

Your Keys Please - the Power of the Human Will

by Joe Root

The sermon emphasizes the importance of giving our will to God and making a commitment to follow Him, highlighting the unique ability we have to determine to consent or refuse.

Duration: 1:35:42

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-18, Esther 4:14, Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 12:1-2, James 4:7

Topics: "Surrendering To God", "Human Will"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering our will to God, using examples of biblical figures who struggled with their wills. It challenges listeners to consider areas where their will may be unyielded and encourages them to seek God's will above their own desires.

Transcript

Twelve men stepped out into the night. One was in the lead and the others were following him. He walked down the stairway and down the trail and over the ravine to the well-known place where at last he paused.

The leader turned to the others and solemnly told them, Sit down here. I am going to go yonder and pray. He took three out of the remaining eleven.

They went a little further and then he told them, You stay here. I am going on. The Word of God says he went further, about as far as you could throw a rock.

There he fell on his face and said, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. The sorrowful leader, as he prayed, Luke says, an angel appeared strengthening him.

And he rose from his space and he walked back to the three who had fallen asleep in their sorrow and in their confusion. And he said to them, What? Are you sleeping? Couldn't you watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

He went back again. And again he began to pray. The Bible says, being in a great agony, he prayed the more earnestly.

Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. Again, he went back.

And found them sleeping. The third time, this sweating, agonizing one went and cast himself down and cried, Abba, Father, Daddy, O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, let thy will be done.

He wrestled his sweaty, blood-soaked body as he wrestled in prayer with his Father. He had cried when he entered into the world, the Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.

Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. But up in this final, critical hour, he wrestled with his human will and with his Father's sovereign will.

O Father, this cup, this cup, thy will be done. And Jesus Christ rose up from that place with his face set like a flint and with a solemn resolve to go to Calvary's cross for your sins and for mine. Tonight, by the grace of God and desiring your prayers, we would like to hold this message before you.

The title is, Your Keys Please the Power of the Human Will. Turn with me, if you would, to the epistle of Paul to the Philippian church, the book of Philippians chapter 2. I appreciate the simple definition of this event. It's called Bible school.

And surely in a Bible school we'll have Bibles that are active and that are turning to Scripture and that are looking to see what the Word of God has to say. There's a brother and sister in our congregation out in Ellensburg, Washington, who have fellowshiped with us for the last 20 some years. They came from the community there and they said one of the first things that touched our hearts as we came to church, as we came and began to worship, something that stood out, something I had never thought of.

They said it was the sound of rustling pages. It stood out. We hadn't experienced it quite like that in any other church.

And we only thank God for that. I know it's the same for you. We're interested in the Bible.

This is Bible school. We're interested in the Word of God that has been miraculously and marvelously preserved for each one of us. So if you will turn with me to Philippians chapter 2, I just want to read a few verses as a basis for the message tonight, beginning at verse 9. We have prior to this in the second chapter of Philippians, the condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnation.

The Bible says, being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him and given Him, beginning at verse 9, turn with me, follow with me now.

Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. I want to highlight that passage of Scripture for you this evening.

It is God. Young people, each one who have come tonight to this time of worship and meditation on the Word of God, I want to remind you of what the Apostle holds before us tonight, that it is God. And wherever you've come from, whatever circumstances have made up your life, I don't know most of you, I recognize a very few of you, but it's such a blessing to come together where the Bible is open and we're seeking direction and a message from the Word of God.

But tonight I want to just welcome you. I don't know what the uneven journey of your life has been. I don't know what sorrows, failures, struggles, temptations, heartaches, joys, victories, I don't know what all the strands and the threads that have woven together to make up your life have been.

But whatever they've been tonight, welcome in Jesus' name. The Word of God is here. The Spirit of God is present to pour out a blessing for each one of us.

And so the Apostle says, it is God who works in you, notice, to do two things. Both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Do you see that? I find that very encouraging tonight.

It is God who is working in you to do two things. First of all, to will. That means to birth in my heart a desire for His will.

A desire to be obedient to His Word. A desire to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. God works in you to will.

But He doesn't stop there. It isn't just to give you the want to. It's to help you get it done.

And so He works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure. Isn't that a blessing? God is helping us to have the desire. Have you ever felt like, Lord, I'm not even sure if I want to follow You.

I've had some times like that in my life. I'm ashamed to say I've had some times like that in my life. But I thank God as we fall on our face and as we seek His face.

The Bible tells us that He will work in us to give us the will and the power to do His good pleasure. So tonight, we want to talk about the human will. Your keys, please.

The power of the human will. As we think about the will tonight, I would like to just suggest to you that your will, if I could offer you this definition for our purposes tonight, it is the unique ability that you have to determine to consent or to refuse. That is your will.

It's the unique ability that you have to determine to consent or to refuse. That is your will. Now we see two balancing truths in God's Word that I want to hold before you tonight, before we go any farther.

I want to make sure we're very balanced in the Scripture. And if you would turn with me, Bible School students, let's hear those rustling pages as you turn to the first chapter of Ephesians. The first chapter of Ephesians.

In the first chapter of Ephesians, verse 11 says this. It's a beautiful passage of Scripture. I'd love to talk about the whole chapter, but let's just look at verse 11 tonight.

The Apostle says, In whom, that's in Jesus Christ, we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. That, beloved, is God's absolute sovereign will. And as I said, we're going to look at two balancing truths in Scripture.

And so many times in the Word of God, Scripture is, shall I say, held in a beautiful tension. There are truths that sometimes seem to be addressing different sides of the same issue. And I think it's so important that we don't jump on a ditch or in a camp and ignore a truth, but rather we can accept and embrace and rejoice in all the Word of God.

