

GOD'S WILL

Week #9 of a series on "Unity's Foundational Teachings"

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Rev. Richard Rogers

Do you know what God's will is for your life? Oooh, it's a quiet room! [Congregation laughs] Right? Do you know what God's will is for your life? Like, if you knew what God's will was for your life, would your life be easier or harder? [Congregants: "Easier."] I think it'd be easier. Like, if you knew what your job was, is it easier to know what your job is, or is it easier when you have to get up every morning than guess? [Congregants laugh] Like, if you had a boss and every time he came in he just said, "Go get busy." [Congregants laugh] And you weren't really sure what you were supposed to do; you were just supposed to get busy.

Some of us were kind of raised with that mindset spiritually. We were supposed to get "busy." And some of us were taught to be busy being "good." That seemed hard. Right? And yet, we knew we were busy, because if we weren't moving fast enough -- if we weren't getting things done == we knew that we couldn't be doing God's will.

But what if God's will is deeper than that? What if, because you were created in the image and likeness of God, God's will for you has to be to know the fullness of who you are. What if your real purpose -- God's will for each and every one of us -- is a level of good, perfect good, that is higher and greater than we can imagine. And what if, every day, we had to get up and be about that higher level of good?

You know, I've been doing this series this year on Unity fundamentals. And I've wanted to kind of take it back to those fundamental things that really are what Unity stands for. And the first one is **GOD'S WILL**. Because oftentimes after a tragedy or a disaster, people will say, "Well, why did God allow know?" You know, "Why would God allow that awful thing to happen to that family or that individual?" And, you know, oftentimes I will say, "It's not God's will. We've been given everything we need to create a world of peace and abundance where every child could be fed. And we have everything that we need for a world that works for us. for everybody."

Charles Fillmore, the co-founder of Unity said this:

"God's will is always perfection and all good for his children: perfect health in mind and body; abundance and of every good thing, including joy and peace and wisdom and eternal life. His will is not for us to suffer imperfections in any form.

"The belief that God wills both good and evil is false; the truth is that God is all good, and only good can come from man from His will. If man experiences error or inharmony, he brings them upon himself by his failure to harmonize his thoughts, words and actions with the Lord or divine law."

What if God's will truly is to profile wake you up to your spirituality? To your wholeness? To all that you've been created to be? What if every obstacle, every challenge, every problem, every blessing is trying to wake us up to the fullness of who we are and to understand our own greatness? To understand what it truly means to be created in the image and likeness of God?

Steve Harvey ... And I find Steve Harvey very inspiring! Steve Harvey; one of his quotes is, "God's will was exceedingly, abundantly above all that I would ever ask or think of."

You know, when you hear his story of how he was on his last six dollars and got a job offer that led to another job offer on the very weekend that he was about to give up comedy forever. And in that last moment, the doors opened and he was blessed.

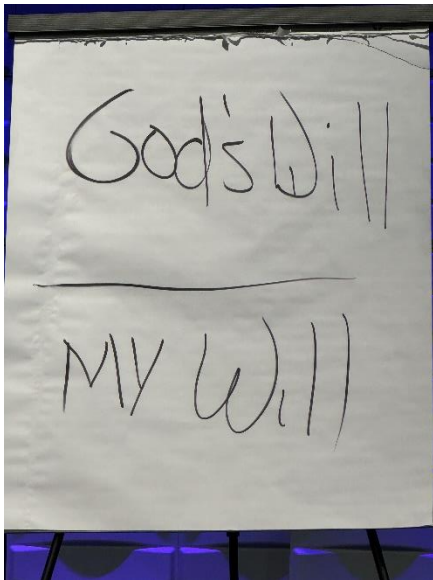
And I want us to really look at, tonight, a deeper, more profound understanding of God's will.

Robert Schuller said, "It takes tremendous spiritual energy to walk God's walk, to work God's work, to fulfill God's will, and to complete his dream of our self-esteem." I want you to hear that! Like, the ultimate job is for us to awaken and see ourselves from God's point of view!

