

Series: Death and Resurrection: Why Jesus Had to Die

Sermon: The Garden – Not My Will, but Yours Be Done

Text: Luke 22.39-46

Intro

In our sermons right now we are following Jesus from the upper room to the empty tomb in a series we are calling Death and Resurrection. And what I know is that if you don't get your head and heart around what is recorded in these 3 chapters, then nothing else you do in the Christian life really matters. In fact, this right here is the pinnacle of Christianity. It's what the whole Old Testament was pointing to and the rest of the new testament is looking back on. It's the mountain top. You climb a mountain; you rest at the top & soak it in. The gospels are the mountain top of scripture. And the death & resurrection are the highest lookout. So we pause here & look for a while. Today's passage is Luke 22.39-46. Gonna read it in its entirety right now.

39 He went out and made his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. 40 When he reached the place, he told them, "Pray that you may not fall into temptation." 41 Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and began to pray, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me — nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

43 Then an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. 44 Being in anguish, he prayed more fervently, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. 45 When he got up from prayer and came to the disciples, he found them sleeping, exhausted from their grief. 46 "Why are

you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray, so that you won't fall into temptation." -- Luke 22:39-46 (CSB)

Not my will, but yours be done. That's the sermon today. The will of self - submitting to the will of God. This is the Christian life in a prayer. I'm going to do 3 things here.

1. I'm going to **walk through this passage** and show you what it means. Just verse by verse. Hopefully in a way that if you do it at home you'll start getting meaning on your own.
2. Talk about what has to happen to align our will to God's will
3. **Walk around the arenas of your life** to show you what it means to put this prayer into action.

Warning: praying this prayer – will eventually impact everything in your life. This prayer has changed my life. It changed my career trajectory, it changed my marriage, it continues to shape how I parent, it shapes my work-ethic. It is shaping my dreams for my future. I cannot escape this prayer. I have times where everything in me doesn't like this prayer and yet I've experienced so much of the goodness of God from it, I keep coming back to it.

So let's look at it, see what has to happen to align our will to God's will, and I'm gonna get up in your business for a bit.

39 He went out and made his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.

Alright Jesus left dinner. He's going out to the Mount of Olives.¹ A mountain on the east side of the city kind of overlooking Jerusalem. Several OT references to this mountain. Including one in Zechariah 14 that says this is where the Messiah will stand on the day of the Lord. And the garden where he goes is at the foot of this mountain. The garden is called Gethsemane which we know from Matthew's gospel.

This holy place. This encampment, is kind of like his spot to talk with the Lord. Which aint a bad idea for you to find a spot where you can pray to the Lord each morning. Maybe your couch, maybe a kitchen table, wherever. Wherever and whenever it is, you need a "usual" place you go to talk with the Lord.

40 When he reached the place, he told them, "Pray that you may not fall into temptation."

Pray that you may not fall into temptation. Ok here's the deal. Both the disciples AND Jesus are going to be subject to temptation here in the garden. And a part of knowing & following God's will is knowing there is an enemy out to tempt you AWAY from it. So we need to talk about this for a second.

The disciples are starting to get a sense that Jesus is going to die. Remember the last supper? That like just happened. And Jesus made it pretty clear he is going to die. Well, when the leader you've pledged your life to tells you he's going to

¹ 2 Samuel 15.32 – a place of worship for King David. This thing sits above Jerusalem on the east side of the city. Ezekiel 11.23 – Glory of the lord

die...that shakes you. So, understandably the disciples are shaken. And there is a message to us here that a real enemy exists who loves to strike at us when our circumstances start to get shaky. Like – maybe God isn't real after all. Jesus knows the disciples are vulnerable right now. So what does he tell them to do? PRAY. That's his command. **Because our weapon against the enemy is not strength, but instead it is weakness. It is dependence on God.** And I cannot stress this enough because sometimes we Christians do everything we can to grit your way out of temptation. Everything except depend on God to bring us out. I know I have.

Some of the silliest practices I've ever heard of are Christians trying to outwit temptation on their own strength apart from God's help.