And who has known the mind of the Lord? Who has been His counselor? God's thoughts are higher than ours, and so He can declare that He has an absolute sovereign will, and He can also sovereignly give you the choice of your will. And so that's the second truth we want to look at tonight. First of all, God's absolute sovereign will, it is God who works all things after the counsel of His own will.

We read in the book of Romans, Who has resisted His will in Romans 9? No one. God is sovereign. But secondly, God's sovereign design to grant humanity the choice of their will.

And we find a number of times in Scripture, Whosoever will. That term. Whoever will respond.

Whosoever will. Let Him come. Let Him come.

Two balancing truths. God's sovereign will, and God's sovereign design to grant you the choice of your will. We're not robots here tonight, programmed by God to say, I will obey you God.

I will do whatever you say to me God. No, God created you to be a person, a human with personality and with a living soul, and He longs for that response. Our God is relational.

He wants a relationship with each of us. But He wants us to choose to follow Him, and He holds out the invitation. And sometimes it's like it says in the Old Testament, where God says to Israel, He saith, Romans 9 quotes this, All day long have I held forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

All day long He held out His hands, longing for relationship. Because God didn't make us robots. He wants to invite us to come, and worship, and give our wills to Him.

So your will, the unique ability that you have to determine, to consent, or to refuse. And I want to say again, that God is sovereign, and there are aspects of His sovereign design, that I don't claim to fully understand, but I believe. And I accept that God is ultimately in control of all things.

But that same sovereign God has the ability to grant us human choice. And He's done that. And so tonight, as you think about this subject of the will, I want you to reflect back on the messages today.

And I'd like these questions to be in your heart, and in your mind. Will you, my brother, my sister, will you, in your generation, choose to pick up the torch, and run with it in 2017? Will you? Will you? As you consider your will tonight, will you choose to be one of those that are blessed, because they're poor in spirit? They've embraced poverty of spirit. Those who choose to mourn for sin.

Those who choose to, instead of exalting self, walk in meekness. And those who praise God, hunger and thirst after righteousness, so that you might be filled. Will you? Will you? As you reflect on the messages today, will you, my sister, my brother, will you choose to walk by faith, trusting in God, even through difficult, and sometimes confusing relationships? Will you? I'm very blessed by the messages already.

They touch something. They touch my will. Tonight we'd like to look a little closer at this thought of the will.

I'd like to sing a song. Let's sing 374. A couple of verses.

A familiar song that was written by, it's in the Christian hymn, 374, by Francis Habergow. Take my life and let it be. The first verse, and then I'd like to sing the fourth verse together.

The fourth verse. I love this hymn. It's a beautiful hymn.

It has a beautiful story behind the hymn. But whenever I get to the fourth verse, singing this hymn, I notice just a little struggle in my life. You look at verse 4 with me as we sing it together.

Let's sing verse 1 and then verse 4. Take my life and let it be. Consecrated Lord to Thee. Take my mess and let it be.

At the end of time. Take my life and let it be. Now, I would like, brothers, for you to hum, just sing ooh or hum, as the sisters sing verse 4 again.

And then, sisters, I would like you to hum or ooh as the brothers sing verse 5. Take my will. Brothers humming. Sisters singing.

Take my will. Think about it and make it thine. Let's sing.

Ever. Only. All.

For Thee. That's quite a commitment. Brothers and sisters, may God bless you.

As you take your will and make it His every day and perhaps in a special way this week. As we look at this message tonight, I'd like to look at four general areas as we talk about the human will. I want you to consider this with me.

First of all, I want to just look quickly at our will. What is it? We've talked about that a little bit already. Our will, what is it? That's point number one.

Secondly, we will want to look at some general balancing thoughts about the will. Point number two, some general balancing thoughts about the will. Point number three, some Bible examples of people who wrestled with their will.

That's point number three, some Bible examples of people who wrestled with their will. And finally, point number four, your will, what does this message have to do with us this week? Your will. Point number four, what does this message have to do with us this week? Again, I appreciate your ongoing prayers.

We seek the Word of God to give us some insight tonight. Point number one, our will, what is it? Again, I will say your will is the unique ability that God has given you to determine, to consent, or to refuse. Your will is a key that you alone hold.

I remember so well when I was a young man in high school. I grew up in Modesto, California. Twenty-five years ago, my wife and I moved to Washington state.

But I grew up in California and I went through the public school system my whole life. And when I was in high school, the high school maybe had a couple of thousand people, and I remember that there was a guy that I had seen in elementary school. He was a pretty cool guy.

Back in those days, he had long hair and he was rough and he was tough and I was just a little bit afraid of him. His name was Raymond. And I remember Raymond had a bright red, hopped up car.

And it was all jacked up and back like they used to be in those days with big wide tires and chrome wheels and a big loud rumble in the mufflers. And Raymond would drive that car around. And I remember well one afternoon as we were getting out of school, Raymond went and got in his car.

And he began to drive around the parking lot. And one place in the parking lot, Raymond loved attention. One place in the parking lot, he just spun his tires a little bit and squealed and made some noise and made some smoke.

And he marveled at and enjoyed all the attention that he was getting. But out of the corner of my eye, I saw a man. A man we called John Nark.

He was the narcotics officer in that school where I grew up. And a general security officer. And I saw John start walking through the parking lot.

But Raymond didn't see him. He was enjoying all the attention as he drove that big powerful, hopped up, bright red, wide tired car around the parking lot. And I saw John Nark slip up behind his car.

Raymond was looking at all the attention he was getting. He was rumbling his muscles once again. And he paused for just a few moments and just put it in gear there and just looked and was relishing the attention.

And I saw John slide up beside his car, reach in beside the steering wheel, grab the keys and shut it off and put them in his pocket and start walking toward the office. He didn't say a word. And Raymond was left there frantic and powerless.