You know that, for many of us, it's actually easier to believe that we are broken; that we are bad; that we are less than; that we'll never be any good. It's actually easier to believe what's wrong with us than to truly open our mind and heart to the possibility that we truly were created in the image and likeness of God and that our future is infinite possibilities. That we were born for our own greatness. That the Spirit of God has been placed within us so that we can overcome every obstacle, every challenge, every need, every problem, and know the glory of God for each and every one of us.

That we're not here to continue to live from a mindset that we are the problem. But we are sometimes the problem, but it's always because we won't stand in the glory of who we are.

[Referring to the flip chart/easel] This little guy's getting ... He's kind of getting a little sad.



Okay. [Writes "God's will" on flipchart] God's will. Okay? Now ... [Draws a line below "God's will" and writes "My will."] Right? I want you to see that distinction.

Because sometimes we believe that "my will" is actually superior to God's will. And we get a little cranky when it looks like there's something interfering with my will. How many of you know that if you were king or queen of the universe for a day, that things would be run better? [Congregants laugh] Right? There are no limits to the power of our ego! Like, how many of you have ever been angry with God that your plan wasn't working out the way you thought it should? Right? That we have such an active, wonderful, creative mind that we absolutely know how our life should go. And what happens is, then we're just functioning from this ["my will"] level of life.

But what if there's a higher level of good? A higher will, if you will. A higher level of good that we could be living from and entertaining and experiencing. How do we get here? How do we get to that level of good?

The most powerful affirmation ... I did a series of talks years ago called "The Five Most Important Prayers." And the lead prayer -- the one that I said was the most important prayer -- was, "**Thy will be done.**" That the most important prayer that takes us from this ["my will"] to this ["God's will"] is, "*Thy will be done.*"

That every time we get stuck in our own ego belief that we know the highest and the best, we have this prayer that says, "*Not my will, but Thy will be done.*" And the moment we move from our will to God's will, then the whole other level of life becomes available to us!

And sometimes we are so upset with God's will -- that we're not getting what we want -- that we just want to have our little temper tantrum and kick our little feet and kick our little hands. And like, "*No, no, no! It's supposed to go this way!*" And yes; you can spend years working on your will. But in one moment, you can say, "*But Thy will be done.*" Thy will be done!

And the moment we say, "*Thy will be done,*" there's an opportunity for us to get curious. To say, "*I really wonder what the highest will is that God has for me in this moment, or in this situation, or this*

possibility. I wonder if there's a higher possibility. level of good that I could actually access, and to know that."

Because you know what you're thinking. You know what the highest will is that you can imagine. But that's a limited point of view! You don't know infinite good. Like, there's a higher level! And the moment we say, "*Thy will be done*," it actually frees us from our own material, humanistic thinking. It invites a whole other level of good to show up into our life! And we just have to have the courage to say, "*Alright; I'm willing to give up my ego desires for a higher level of good.*"

Together: [with congregation] "*Thy will be done.*"

One more time: [with congregation] "*Thy will be done.*"

Do all of us have an area in our life where we are just a tad frustrated with the way it's turning out? [Congregants laugh] Right? If you don't, talk to your neighbor. Right? And I just want you to see: every time you're frustrated, you are dealing with a limited desire. And every time you're frustrated, disappointed, anger, upset, I want you to see that it's in those moments that there's a whole other level of life that's available to you if you will kind of get off of it and move into a higher possibility and simply say ...

Together: [with congregation] "*Thy will be done.*"

Thy will be done! I'm curious. Can you see as a planet that maybe we haven't maximized the highest level of good that we could do as a planet? Right? Like, it's always easier to see it for somebody else than it is to see it for yourself, right? Sometimes we get so involved in our own thought process that we absolutely think, "*It should look like this.*" And when it doesn't, we get our little feelings hurt.

"Thy will be done."

Together: [with congregation] "*Thy will be done.*"

You know, there's a Scripture in 1 Corinthians that says, "*What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him.*" I mean, that's a pretty big statement! That no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart of man has yet conceived what God has prepared for those who love him! And the opening idea is that there's a whole other level of good that is available to all of us!