- Delete my Instagram account and that will keep me from the temptation to comparison.
- Don't hold hands...that will keep us safe from one another.
- Or guys will wear a rubber band around their wrist and if they feel tempted they are supposed to snap the rubber band against their wrist. Like that's going to snap them out of temptation. 9th grade youth group was just a bunch of guys snapping their wrists all day.

Look I'm actually a believer in smart discipleship. Like If your head is made of butter, keep it away from the fire. BUT, trying to outsmart temptation APART from actively seeking God's help is actually pretty dumb.

leaves Jerusalem and goes up to this spot. Zech 14.4 – The Messiah will stand on the Mount of Olives on the day of the coming of the Lord.

It's like trying to put out a forest fire with a water gun

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION ALONE WILL NOT KEEP YOU FROM SINNING! So change your behavior YES, but more than that...You need **desire change & you need God's help**.

- New desires – You can't just stop desiring. That's the problem with discipleship just being "STOP." You have to change the direction of your desire. We were made to desire God. Ps 16.11. And when we see his love for us...man it changes us. This is why every week I tell you to abide in his love. Because it will change your desires. Instead of just saying no to sin because its bad...your time will be spent saying YES to God because he is good. You won't be backing away from sin; you'll be walking towards God. More on that in a minute.
- God's help – God's spirit. God's power.

Go to God and ask him to keep you from temptation. What Jesus is telling them to pray here is no different than the same prayer he told them in the Lord's prayer. Luke 11.4 – Do not bring us into temptation. God, we need you. We need you to deliver us.

Sometimes Christians who deal with temptation to sin think it's a sign that they must not be saved. Like maybe your salvation didn't fully take. Listen to the apostle Paul. He knows what you are feeling. He's felt it. People in his churches felt it.

3 No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation

he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it. -- 1 Corinthians 10:3

He's saying hey man, I know you are thinking you are the first Christian to have ever dealt with this kind of temptation. But that's just not true. There have been 2000 years of messed up Christians who have dealt with all kinds of sin. Even really dark stuff. It's not unusual. Temptation comes. Testing comes. And when it does, the reminder to you RIGHT there is HEY, GOD is faithful. He will not let you be overcome if you will submit to him. And he will give you a way out.

So basically I'm saying the Christian response to temptation is **STOP, DROP, & ROLL**. When temptation comes on you... Stop everything, drop to your knees in prayer & in the power of the holy spirit roll on outta there.

Lemme say this and then keep moving – Because of Jesus...man or woman of God...you can have victory over that sin. That is not some sappy hallmark sentiment - that is biblical truth.

You stay close to Jesus and you stay on your knees in prayer. You stay in community where others know you so well they know your sin patterns. And man God is faithful. Romans 8.11 says the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. That's power. And I want you to go into that battle this afternoon with that HOPE.

- You feel like you've tried everything and I'm telling you PRAY. Get others to Pray. FAST & Pray. Man get vigilant in your PRAYER life.

- I want you to have hope against that temptation to FEAR...that feels overwhelming. But I'm telling you, you have not been given a spirit of fear but one of power, love, and sound judgment. God will provide a way out of the temptation the enemy brings on you. That WAY OUT is weakness. It's dependence on God instead of independence from God. Make your determined effort to be a determined effort to PRAY.
- Get your d-group set a time on your phones to pray for one another. Start asking each other questions about temptation.
- PRAY ON THE SPOT
- That is strength through weakness.

Ok let's keep going.

41 Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and began to pray,

Ok get ready. Jesus. God the son...is about to pray to God the father. Ya'll we are being invited in to something really holy here. And there is a reason for it. There is a reason God put this private prayer in the bible for us to read it. So that we will WORSHIP at what it means for us and then follow Jesus in it.

42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me — nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

Father — Jesus is still submitting himself to God the father. Even though he is God, equal with God John 1 tells us. This

prayer is offered to the Father, through the Spirit, by the Son. It is an incredible moment of humility. One we should marvel at. And rejoice in. That even God the son is submitted to God the father.