And I saw him get out of his car and he almost started to whimper, almost started to cry. And he followed after the man and said, I need my keys. Give me back my keys.

And the man just quietly walked toward the office. Raymond's will was conquered, in a sense, in that moment. His true will wasn't broken.

But John had taken his keys. Beloved tonight, my appeal to you is to give your keys. That's why the title is Your Keys, Please.

Not to me, but to the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Spirit of God. Would you be willing to hand over the keys of your life to Him? Our will. What is it? It's a key that you alone hold.

Just a few other points about what is our will. I want to say that your will is a gift from God. We've already talked about that.

It's from God. And it's amazing power that God has given you. The omnipotent, almighty, all-powerful, creative force of the universe, God Almighty, has chosen not to overpower something that you carry.

Your will. Your own will. Isn't that amazing? Ever thought about how much power that is? That almighty God, in His own sovereign wisdom, would choose to give you that power and then choose to not overpower it.

Give you choice to do as you will. Another thought about the will. Your will, I want to suggest to you tonight, is a critical link, the critical link between your understanding and obeying the truth.

The critical link. It's one thing to understand the truth. One thing to understand the Word of God.

It's another thing to obey it. To carry it out. Your will.

Your will is that link between those two. Another point, under this first heading, our will, what is it? I want to say that your will can be a mighty, fortified, thick, powerful wall between you and the liberating power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Your will can be that wall.

Your will can be the gap between your satisfaction with mediocrity and a full commitment to being a disciple of Jesus Christ without reserve. Your will. Your will may be the protective bars that you may put up between yourself and what your conscience is whispering, perhaps sometimes even shouting this week as the brothers speak to you and as the Spirit of God moves in your midst.

Your will. Your will can become protective bars against what your conscience is whispering, sometimes even shouting to you. Your will.

Jesus said this in the ninth chapter of the gospel of Luke. In fact, let's turn to that real quickly. We're here at Bible School.

Let's hear some rustling pages. Luke chapter 9. I like to tell students when they come to our Bible School out in Washington, any of you would be welcome someday, I like to tell them to learn to be a little bit of a fast draw, a Bible turner. It's good practice.

It isn't competition. We're not trying to sow that kind of spirit, but it is good to learn to be familiar with the book and learn to be able to turn there quickly. I personally knew the man who was the fast draw champion in the state of California.

In fact, I still know him. He's an old man now. He's a non-resistant man now.

He's a man who loves the Lord now. But when he was a young man, I was at his house when I was a young man looking at the trophies that I remember out in his garage that were all dusty that he had gained as a young man because he was the fastest draw with a pistol in the state of California, Nevada. He won time after time.

I never saw him do it. My brother did. My brother married his daughter.

And my brother said, you couldn't even see it. He had his holster all greased up and he had an aluminum lightweight pistol in that holster and he could have a balloon over on the wall and they could somehow signal to start and you couldn't even see as he pulled out that gun and shot that balloon. He was a fast draw.

For what? What's that matter? Nothing. He would tell you that today. But to be efficient at turning to the word of God, sometimes we need to be a fast draw for Satan because he comes with a temptation.

And Jesus said, get behind me Satan. It is written, thou shalt love the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve. He had a fast draw scripture for Satan.

So let's look at Luke 9 verse 23 and 24. We're thinking about what is our will? Verse 23 24. In fact, let's go ahead and, well let's just read those two verses.

Let's read them out loud together. Verse 23 Luke 9 verse 23 and 24 And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever will

save his life shall lose it.

But whosoever will lose his life for my sake the same shall save it. You know, we often hear, I know in many of our churches and well we should, the teaching of Jesus to deny ourselves and take up the cross. That's what Jesus taught.

But have you ever thought that the true essence of denying self is giving up my will to the Lord? Sometimes I can get thinking that self-denial is I'll do without this and I'll do without that and I'll make it hard on myself for this and hard on myself for that. And there is a time to say no, beloved. We certainly are not undermining that.

In fact, I greatly encourage that. But I think beyond those things at the very core and at the very essence is I must somehow to my own will, give up my own will. And then those things fall into place and flow out of that.

The true essence of self denial is giving up my own will or it is shall we say relinquishing my independence. The Bible says the just shall live by faith. Doesn't it? Somehow it just gives me a little sense of security.

A little sense of ownership if I can kind of believe that but still hang on to my own will. We pray, don't we? We often pray. In fact, let's just say the first few words of the Lord's prayer together very reverently.

Our Father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done. We can pause there. Ever thought about what you're praying? When you pray that prayer? When you read those words? Thy will be done.

Romans 12 is a favorite chapter of many of us. Our heritage loves these words and well we should. It's the word of God.

The 12th chapter of Romans the apostle breaks into that refrain and he says I beseech you brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service and be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Our will. Well, let's go on and consider now the second heading.

Some general balancing thoughts about the will. Just a basic title there. The first section was our will what is it? Now we're looking at section number two.

Some general balancing thoughts about the will. Get your Bibles ready. Be turning to Romans chapter 9. Romans chapter 9 is often considered one of the more difficult theological passages in the New Testament.

I'm not going to launch into an exegesis of that tonight. I would like to again say that we cannot muscle our way to glory through a white knuckled discipline and determination of a determined will. It's just my finging on and my determination and my will and I'm going to muscle my way to heaven that way.

That's not what we're teaching here tonight. We recognize both a sovereign and a merciful God who has shown grace to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. And I want you to look in Romans 9 just at verses 16, 17 and 18.