I remember my first ministry: little town; Merced, California. And I had a dream. And in this dream, the church was a bar. [Congregants laugh] All right, just sit with me; just hang in there, right? The church was a bar, right? right? It was like an old Western bar. And there was a cute little church, and it was like an old Western bar. The sanctuary was like an old Western bar. And then, in this dream, I walked behind the bar and there was this palatial experience. And I thought, "*Well, why don't we worship in here? This is better!*" And God -- in the voice -- and God said to me, "*That's your job. Your job is to help them move from the bar to church.*" Right?

And over and over again, what I want you to see is that sometimes we're fighting for our limitations instead of saying, "*Thy will be done.*"

Together: [with congregation] "*Thy will be done.*"

This is what Jesus said. Matthew 7: "*For everyone who asks, receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened ... Which of you, if your son asked for bread, would give him a stone? Or if he asked for a fish, would give him a snake? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father, who is in heaven, give good gifts to those who ask him?"*

Now, when we hear that last part – “For those that ask Him” -- we thought, “Okay, God, this is what I want. I want it red. I'd prefer if it said Ferrari on it, right? This is, this is what I want.” Right?

And instead of just being curious -- like, “What’s the best? What’s the best that God has? What is the best way my life could look? What would truly be the greatest life that God could imagine for me? Not that I could imagine for myself?”

And the more that we get curious about this level of higher good -- this level of God's perfection -- the more that we're willing to begin to let go of this [“my will”] for this [“God’s will”]. And you can live your whole life fighting for this [“my will”]. And some of it's going to be great! But it's still not going to be this [“God’s will”]. Like, if you get everything you want at this level [“my will”], it's never going to be this [“God’s will”]. This [“God’s will”] is better.

You were created in the image and likeness of God. That's the ultimate gift! Do you know that? Can you live that? Can you express that? Can you express all the God that is within you? Can you know the fullness of who you are? That's God's will for us!

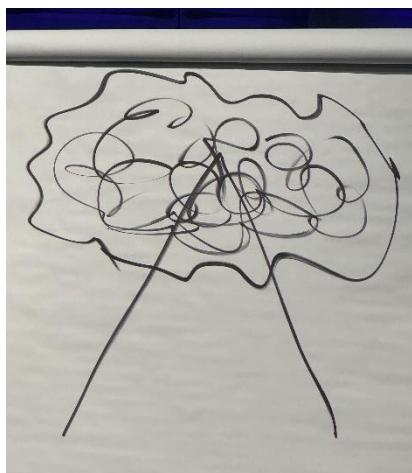
When we know that, we're able to overcome all the “stuff” of life, because we know that everything that is in our life is to launch us into a higher way of knowing ourselves; into experiencing a higher level of good; and to truly manifest the kingdom of God that's all around us.

And yet, when we look at some of the ways that we have prayed ... You know, *the Book of Common Prayer*, written in the 1500s, says this: “We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs underneath Your table.”

Anybody ever prayed that one? “We are so much not worthy to gather up the crumbs underneath Your table.” And I want you to see that that mindset that says that we are lowly and awful and broken and sinful -- that mindset keeps us at this level where we never even contemplate how good it could be.

That tonight, would you be willing to move your vision a little higher? To see the possibilities?

Okay, I'm going try to do artwork. [Congregants laugh] Yeah; you think that's funny now, wait 'til you see it. [Congregants laugh] 'kay? Guess what that is? No; not a pumpkin. Pumpkin pie! No; it's a mountain. [Congregants laugh] Okay, that's how basic we're going here, people. Right?



Guess what this is? [Congregants: “Cloud.”] It's a cloud! That's why people don't ever invite me to play Pictionary with them because ... So this is a cloud.

Now, if this is a cloud. what happens to the top of the mountain? Right? Can you see it? Kind of, but not really, right? So this is the dilemma. We're somewhere here. [Points to the bottom part of the mountain] Each one of us is somewhere here.