IF you are willing — I gotta admit this part is a mystery to me. Because Jesus knows the will of the father and yet is submitted to the will of the father and is asking the father for another way. And I think in the providence of God what is happening here is that **Jesus is modeling for us submission to the father no matter the cost.** Throughout the gospels the relationship Jesus describes himself having with God the father is one of both COMPLETE unity...and we are like ok they are one and the same...and then one where he is completely submitted as a son is to a father. And THIS RIGHT HERE is a mystery. **You can't explain it other than to say they are one in essence and yet distinct in persons.** And really smart people been trying to explain that for 2k years.

Take this cup from me² — I want you to hear a freedom there in Jesus' words. It is OK to ask God to take away your suffering. It is ok to ask God to take away your pain. It is ok to ASK GOD FOR SOMETHING! We are children. His children! He loves you. He wants you to come and ask him for things. What makes this prayer so powerful to me is that it holds 2 together the RIGHT AND GOOD practice of asking God to alleviate suffering. AND the Right and Good desire to submit to the will of God. Ya'll this cup was no joke. Isaiah 51 calls this cup the wrath of God. Poured out against sin. Not just against one

² It is clear from the OT that the taking of the cup denotes that Jesus took upon himself the wrath of God (Is 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15, 17, 28; 49:12; Lam 4:21; Ezek 23:31-33; Hab 2:16; Zech 12:2)

person's sin. Against all sins of all mankind for all time. Every sin is an injustice towards God. And God in his patience and lovingkindness has not brought the punishment for all sin onto us. I mean just think about the things you did & you THOUGHT before church today that were not in line with God's word.

- Used to say the road to church is where the devil lives. We'd get in arguments and it's like 6am and I'm like why are we even talking at all!? All those sins...plus all of them from what you did last week. Plus, all those you did & thought during COVID in isolation. Plus, all the others. Plus, everyone else's for all time. **And all the righteous punishment God, because he is a God of Justice, MUST hand down in response to sin...He puts it ALL on Jesus. THAT is the cup Jesus is saying...please let it pass from me.**
- *EXAMPLES OF SIN: There was a holocaust, there was a slave trade, there was a harsh word spoken, there was pornography viewed.*

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.

Ok. That's the crux of the prayer I want you to see. Not my will, but yours be done. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Not my will, but yours be done. That's the prayer that has changed my life and it will change yours if you will commit yourself to pray it.

Your will – It's your hopes & dreams and the plans you make for them. It's the things you want and the plans you make to get them.

Courtney and I just got an up to date will. I encourage you to do that if you haven't. And our will is what WE WANT to

happen if we die. It's the legal provision to make our desires into a reality. Like we divide up all .6 acres among our 4 kids equally.

And Jesus is saying right here...Not my will – I don't want to suffer...but MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY SUFFERING – IS YOUR WILL. More important than my life – Is your will. IF Jesus' will and the father's will conflict, Jesus is submitting to the father's will. Not my will, but yours be done.

43 Then an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him.

Man this is just like when Satan tempted him in the wilderness. The angels are submitted to God the son. And while I do think this is unique because of the unique suffering Jesus was going into...I do not think angels have stopped serving the purposes of God. They continue to carry out God's purposes now as does the very Spirit of God who prays to God the father on our behalf when we pray. This is how much God loves you. If he says no, he will supply strength for you to walk in his NO.

44 Being in anguish, he prayed more fervently, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.

His anguish drove him into deeper prayer. His anguish over the certainty of the cup of wrath made him all the more desperate for closeness to the father. What a model for us. Suffering should INCREASE dependency, increase worship, instead of decrease.

45 When he got up from prayer and came to the disciples, he found them sleeping, exhausted from their grief. 46 "Why are

you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray, so that you won’t fall into temptation.”

This repeated command is a big alarm to us that the way to fight against temptation is prayer. Strength through weakness. Through dependence. Sleepy Christians trusting in their own strength are always the ones the enemy takes out first. So stop drop & roll.

Ok that’s our passage. Now, I told you the next thing we’d do is talk about how to align your will to God’s will.

Believe he gave his whole life for your whole life

What I cannot believe...is that our God doesn’t just call us to obey him. Which he has every right to do! He’s God. But he actually goes first. And he goes farther. See Jesus took the penalty for our sin. The full wrath of God...so that when we face death, we only face a shadow of it. I’ve heard it explained like the difference between getting hit by a truck and getting hit by the shadow of the truck. Because of Christ, death is but a shadow. It’s sting is gone. Because of what Christ has done.