Again, I'm not going to try and speak extensively about these other than just to read them. Notice. Romans 9 verse 16, 17 and 18 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

Isn't that amazing? That's an amazing passage. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose, have I raised thee up that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Thou wilt then say unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? That's a good question. We're not going to get into all of that other than I will say there are balancing truths in Scripture and we recognize that God is giving us a lesson here in Romans 9 as He talks about nations and He talks about His sovereign choosing and we recognize though that we do want to honor God as we acknowledge who has resisted His will. And we acknowledge that it's ultimately not of Him that willeth or of Him that runneth, but the real focus is on God who has shown mercy and praised God for that.

So these are some general balancing thoughts about the will. May O man, the Scripture says, who art thou that replies against God? Shall the thing form say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? And yet before you leave Romans 9, I want you to look at something. Look down clear at verse 33, the last verse of Romans 9 and I want you to see the balance right in this very chapter.

The Apostle says, As it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offense and whosoever whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. We can see this opportunity of the choosing of the will right here in Romans 9. Well I want to go on a couple more balancing thoughts as we think about the will. The Bible warns about something called will worship.

Turn with me to the book of Colossians. Colossians. Fast draw to Colossians chapter 2. Let's look at verses 20 through 23.

This is something the Bible calls will worship. I'm not promoting will worship tonight. I'm promoting that we yield our stubborn wills to the sovereign will of a loving and merciful God who has chosen to sovereignly give us that choice.

But look at this danger. There's a danger that's called will worship. Look with me.

Verse 20. Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are you subject to ordinances, touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using after the commandments and doctrines of men, which things indeed have a show of wisdom in will worship and humility and neglecting of the body, not in honor, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. And we could talk about that some more, but I just want to say that sometimes there can be a danger of getting to this point that I'm going to have a will that's just very solid and very resolved and I'm going to white knuckle my way to glory and I'm going to have a focus on what I don't do and what I don't touch and what I don't handle and what I won't do.

And we don't want to be just about what we're not. We want to be about what we are. Followers of Jesus Christ.

And the Bible says those things make a nice show in will worship and voluntary humility and worshiping the body, but they really don't accomplish anything in dealing with this flesh. And we want to go deeper

than just touch not, taste not, handle not. Certainly, I want you to understand there is a place for godly choosing and discernment and even to function together with a body of believers that make wise choices together according to the word of God.

I'm not undermining that at all. I'm only saying that we look deeper at our hearts and we don't want to just have will worship and the things that I proudly show you that I won't do or that I do do. That's will worship.

No, we want something deeper. I want that resignation like Jesus set the example. Not my will, but thine be done.

We're considering some balancing thoughts about the will. Sometimes that flesh based will worship actually manifests a will that's not broken and resigned to God. I've seen that.

I've observed it. Colossians goes on in this same book and encourages us in the third chapter to set our affection on things above. That's a choice of the will.

Do you know your affection can be set? Have you ever thought about that? You have affection. We all do. We have passion.

We have affection. We have the ability and the power and the inclination to love and to have affection. Do you know you can set that? Colossians 3 says set your affection on things above.

Sometimes people say, I just can't help it. I just love this or I just love that. Yes, you can.

You can set your affection. God has chosen to invest that power as he works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. God can help you set your affection.

So, we're not talking about will-worship. First of all, we can't muscle our way. Secondly, we've warned against will-worship.

Third, I want to look under these balancing thoughts about the will. There's a third balancing point I want to mention and that there is a need for conviction and steadfastness. I'm not talking about being wishy-washy and having no mind.

There's a place for solid, unmovable convictions. In 1 Corinthians 16, we read these scriptures, watch you, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Those are words of conviction and resolve and I so appreciate that and I exhort you to that tonight.

Watch you, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men. We're not talking about being wishy-washy. We're talking about yielding our selfish wills to the will of God.

True godly conviction is standing firm on God's will. Well, there's a fourth balancing truth I'd like to mention about the will. There is a place for decision-making.

You know, it's interesting how the Apostle Paul mentioned Apollos and he mentions in one of the scriptures, he said, I desired Apollos to come. But he says this, it's an interesting phrase, he said, but his will was not at all to come at this time. But he shall come when he shall have convenient time, or words to that effect.

You're familiar with that scripture. I desired Apollos, Paul said, but his will was not to come at this time. So there is a place for decision-making.

There is a place to make choices of the will. And submission is not groveling on the ground underneath unbiblical tyranny and oppression. That's not what I'm holding up tonight.

That we just grovel on the ground and have no will at all and just no, there's a place for biblical decision-making. There's a proper place for appeal. There are times we must choose to make a stand that will not always be applauded by everyone.

And Jesus warned of that. So there is a place for decision-making. A fifth balancing point as we consider the will.

This is a serious one. Satan will violate our wills if we let him have a foothold. In 2 Timothy 2, turn with me there quickly.

2 Timothy chapter 2. Let's look at some very interesting words. 2 Timothy chapter 2, notice in verse 25. The Apostle writes to Timothy, verse 24, and says, And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves.

If God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and notice and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. Satan will violate your will if you let him have a foothold. If you let him have a foothold.

That's why in meekness the Apostle said, I want you to instruct those who oppose themselves. If we let Satan have a foothold in our life in some way, we're opposing ourselves. And he can get, he can begin to violate our will.

And there are substances and there are practices that sometimes can pirate the will. You know that term, pirate. When someone pirates something, they're taking over.

And it's a history lesson back in the Caribbean when there were pirates like Blackbeard the pirate, and others who would come up with their ship, come up on another ship, and they would take over! They would come on board! And they would pirate that ship and take over and send it a different direction and plunder that ship. Satan would like to pirate your ship young man and young woman tonight. Satan will violate your will if you give him an open door and a foothold.

It's one of the balancing truths that I see as we discuss the will. Now, greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world. Our God is able to deliver.

