

John 2:13-25

07 March 2018

Thy Will be Done: God's Will & My

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Misunderstanding

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday in Lent

Vicar Luke Scheele

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

**[Introduction]**

Throughout this year and this Lenten season, we have been following our theme of Thy Will be Done. Today we will focus on God's Will and My Misunderstanding.

**[Trouble in the Text]**

As Jesus drove "those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers" (Jn 2:14) out of the temple I can only imagine the uproar it must have started.

As Jesus, in righteous zeal, starts whipping and table flipping, I can hear the money changers screaming in high-pitched voices and the livestock mooing and baaing in protest as they get driven from the temple. As all of this is going on, someone tells the Jews in charge of the temple that a mad-man with a whip is driving people out.

Can you imagine it? The Jews, red-faced and furious, storm towards Jesus, after they hear the news?

"Who does this man think he is? What sign of authority can he show to prove his right to do these things?"

Yet, once the Jews approached Jesus, the trouble doesn't calm down. Instead, a man who has just forcefully disrupted the temple operations tells the Jews, that he does all of this by the sign and authority of his miraculous temple building skills.

Strangely enough, the sign of proof he gives them is that if they destroy this temple, then in three days he will raise it up.

"What?!?"

That's exactly what the Jews thought. The temple, that Jesus stood in, had been built in 516 BC by Ezra and the returning Jewish exiles. Then around 500 years later in 18 BC Herod the Great completed his own temple renovations. These renovations had continued around the temple mount for the entirety of Jesus' life and death.

And they would continue even beyond his resurrection. By the time of Jesus' ministry after 46 years of upgrades the temple mount was almost 5 times larger than it was in Ezra's days.

Any yet, this man, this **mad-man** with a whip, this Jesus from Nazareth was claiming he could rebuild it in only 3 days! The Jews must have thought he was crazy.

The trouble is, is that the Jews misunderstood God's will. They misunderstood what it meant for Jesus to have righteous zeal for His father's house. Jesus, as he drove the people out, was telling them, "do not make my Father's house a house of trade" (Jn 2:16).

You see, Jesus understood that it was the Father's will for the temple to be a house of prayer. But the Jews had turned it into a den of robbers (Lk 19:46).

The Jews thought they were doing the will of God, but instead, in their misunderstanding they had caused God's will to be clouded and hidden from the very people they were supposed to be ministering to.

### ***[Trouble in the World]***

Have we misunderstood the will of God?

In our day and age, the world constantly questions the authority of Jesus. In fact, you and I are guilty of it as well. We have failed to put our faith and trust in Jesus, our Lord and master, and we have instead sought after our own cloudy and misunderstood will.

Where is our zeal for the Lord's House? Is the Christian Church, today, a house of prayer or have we turned our church into a den of robbers?

Now don't misunderstand me, I am not talking about our church building, but the assembly of all believers. The whole Christian Church on earth. How have we disrespected God's sacred assembly, the church?

Instead of viewing our church assembly as a house of prayer, have we turned Christianity into a corporation simply concerned with preserving the bottom line?

When we turn to the world and treat God's Word and Sacraments like a product to be marketed then we present a witness to the world that shows we are nothing but a corporation trying to attract customers. Instead, of disciples of Jesus who, out of love, "desire all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Ti 2:4).

When we follow the world, we misunderstand the will of God for our church and instead focus on our own misguided will and the desires of a sinful world.

### **[*Gospel in the Text*]**

The Jews in our Gospel reading, also misunderstood Jesus' words. Because the temple that Jesus was talking about was not a temple built by man, but a temple built by God.

Throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh tabernacled with his people. He camped and dwelt with them in the original Tabernacle. Then, after King Solomon built the first temple, he dwelt there with His people. However, Solomon's temple was still temporary and after its destruction the Jews continued to misunderstand the true meaning of what it was like for God to dwell with man.

In Jesus, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14).

In Jesus, "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority." (Col 2:9–10).

In Jesus, the Jews were given the greatest and truest sign of authority, because Jesus, the Word of God, gave them the sign of his death and resurrection as proof of his authority. Jesus and his Gospel victory over sin, death, and the devil is that very sign.

God's will for the temple can only be understood through Jesus.

### **[*Gospel in the World*]**

We also have misunderstood the will of God for our church and focused on our own misguided will, just like the Jews did for the temple. And likewise, we, like the Jews, have been given the greatest and truest sign of authority that this world has ever known.

Our sign and our temple is Jesus. Our church is the body of Christ. We are **NOT** a worldly corporation marketing the Word of God and the Sacraments. Instead we are Christians showing love to our neighbor. Our concern is not with the bottom line, but with sharing the love of Jesus.

Because in the person of Jesus, God dwells with man. God's will is for us to trust Jesus and his promises because Jesus proved himself to be true. He proved the truth and authority of his words by allowing the Jews to destroy the temple of his body and then in three days raise it up from the dead.

Jesus won the victory for us, so that God's will is no longer a mystery and misunderstanding to us.

For the good and gracious will of God is that you have the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. All of this has been given to you because "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:16-17).

"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Re 21:3-4).

Your misunderstanding and your sin has passed away. You are forgiven. So, let us every pray to God, "Thy will be done." Amen.

---

"Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." (Heb 13:20-21)

---