Listen this verse over in 1 John captures the Christian life to me.

19 We love because he first loved us. -- 1 John 4:19

The power, the motivation, and the model for love...it all comes from believing he loved us first. He went first. I need you to hear that. He is not asking you to go where he hasn’t gone. If I get a tattoo in my life, it’s probably going to be this verse. Our love of God – our willingness to submit to God’s

will – we do it because HE FIRST LOVED US. When you didn’t love him...he loved you.

And I just need to say that to you here today or watching online or listening to this because a friend sent it to you. **God is not waiting on you to act right to love you.** Jesus went to the cross in full knowledge you would run away from him. In full knowledge you would need the forgiveness and new life he offers. He said not my will, but yours be done. And God’s will was to give his own son over to death so that YOU could have new life. He is not waiting on you to act right to love you. HE LOVES YOU. The gift of God’s love is there for you to receive.

And when you abide...John 15.9...when you abide in his love...you will begin to see that his ways are better than your ways. That his will, even when it feels like death, is actually LIFE to you. And here’s what is so awesome – when you receive his love for you...your desires will change. You will start to love what he loves. And then your will...yours hopes and dreams and plans to achieve them...will be synced up with God’s will. You will want what God wants. And prayers will start to get answered just like you prayed them because you are loving what God loves and asking for the glory of the God YOU KNOW & LOVE to be made visible in this world!

You won’t believe his will is better than yours until you believe he loves you more than you even love yourself. Pride works one of two ways...either you think you are so good on your own you don’t need his love OR you think you are so unworthy that you have to PROVE you deserve his love. BOTH

are pride. Because both assume you know better than God. You do need God. But you can't prove yourself to him. His salvation is the one thing you can't live without, it's the one thing you are not entitled to, and yet the one thing he offers you BEFORE you do anything for him.

Don't give up, keep taking steps

Remember when we were in proverbs and we talked about the two paths? The path of life and path of death? And how sometimes the first step or two...or twenty...down the path of life feels like death? Because saying "Not my will but yours be done" is a DYING to self. In real life, that's hard man. It's dying to the desires that you've been operating by.

On the contrary the first few steps down the path of death feel like life. I see this with young people particularly who were church kids growing up. They were taught that sex before marriage is going to lead to destruction in their life. But then they have sex and they don't experience destruction. So they start to think...maybe the bible is wrong. What they don't see is that they are taking steps on a path. Their conscience starts to get seared towards the holy spirit. And it's not until they are way down the path of death, maybe years later, that they experience the coldness of the heart & soul...and the distance from God...that they've been walking towards. They didn't believe they were on the path because they didn't FEEL it. And we gotta trust the path of life even if it feels like death as we surrender our desires to God's will.

I feel like sometimes we get about 2 steps down the path of life and are like "WHAT IS THE POINT! THIS IS TERRIBLE!" And I'm telling you today Christian – he is worth it. Give your

whole life to God. He will give you life. I promise you. Your flesh is just waging war right now.

Galatians 3.3 - What you began in the spirit are you now finishing in the flesh? Trust God and walk forward in faith.

In every arena of your life pray Not my will but yours be done

This is where the life change starts happening. When your first instinct in every theater of life is to look not for what you want but for what God wants. I'm telling you this prayer starts to get really powerful. It starts to shape and form your whole life. Let's go around the arenas of your life right now. And see what we are talking about...

In my singleness – not my will but yours be done. Maybe that is to pursue a spouse, maybe it is to stop pursuing a spouse. Maybe it's to get out of a bad relationship, maybe it's to have the courage to step into a good relationship. Whatever it is – what if you prayed God not my hopes & dreams & plans to achieve them. Instead I want yours. My wife's spiritual mentor just retired, never married. Has that been hard? Of course. The church celebrates marriage and family and because it does, it can unintentionally devalue singleness. But Scripture doesn't devalue it. In fact, it exalts singleness into a special place of honor and responsibility in the kingdom of God. I don't know what God is going to lead you in but will you pray – Father not my will but yours be done.