But that father one time, he wept before the Lord Jesus and he said, Lord, would You heal my son? There's a demon and it casts him into the fire and it casts him into the water. That demon was violating that boy's will and self-destructing him. But he said, if you can do anything, and beloved Jesus can do something, and He did do something, and He cast that demon out, and He can still do that.

You know, where I live in Ellensburg, Washington, when we first moved there a number of years ago, there was a sheep slaughterhouse. And there was something kind of interesting. I saw that place and I've seen lots of the sheep.

Sometimes there will be a couple thousand sheep grazing with a shepherd out with them and a dog or two in some of the hay fields in the fall. But there was one of the two major West Coast sheep slaughterhouses in Ellensburg, Washington when we first moved there 25 years ago. It's not there anymore.

But there was a friend I had who was very acquainted with that place and he said, there's one thing that just made him shudder at that place. He said, they had an animal at that sheep slaughterhouse called the Judas goat. Now I want to tell you about the Judas goat.

And when I tell you about the Judas goat, I'm thinking about Satan's willingness to deceive and to pirate and to violate your will if you give him a foothold. This Judas goat was a goat. It wasn't a sheep.

But a goat can be taught to be a leader. And this Judas goat knew how to hold his head high and march among the sheep that were waiting for slaughter. And he said, I've seen it many times.

He wouldn't work without pay. But he said, those men who were running that Judas goat, that goat would stick up his head and he'd curl up his lip and they'd flip him a cigarette or they'd flip him a piece of gum or something. That goat would chew on anything.

As soon as he got his reward, they'd say go round them up. And he would march with his head high among those sheep and those sheep had no idea. Here came a confident goat who knew where he was going and they would just file right in.

Right to the slaughter. That's a picture of Satan who will violate your will if you let him, if you give him a foothold. And you know there are substances and practices that can pirate your will.

We talked about that already. You remember the airplanes 911. You remember there were men on board who planned on taking over those planes and they did.

Drugs. Alcohol. Even music.

Hypnosis. I watched a hypnotist one time and it made me shudder. Back in the days when I was in public school.

Taking over people's will as they allowed it to be. They allowed that to happen. All kinds of sensual stimulation.

Even addictive media. You give those things an inroad in your life and they're like that Judas goat. They'll take over your will and lead you to a place where you don't want to be.

These are some thoughts about the will. Well, a final balancing thought under this second heading about the will is that we need the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit to truly yield our wills. We need the power of Christ.

Turn with me to the book of Romans. Quickly to Romans chapter 7 and chapter 8. I want to read just a couple of verses here. Romans says this.

It says to will is present with me. That's the latter part of verse 18. He says to will, the frustration in the seventh chapter of Romans, to will is present with me.

I can will. I want to do it. But how to perform that which is willed, I can't find it.

He can't find it. And this is a picture of a man wrestling that's not really walking in the spirit that's wrestling with this reality of his will. And he says what I should do, I don't.

And what I shouldn't do, I do. And oh wretched man that I am, he cries in this latter part. But I want you to notice now something interesting, another interesting verse in verse 20 of chapter 8. Look over at chapter 8, verse 20.

We read this. Something else about the will. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.

Not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. I want to break down that verse for you a little bit. You look at that verse 20.

The creature, that's you. That's us. We're the creature.

We're the person. The creature was made subject to vanity. That means you are vulnerable to temptation.

You are vulnerable to vanity. You are, you have a tendency and nature within you that can be drawn toward things that are not healthy. The creature, let's get this verse, was made subject, was created in such a way that there are vulnerabilities and appetites that can lead toward destruction.

Made subject to vanity. That's what that means. Now notice the next phrase.

Not willingly. Not willingly. You didn't have any choice in the way you were made.

Have you ever said, oh God, would you just take this desire away from me? Would you just kill this appetite within me? But the Bible says the creature, that's you, that's me, was made subject or vulnerable or with a certain tendency to be vulnerable to temptation, to vanity. Not willingly. That means you didn't make yourself that way.

You didn't ask to be made that way. God chose to make you that way. But the verse doesn't stop.

It says not willingly but by reason of them who hath subjected the same in hope. So if we look at that whole verse, it says you were made vulnerable to temptation. You didn't have any choice in that.

But God chose to make you that way in hope. In hope. And He's going to give you a lot of help in that hope.

But He's hoping that you'll choose Him. God created us with that. Like I said, He did not create us to be robots programmed to do everything just right.

No, He made us subject to vanity. Not willingly. But because He subjected us in hope that we would choose Him.

That we would choose Him as the ultimate joy and pleasure. Yes. We need the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit to truly yield our wills.

Romans 8 says, there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free, free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and forced Him, condemned sin in the flesh that the

righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Praise God. There is hope through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our wills can be yielded to God.

And we can walk in the Spirit. Praise God for that. Remember, it is God who is working in you.

Both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Let's go on to a third section tonight. We have four of them we're wanting to look at.

We've looked at all already. First of all, at our will. What is it? Point number one.

Then point number two, some balancing thoughts and considerations about the will. Now in this third point, I'd like to just quickly look with you at some Bible examples of people who wrestled with their will. Sometimes when we look at examples, we look at real people who had real wrestlings.

It helps us to relate. I'm that way. It helps me understand.

There are so many of them, but can you picture with me just one moment one man that the Bible calls the father of the faithful. And after many, many years and faithfully obeying God and moving out. And yes, he wasn't perfect, but following God at last, at long last, he was given the promise.

The promised son and that boy that he set his love upon began to grow. This promised son, Isaac. Then there came a day.

There came a day. Abraham, take your son, your only son, Isaac, and go offer him for a burnt offering on Mount Moriah. Do you think there was a wrestling with the will? The Bible doesn't choose to record the details of that.

We see that Abraham got up early in the morning. We know that Abraham had a mighty faith and a mighty God. But I can't imagine what that night was like for that old man.

