eternal kingdom. We, the people of the Church of God, will be subject to intimidation, humiliation, and even apparent defeat as the world seeks to impose its will and wishes on us. This should not surprise us.

Our Lord and leader experienced these same things, and he has warned us of what we, too, will experience in this world. But Jesus has proven that “God’s Will” will be done and assures us that we will share in that gracious will. Thus, we can confidently proclaim with Martin Luther, **“Were they to take our house, Goods, honor, child, or spouse, Though life be wrenched away, They cannot win the day. The Kingdom’s ours forever!”** (LSB 657:4).

Let us always pray “Thy will be done” with joy and confidence, for God wishes for us that which ***“no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined”*** (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Amen