In my Family – Not my will but yours be done. Parents what are your hopes & dreams and plans for your kids? Are they yours or are they Gods? are trying to control your kid's

future...or are you trying to prepare them for his will? When I see Christian parents obsessed with activities for their kids instead of obsessed with their closeness to God...I want to plead with them to pray this prayer. And it WILL feel difficult to pray this. The path to life will feel like death as you actually walk in the steps of Jesus. But there will be life for your family as a result. And I'm not telling you what activities to do and not do. I'm telling you let God's purpose for your family REIGN in your family.

****Family Worship Equip Forum. Come learn how****

In your career – Not my will but yours be done. Ok, this one might feel ambiguous. I mean for me when I prayed this, I ended up going into pastoral ministry. I'm not saying that's you. Maybe a handful but most of us aren't going that route. For most of us its surrendering your hopes and dreams and plans to achieve them to God's purposes. For example: he's more concerned with your character than your compensation gains. He's more concerned with your work-rest margin than your profit margin. He's more concerned with your impact on people than on the bottom line. He's concerned with excellence in your work only because it represents HIM! I can't tell you what his specific will is in your situation, but I can promise you if you start praying this prayer he's going to start convicting you about it.

In my reputation – not my will but yours be done. I want us to be unashamed worshippers of Jesus. And I think we need to put to death our image. Like David we need to unashamedly dance before our God. You are not going to win people into heaven with your PUT-TOGETHER-NESS. That would be God

giving you glory. No, you are going to see people come to Jesus by exalting Jesus and humbling yourself. We all still want to be at the cool kids table in the cafeteria. Put that to death. And make much of Jesus. You will find freedom there.

In my retirement – not my will but yours be done. Some of you are on the edge of retirement. That needs to be the greatest years of ministry ever in your life. The whole idea of retirement FROM LIFE, while still alive, is antithetical to the gospel. You heard me. End your work...sure. Retire. Praise God if you are able to do that. But God's will is not for you to get fat while floating on the lake while staring at birds. Do some of that...and then get to work raising up the next generation of disciples of Jesus Christ. Go to the nations and see a people group come to faith. The bizarreness of dying before you die is a ridiculous carrot at the end of the work-like-a-dog stick that has been dangled before you for 40 years. It's not from God. What is though? Well I dare you to start praying not my will but yours be done.

In my money – not my will but yours be done. Put a personal budget down on paper and say ok God...what do you want to do here? Not my will but yours be done. I have hopes & dreams...but first God what are you doing here? Not my will but yours be done.

****More on money****

****In MY CONTROL / TIME**** - I want god's will if it fits my plans.

In our church – Not my will but yours be done. What if you have mistaken your desires and preferences for our church

with God's will? Ya'll by and large I love how committed you are to us being a biblical church. But what if we redoubled our prayer lives over Mercy church to say I want what GOD wants. Not my will but yours be done. The elders are constantly praying this over Mercy church and we would welcome you joining us in that prayer.

In my suffering – Not my will but yours be done. Run to him not from him in suffering. Suffering is not a sign God has forgotten you. It's actually an opportunity to draw close to God!

12 Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you. 13 Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. -- 1 Peter 4:12-13

I want you to walk out of here REJOICING that your savior KNOWS where you are. Has been further. And LOVES you. And offers you hope that one day his glory is going to be revealed. And because I believe in his sacrifice for me I believe I will SHARE in his glory! At some point God is going to take into a garden. A dark night of suffering. Some of you will contract a disease that will kill you. Some of you will experience sudden unexpected loss. And my question is when you gather around the graveside of the one you love...year after year...will you worship your way through your grief? Will you trust God the father even then? We are going to pray for healings here because we believe our God can heal. The prayer for healing and the prayer of surrender to the will of God are NOT at odds

with each other. They are simply the prayers children of the father pray. And we trust the father with the outcome.

I'm telling you this sounds crazy. But it is the path of Jesus and the path to life. Surrender your whole life to God, and live. I want to close with Peter's close to his first letter.

6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. 8 Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. 9 Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

10 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. 11 To him be dominion forever. Amen. -- 1 Peter 5:6-11