But I know that there came a time when God said, Abraham, now I know. Now I know that you'll follow me. Now I know that you believe me.

Praise God. I think of another man who wrestled with his will. Some of these are good and some of them aren't so good.

There was a man one time that God came to him and he said, I want you to go to a city. The city of Nineveh. There I want you to go preach and tell them that a few more days and your city is going to be destroyed.

Will. Will wrestling. And if you wrestle with your will, you get a commission, you get direction, you get instructions from a parent or authority.

Jonah got a word from God. You go and preach at Nineveh. Not Nineveh.

Nineveh? All we know is the Bible says he headed the other way and he caught a ship to Tarshish. God met him out there in the wilderness. Praise God, beloved.

If there's some of you who have ran and you have not yielded your will and you have ran away from the direction of God, God will meet you out there too. It might get kind of stormy. You might spend a few days

in a pretty dark spot.

But if you'll turn even then, God will bless even now. Praise God. Bible examples of people who wrestled with their will.

I think about a man who wouldn't leave God's will alone. This man the Bible calls Balaam. And Balaam was a soothsayer.

He was the son of Bosor, I believe the Bible says. And he was kind of an interesting character we read about in the Old Testament. And the king of Moab sent some noble men down to Balaam and said, Balaam, why don't you come up here? This nation, this nation of Israel is coming against us and it seems like they're conquering everyone in their pathway and I need someone like you that has some authority with the gods and I'd like you to curse this nation for me.

Balaam said, well, I'll have to ask God. I can only do what he tells me. So he went and asked God and God said, don't go.

Don't go with the men. So Balaam got up the next morning and told the men I can't go. The men went back to Balak, the king of Moab.

Balak sent some more honorable men and nicer rewards. I don't know what all those might have been. You know, Satan will do that sometimes.

Oh, you said no, but it sounded a little weak. I'll up the ante a little bit. I'll make this more fun.

I'll make this more rewarding. Listen, it'll be alright. Curse Israel.

Well, once again Balaam had enough realization. He said, I can't do anything except for what God tells me. Let me go ask God again.

Be careful. Let me go ask God again. God said, don't go.

And so he went back and told them, I can't go. And I believe it's the third time, I haven't read this recently, that Balak sent even more rewards and even more honorable. The Bible gives us a little glimpse into Balaam's life that says he loved the wages of unrighteousness.

Balaam said, well, I'll go ask God again and see what more. And finally God said, alright, go. You go.

But the Bible says the Lord was angry because he went. Be careful. There comes a time when we can't quite leave God's will alone and he's answered clearly.

And we keep pressing and playing and there may come a time when God will say, okay, go. But it's not with blessing. I think about David.

I'll just mention a few others real quickly. You remember David? There came a time where he told Joab, I want you to go number the hosts. You go number Israel.

And Joab and God said, you don't need to do that. And Joab, his general said, now may the Lord multiply the hosts, but why do you want to go number them? You shouldn't do that. But David prevailed.

No. Go number them. One scripture says Satan was involved.

One scripture says the Lord was involved in that. I'll let you sort that out. But David had a strong will there.

Here's a very sobering one. I think about a young man that the Bible says was an incredibly strong man by the name of Samson. And Samson grew up under the blessing and the sovereign hand of God.

He was a child sent from God, but he had an unbroken will. There came a time that he saw one of the Gentile girls, one of the Babylonian, or one of the Philistine girls, I believe it was. And he told his parents, I want that girl.

And praise God, the Lord redeems people from all kinds of backgrounds, but there's a point here in Samson's life. He talked to his parents and said, I want that girl. And they said, isn't there a girl among your people? And he said, get her for me, for she pleases me well.

Dangerous words. Get her for me. She pleases me well.

Samson had an unbroken will. And God used him in a mighty way. But he had to experience a lot of heartache because of his unbroken and stubborn will.

I think about the beautiful will of a woman by the name of Esther. Her cousin Mordecai told her, Esther, you're the queen. There's a decree to kill all the Jews.

You're the one. You go before the king and plead for your people. Now no one knew that Esther was a Jew.

That was a secret between her and Mordecai. She said, I can't go before the king. There's a law that if anyone comes before the king, unless he's invited, there's one decree for them and that's death.

Unless the king would happen to hold out his golden scepter. Other than that, it's death. And I haven't been invited to come and see the king for 30 days now.

Mordecai said, Esther, he sent a message back. If you don't go, God will bring deliverance through someone else. But how do you know? Don't you realize that God has brought you into the kingdom for such a time as this? Beloved, tonight can you grasp that truth yourselves? God has brought you into the kingdom for such a time as this.

2017 is a wonderful time to be a Christian. And Esther finally said, Ok, I'll fast. You fast and I'll fast in my maidens for three days and then I will go, she said.

And if I perish, I perish. Beautiful example of a submitted will. A resigned will.

I think about the rich young ruler. The Bible tells us about him. He was a nice man.

A polite man. A model young man who came and fell at the feet of Jesus and said, Good Master, what shall I do that I might inherit eternal life? And Jesus mentioned some commandments to him and he said, Yes Lord, all these things I've done. But what lack I yet? And Jesus said, he looked and the Bible specifically says he loved him.

He loved him. He said, If you would be perfect, go and sell all that you have and give to the poor and come and follow me. That man walked away sorrowful.

I don't want any of you to walk away this week sorrowful. He had an unbroken will. He was nice.

He was polite. I think he was a model young man, but he had an unbroken will. And he went away sorrowful.

An unbroken will. We could think of other examples, but I must hurry on. We've looked at some Bible examples of people who wrestled with their will.

That was the third point tonight. Now I want to look at a fourth and final point for a while with you. This fourth point I've titled, Your Will.

