

SERMON JUNE 30 2024 “God’s Will Is Always Best”

Dear fellow redeemed of, by, and for Christ Jesus, in our fellowship hall, we have a sign that says, “God is Good,” and many would add, “All the time.” That’s a modern way of saying, “*The Will of God is Always Best,*”

At times, it’s easy for you to agree with that sentiment.

It’s easy if you are in good health, have a nice home, a good job, plenty to eat, good friends, a car or two, a television, smartphones, and more free time than you know what to do with.

Yes, *The Will of God is Always Best* is easy to say when you live in such luxury.

But if one or more of these things are taken away, who is first in line at the heavenly complaint department window?

*The Will of God is Always Best* isn’t so easy to say when the will of God doesn’t seem good to you at all.

That’s what happened to Jairus in today’s Gospel lesson. His little girl wasn’t just sick, she was at the point of death. She was only twelve years old. She had her whole life ahead of her. But she was slipping away.

So Jairus finds Jesus, falls at His feet, and begs Him: **Please come and Lay your hands on her.**

***Your divine hands, Your creating hands, Your healing hands. Please.*** And there is hope. Jesus begins to go with Jairus ***until some woman shows up.***

Imagine if your daughter was in the hospital, and the doctors said the next 24 hours would make the difference between life and death.

You're in the room with her, worrying your head off, when all of a sudden, machines start beeping and buzzing, lights are flashing, alarms are sounding, and you go rushing out into the hallway and yell for the doctors and nurses to come.

And they begin running toward your child's room . . . but then they stop. They stop because a lady in the hallway needs a new bandage on her wound, and they start caring for her.

And you're thinking: *The Will of God is Always Best*, right? NO! You're thinking: ***she's had that wound for twelve stinkin' years! She can wait! My daughter may not even have twelve more seconds! Don't you understand? I need help now!***

We're not told what Jairus thought, or if he wanted to complain. Maybe he never got the chance.

For while Jesus was still speaking, he heard four little words that every parent dreads: **"Your daughter is dead."** It was too late. *The Will of God is Always Best?*

The story is not over yet, of course, as you heard. But we should pause here for a moment to consider the number **twelve**.

This little girl was *twelve* years old. The woman in our lesson had been bleeding for *twelve* years. This is not a coincidence.

Twelve is the number of the church. It is 4 times 3. Four: the number of the world, of wholeness, the four directions of the compass - east, west, north, and south. And three: the divine number, the trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**The twelve**, then, are those from all over the world, from all times and places, who are in God through faith in Jesus Christ. Twelve is the church. **Twelve is you.**

So put yourself in this “Twelve” story. Have you ever thought God was helping the wrong people at the wrong time when He should have been helping you?

Or maybe you’ve felt more like the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years - why didn’t God help sooner? Why did you have to suffer so much and for so long?

*Have you ever thought those ways?*

Well, imagine if Jesus had just walked past that woman. ***I’ll get back to you when I have the time. I have more important work to do now.***

A kind of “divine triage” - got to help the more needy first.

Well, if that's the case, will He *ever* get to me and my needs, problems, and suffering? Twelve years is a long time.

When you're a kid asking your parents to help you with something, and they tell you: *Later. In a little while.* You know what that means, don't you? It usually means no. "Later" never seems to come. Parents are sinners, too.

But it is not that way with Jesus. ***The Will of God IS Always Best.*** Even when it doesn't seem like it. There is no "divine triage" with God. He does what is good and best for all.

He does what He does for a reason, even if that reason is hidden from us. Even if what He does seems the opposite of best to you and me. It is **faith** that says: ***The Will of God is Always Best,*** even when that faith is looking into a bleak future.

At such times, Jesus says to you the same thing he said to Jairus: "**Do not fear, only believe.**" By faith, Jairus gets to see what some of Jesus' twelve disciples never saw: He saw Jesus stare death in the face, and death backed down.

My friends, that's a picture of your future as well. The world laughs at our hope of eternal life, just as those in Jairus' house laughed at Jesus when He said: **The child is not dead but sleeping.**

But unless Jesus returns first before you die, you will be like this little girl.

You will be awoken from your sleep of death at the sound of Jesus' voice. On that day, He will take you by the hand and raise you to a life that will never end.

Earlier, I mentioned how angry and disappointed we are when that which we love is taken away from us, but Jesus gave everything up - willingly - for you.

St. Paul said: **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.**

Jesus gave up everything for you, becoming not just poor, but the chief of all sinners, so that all your sins, grumbling, complaining, and doubting would be forgiven.

That all the sin that is killing you and causing you to love and worship what you have instead of the One who gave you those things— would be washed away, forgiven in the blood that flowed from Jesus' cross and onto you in Holy Baptism, and you be raised - here and now - to a new life.

***Talitha cumi.*** That's what Jesus said to Jairus' daughter.

In Holy Baptism, Jesus said the same thing to you. Talitha cumi, **My child, arise.**

That's what Jesus is going to say to you when He comes again in glory on the last day.

Jesus died for your sin and He rose to give you new life . . . just as He did for Jairus, for Jairus' daughter and for the woman with a bleeding problem.

That's why Jeremiah could speak the words we heard earlier: **The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

Those words weren't easy for Jeremiah to confess. God's people had just been defeated in war and hauled off as prisoners. Jerusalem and the Temple lay in ruins. *The Will of God is Always Best?* Israel, as a nation, had just died!

But Jeremiah knew there would be a resurrection. This dark night would end, in God's time; and then there would be a morning. A new life.

**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. They are new every morning.**

Yes, for every morning is like a little resurrection.

We lie down in sleep, tired and worn out and maybe beat up by sin, and then we rise in the morning, a little resurrection. The Lord gives us rest, and then a new day.

So, each night and each morning is like practice for our death and resurrection!

Unless Jesus returns beforehand, you and I will sleep the sleep of death, tired and worn out, but we'll awaken in the morning of eternity to a new day that will have no end.

Until that day, when you rise each morning - on *this* side of eternity - the love and mercy of God will be with you.

Working to help, heal, and save you. No triage. No favorites. No limited time and resources. Jesus is big enough to help all. *The Will of God is Always Best.*

Oh, you'll have your moments of doubt, fear and grumbling, as I do. But at those moments, **“Do not fear, only believe.”**

Finally, did you notice what this little girl needed after Jesus raised her to life? He **told them to give her something to eat.**

You, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, have been raised with Christ in baptism to a new life, too, and Jesus has provided food for you - His very Body and Blood.

The food of forgiveness, life, and salvation. The food that nourishes you not just for this body and life, but for eternal life. That you live not just now but live forever.

So come you Twelve - take and eat. And then go - confess, serve, rejoice. ***The Will of God is Always Best. Great is His faithfulness.*** Amen.