And the good that God has for us is the mountaintop experience. We're not supposed to settle for living down here. There's nothing wrong with living here, but we've been offered up here! We've been offered the mountaintop! But we have to be willing to make the journey – and the obstacles and the challenges that come from wherever we are on the mountain to the mountaintop experience.

And the mountaintop experience is what your soul came for! You came for the glory of God! You came to know yourself created in the image and likeness of God! You came for the mountaintop experience.! There's an expression that somebody shared with me that said, “Rock bottom will teach you lessons that

the mountaintops never will." Is that true? Yes! But the mountaintop will teach you lessons that rock bottom never will! Like, how many lessons do we need to learn from hitting rock bottom? Like, the number one lesson from hitting rock bottom is that we are at rock bottom! [Congregants laugh] Like, that's the number one lesson from hitting rock bottom: *"Oh, this isn't good! I don't like this. I don't like to be poor or broke or lonely or suffering or sick. I don't enjoy that. I want to go to the mountaintop and go hang out in that level of life that God promised us from the beginning of time."*

That each and every one of us was created to go hang out at the mountaintop!

"Well, Richard, come on. You know, I don't deserve the mountaintop." But you can't say that if you truly believe that you're created in the image and likeness of God! If you're created in the image and likeness of God, the mountaintop was built for you. The mountaintop is the only place that's going to satisfy your soul!

God's will for you is to know the glory of God expressing through you.

You know, we're moving into Easter. And this Easter experience is about dying to the old ways so that we can be born again in a higher way. Dying to our physical limitations so that we can be born into the glory of God. That's the Easter message.

And as we prepare for that message, each one of us is going to have to let go of the limitations that we are so committed to. And really get curious about what it would be for your number one prayer to be, *"Thy will be done."*

Together: [with congregation] *"Thy will be done."*

Because I'm telling you, we don't really have a good idea what this [mountaintop] looks like. We've had some great spiritual teachers that have pointed to the mountaintop and invited us to travel. But we have no idea what it would be like for us to live at the mountaintop experience. We have to take that on faith.

Now, have you ever read stories about people mountain climbing? One of the things we have heard from the stories we've heard about people mountain climbing is that it is far more dangerous to do it by yourself. Like, there's this idea that it's actually safer to move up the mountain when you do it in groups.

And I truly believe that's what the benefit of spiritual community: that we weren't designed to do this by ourselves. We actually want people around us to carry the pack when it gets too heavy. We want somebody to go ahead and say, *"Look, where's the path, because I don't see it."* We want somebody to help us carry the food and do all the things it takes to move to the mountaintop. And we do that best when we do it together!

That when you have people around you who are equally committed to living at the mountaintop, it inspires you to get up every day, put on your pack for another day, and take the trip of that day.

We are created in the image and likeness of God. And God's will is that every one of God's little ducks is going to get to the mountaintop. Some of us taking the long way, right? [Congregants laugh] Some of us have circled the mountain a few times. Right? Making sure there isn't an elevator, an escalator; making sure there isn't an easier way.

But at some point, we have to decide that that mountain is for us. It is our spiritual good to climb that mountain. And to be able to get to the top and look out as far as you can see and know that all that -- everything you see -- was for your soul's good. For when we are on the mountain top, every step we took to get us there -- every activity, every sacrifice, everything it took to get us to the mountaintop -- was worth it to see that view and to know that Truth.

"Thy will be done."

Will you say that with me? [With congregants:] *"Thy will be done."*

Let's pray.

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God that is right here, right now. That there is only one Presence and one Power -- God the Good -- in each and every one of us. And that we are absolutely here for something greater than we realize: a plan, a mission, a purpose that is our divine heritage. It's within us; it's woven into our soul. That we will never be truly, deeply, profoundly satisfied until we climb to the mountaintop and know the glory of God. That we truly are God's beloved. We are those spiritual giants who don't yet believe that we're giants. So in the name and through the power of the living Christ, we say together, [with congregants] *"Thy will be done."* One more time: [with congregations] *"Thy will be done."* And so it is. Amen.

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