What does this message have to do with all of us this week? Each of our lives. What does this will subject how does it get practical? I'm going to be a little bit general, but I'm going to mention some things and you think about it. I want you to consider in your own life some manifestations of your will.

I want you to look at in general at how people manifest their will and may the Spirit of God touch your heart and my heart if there are any areas where I'm needing to yield my will. Even little children very early manifest their will, don't they? I remember when our son was born I decided at five months old I saw him as his diaper was being changed, I saw times when he manifested his will. He arched his back, he got stiff and I saw a little human will starting to resist.

Children pretty young begin to manifest their will. So we must train and teach them. I've thought how many times we love to have company in our home we often stretch out the table.

We've got a table from Pennsylvania back here and we love to stretch it out and put boards in and have folks there for fellowship and times of blessing and my wife serves meals and we just enjoy that time of fellowship but you know there's something I've observed many times. I've seen young families, we have many precious young families that we love and children there and sometimes we have neighbors down as well but I've seen parents as they talk to their children and the child says, Daddy I'm ready to get up. Can I get down now? Okay, have you cleaned up your plate? Okay, now you go ask Brother Joe if you can be excused.

And I've seen parents or sometimes mothers or fathers take their child by the hand and lead them down to the end of the table by me and say, okay, ask Brother Joe if you can be excused. Okay honey, would you please would you please ask him if you can be excused. And you see the lips get tight and you see the grip get strong and that little will and sometimes there's fear and parents wisely know how to train those things but I'm just illustrating that it isn't very long.

Children don't live very long, do they, until we begin to see this manifestation of the will and oh what a kind gift we give children by not letting them have their will. It's kind of like concrete. For a while you can work with that will but there comes a time when it kind of sets up and it's a little harder to work with.

It's a great difficulty later in life if it hasn't been brought into subjection at a young age and yet even then, can't we praise God? It's not beyond the reach of God. God has some pretty big jackhammers for that concrete and He can still break it up and I've seen it happen. Praise God.

That's our God. Your will. What are some lessons for us this week? Well, as we think about manifestations of the will, I just want to say some of us are married here tonight, some of you are contemplating marriage perhaps someday in your life.

I want to say that marriage is a real manifestation of the condition of the will. Many times we can be so wonderful and so nice and so sweet and then in marriage all of a sudden we realize that I had a little stronger a little more unbroken will than what I realized. It manifests the condition of our will.

Employment and job relationships often reveal the condition of our will. How are you getting along at work? Many times our will is kind of manifest in these little exposures and experiences we have in life. Our will.

Sometimes I marvel when we pass by businesses and used to see this pretty often where I grew up in California. There would be people out marching on the sidewalk with signs on strike. Unfair.

In fact, the high school that I mentioned that I went to, there was a time when the teachers all went on strike. Or many of them, not all of them. And there was a lot of pressure on the few teachers that were willing to go and teach.

And we had teachers hollering at us from the sidewalk. Hey, don't worry about it. You don't need to go to class.

It won't affect your grade. Can you imagine that? The will. I didn't get the benefits I wanted.

I didn't get the pay raise I wanted. The will. Employment opportunities manifest the condition of our will.

How I work together with my brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus often is a manifestation of my will. In fact, just about any relationship will reveal how highly I deprive my own will. Our brother as he speaks about relationships, I want you to think about this thought of the will.

As our brother speaks about passing on the torch, think about my will. As our brother speaks about principles of the kingdom of Christ, the blessings, the constitution that our Lord Jesus instituted, it brings me face to face with my will. I want to mention that there is something that I call passive stubbornness.

Passive stubbornness. Sometimes we can fall into this trap. I'm just going to be uninvolved and kind of autonomous and kind of just no problem, you guys do whatever you want.

I'm just not really involved. Maybe even sometimes I'll say, hey, I'm not up to that. I don't have the ability kind of a claimed inability and yet often really what the situation is is I'm just not willing to roll up my sleeves and get involved.

I don't want to get close to something that might tap into my will a little bit. So just because I have this passive distance doesn't always mean that I have a yielded will. It may actually reveal a stubborn will at times.

Sometimes God calls us to humble ourselves and invest and be a part even if I don't feel like I'm maybe the best one. Well, I have a warning for you, brothers and sisters. Old areas of unyielded will.

Whatever it is in my life or in your life, if there's some old area, if even now the Spirit of God is knocking at your heart and revealing an old area that I'm still hanging on to my will that has not been given over to God, it can begin to seem normal to you. That's a danger that I see. If I have some area that I just keep hanging on to my idea and to my own way, it can begin to eventually seem normal.

And other people may have kind of just adjusted and charitably accepted us the way we are, yet we're going on blindly in life with a serious gap in our blessing from God and potentially heading toward disaster or danger. So be careful. That old area of unyielded will that I've kind of hung on to can begin to seem normal.

And I can begin to allow it. And other people kind of adjust to it and just say, well, he's just kind of that way. She just, that's just a little bit her.

Be careful. If I choose not to deal with that, I may be walking toward disaster. Brothers and sisters tonight, your will, stubborn wills, devastate nations, damage businesses, ruin homes, wreck lives, destroy churches, devastate the testimony of Jesus Christ.

My young man, young lady tonight, what is the hour that is facing you? What is the cup that you are struggling with? Remember the Lord Jesus wrestled with that cup. What's in your cup tonight? What will be in your cup this week? You know, He drank that cup for us. We don't have to drink it.

But I believe there is a cup that you may be facing that will deal with your will. The Father, the Lord may have lovingly placed a cup in your path that you're struggling with your will to drink. Are there some untills in your life that are standing in the way of you yielding? Is there any until? Well, until I plan to deal with that eventually.

What is it? What sin? Hidden? Justified? Procrastinated? Some sweet little secret idol? What sin is worth that? What's keeping me from drinking that cup? What sound? What screen? What secret? What fantasy? What hatred? What jealousy? What gossip habit am I hanging on to? What meat? What meat? In other words, what right? You know, the Apostle said, I can eat meat. I can eat meat. Meat doesn't destroy the work of God.

Meat's no problem for me. But there came a time that he said, But if thy brother begreathed with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. What meat is becoming an obstacle in your life? What right? Something I just won't quite release.

What grudge? You know, the Proverbs has an interesting statement. It says, The heart knoweth its own bitterness. The heart knoweth its own bitterness.

Do you believe that? Do you know if you have any bitterness in your heart? I think you can. Deep down, there's a realization that there's a little bit of bitterness. All is not well.

What grudge is worth hanging on to my own will? What fear is blocking me from God's will? What fear? Oh, I could never do that. What would people What if What fear is blocking you from God's will? Proverbs 129 says, They hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel.

They despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices. My friend, brother, sister, tonight, if you avoid your Gethsemane, your place of wrestling with your will, the breaking of your own will and yielding to the Lord, if you harden and stiffen and turn away again, alas, where will you be? Will you go on another year? How much more damage, some of it may be irreversible, will be caused in 2017? All because of your stubborn will? Do you really have a desire for God's will? Do you really tonight? It's an interesting proverb, and I'm soon going to close, that says this, Wherefore is there price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? That's an interesting phrase, an interesting verse.

It's Proverbs 17, 16. Wherefore is there price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it? And what that tells me is why would you make an investment in wisdom if you're really not interested in following it? Why would you pay to come to Ephrata to the Bible school? Why would you take time off work? Why would you pay money? Why would you drive to this place? Why would you have that price in your hand to get wisdom if you don't actually have a heart for it? And I believe you do. I just want to encourage you to have a heart for it.

And it's going to touch your will in some way this week. I think it'll probably touch mine. I marvel.

I just turned 53 years old just since I got here to Pennsylvania two or three days ago. And I marvel how my own will still rises up at some of the littlest things and sometimes at big things. Oh, the peace, the victory, the glorious freedom and the inner joy of a will that's resigned to God.

There came a time when Jesus, I believe there at Gethsemane, yielded His will to God and He set His face toward the cross. The Bible says this, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Can you consider beyond the cup, whatever's in your cup that looks hard to drink, can you consider the joy set before you by Jesus? You know, Jesus said as He looked over the city of His loved ones, He said, Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not.

Put your name in there instead of Jerusalem. Oh, Joe! Joe! Oh, Melanie! Melanie! Put your name in there. Your name.

Oh, brother! Oh, sister! Sister! How many times I'd like to have gathered you. I'd like to have blessed you. I'd like to have healed you.

I'd like to have comforted you, but you would not. That's the will, beloved. Oh, the peace, the victory, the glorious freedom and the inner joy of a will that is resigned to God.

Picture what God could do with this group if we would break our proud wills together in whatever areas that's needed. Some of the last words of the last book of the Bible is whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely. There's a poem I'd like to read to you as I close.

We're going to give an opportunity for you to respond to any conviction that the Lord may have laid upon your heart. Right here the first evening, if there's been something stirred up in your own will that you would like to deal with, you are most welcome to come forward. There will be brothers and sisters to counsel and pray with you.

And wouldn't it be a blessing? Oh, the freedom! Oh, the joy of a will resigned to God. Consider this poem. And then we'd like to sing.

I would like to sing, brothers, if it would be possible, that same song again, 374. And then you can go on and perhaps that song would be adequate if we could. We'll sing it shortly.

But I'd like to read you this poem. It's also a song. Maybe you know this song.

You think about it. That the Spirit of God is calling you as a student tonight to seek some counsel, to have a time of prayer, to deal with a difficult area of your own will. It may be something very noble that God is

calling you to.

It may be something difficult. It may be dark that you need to deal with. I want to invite you to do that.

Here's the poem, Sweet Will of God. My stubborn will at last hath yielded. I would be thine, yes, thine alone.

Shut in with thee, my Lord, forever, the center of God's will, my home. Sweet will of God, still fold me closer till I am wholly lost in thee. Sweet will of God, still fold me closer till I am wholly lost in thee.

Let's sing again. 374. If you would like to deal with your will in some way tonight, you are welcome to come forward.

I know you don't have to come forward. It's possible to deal with your will. But sometimes, God puts a blessing on making a step that is clearly identified in my own life and planting a stake in the ground to deal with our will.

We'll sing this song. Anyone in the audience tonight is welcome. There will be brothers and sisters available for prayer.

Let's sing 374. Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee. Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love.

At the impulse of thy love. Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for me. Take my voice and let it be heard.

Take my spirit with messages. It shall be no longer. Take my heart and let it be heard.

You can go through those doors over there if you would like. And sisters, through these doors, if you would like to pray with someone, I'll turn the time over to Brother Mark. Thank you, Brother Joe, for sharing with us.

Brother Joe started out the message with a story of 11 men. There was a 12th man that wasn't in that group that night. And you know his story.

Ultimately, the Bible says he was destroyed because of a choice he made. I only tell you that just for us to consider how important our choices are. We consider our will.

He was chosen. Jesus chose him to walk with him. What he knew, I don't know.

Did he know the future? I don't know. I suppose he did, but he chose him. And he made a choice.

So I only say that to say you all have choices to make. Those 11, I understand all but one of them died a martyr's death. Brother John D. told us today that sorrow is a path to joy.

Those men were willing to go down into the depths of giving their life. One man made a different choice. He wanted the little money.

I don't know what all motivated him, but he made a choice that destroyed him. So you young people, be very wise about your choices. You've been chosen.

You are, may I say, one of the 12. Be very wise. It's serious.

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