

Pray More Lenten Retreat - Transcript

Trusting in God's Will

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Hi, my name is Ashley Stevens of Mountains Unmoved. And today we're gonna take a look at one of Christ's scariest days in His life. We're gonna look at how He handled His fear and how and why He trusted God's will for His life above His own.

Before we begin, let's open in prayer. *In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Amen. God, today I wanna lift up anyone who's afraid, I wanna lift up anyone who's afraid of a big decision, anyone who's afraid of the next step, anyone who's afraid of something that you're calling them to that seems scary. And today as we reflect on what Christ did with His fear, and how He trusted in God's will, I pray that we would all be strengthened to find and to trust God's will for our life as well. I ask this in your name. Amen. In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Today we're gonna take a closer look at Christ's time in the garden. So if you have a Bible, open up with me, we're gonna start with Mark chapter 14, and start with verse 32. And it says: ***Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with Him Peter, James and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and keep watch." He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass by Him; He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will, but what you will."***

A little context of that passage: Christ and His disciples were very freshly out of their last meal together out of the Last Supper. Christ was well aware that that night soon after He would be betrayed by one of His disciples, one of His followers, one of His friends. And that night when Christ's soul was troubled, even to death, when He was distressed, He took some of His closest friends, He took Peter, James, and John, three of His disciples with Him, and He invited them into His anguish that night. He invited them to come and pray with Him. He invited

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them, He asked them to keep watch, and to keep guard while He went to the Father.

And after that passage, what strikes me is not once, not twice, but three times the same thing occurs. After Christ prays that Abba prayer, father prayer, He went back to His disciples and He found them all asleep. And each time Christ wakes them up and says, "Continue to keep watch, continue to stay awake and keep watch for me while I go back to my father." That time, Christ was incessantly going back to prayer, to the Father, on the scariest night of His life. And that night, the words He used the Abba Father, that term appears other times in Scripture, and it's one of the most personal ways of addressing our Dad. And Christ was essentially saying, "Daddy, Daddy, I know you can do all things, please take this cup away from me. Put this hour pass by me, but Dad, I trust you and I love you and not my will, but your will be done."

How does Christ get there? How do we get there? How does Christ get to that spot where He trusts so completely in His Father's love that He submits His will to His, even when He knew it was scary. There's a quote I love by St. Thomas Aquinas, it says, "To love God is something greater than to know Him." And I think that night Christ was able to trust His father, He was able to trust His will, because He knew He was loved by Him. There's a verse in first John, it says, "*Perfect love, casts out fear.*" And that night, Christ was able to take His fear, and then give it to the Father, because He knew He was perfectly and completely loved.

How do we get there though? How do we get to that spot in our relationship with God, that we trust His will above our own? How do we take our fears and, rather than stressing and turning into a fraz ball, offer them to the Father. How do we get there?

For myself one of my scariest parts one of my scariest chapters, was soon after my accident. And I was down in Atlanta in my second month of therapy, and at the age of 22, I was stripped of my independence. I wasn't able to eat non pureed food, I wasn't able to walk or use the restroom unassisted, I definitely wasn't able to do the big things like go back to work or drive or get married, and at that time in my life, I was terrified. I was terrified that these things I had planned for, like getting my MBA, these things I had dreamed about like walking down the aisle and starting a

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family. I was scared that they would never come to be and I was scared that God's will for my life would be radically different than my own.

And on that day, I have to be honest with you, I was angry. I was angry, and there were parts in my story in my recovery, that I wanted to punch a wall, and I asked God and I looked at Him, I said, why? Why? How can you be loving God, and bring me through this? Why, God? But I'm so thankful I have learned in high school, how to find His love, especially in those types of moments. And I'm gonna show you how I did that today. So if you have a Bible, open up to Ephesians chapter one. And the way for me that I hear God's love declares is turning to His word. And in high school I learned when I read passages, Ephesians is a great chapter to do this, Colossians is another good one. For really any spot in Scripture and what I do is when I read the word us, I change it to me. I make it personal. I make it God's word to myself. When I read the word God's people, I change it to my name, I say, Ashley.

So let's do it right now with Ephesians chapter one, starting with verse three, and I'm gonna apply it to you right now. Says: ***Blessed be the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed you in Christ, with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as He chose you and Him before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before Him. In love He destined you for adoption to Himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of His will for the praise of the glory of His grace that He granted you in the beloved.*** In Jesus Christ.

Do we believe this? Do we believe that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens? Do we realize that we were chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before God? And what does knowing that change the way we feel God sees us? How much does growing in that identity, help us to better trust His will, to trust His love for our lives on scary days?

For me, I find God's love in His word, like I mentioned, for you, maybe it's somewhere else. Maybe for you, you hear Him or you see Him or you feel His love more in prayer or adoration. Maybe you see it more in fellowship or Bible study, but if you take away one thing from this talk tonight, I ask that that be what you take home what ever that thing or that activity or that person is that makes you feel closest to God makes you see His love and hear His voice clearest, do those things

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and do those things often. Because I found, the more I engage with the Father, the more I go to His word, the more I see His love, the more I hear tenderness in His voice, and the more on scary days of fear and uncertainty, that I'm able to, just as Christ did, to lay down my will at our loving fathers feet.

Let's close in prayer. *In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. God, I thank you so much for your perfect, and complete love for each and every one of us, I thank you for the witness that Christ showed in submitting His will to yours. And I thank you for the love that you showed in redeeming our sin in His life on the cross. And I just pray, in our moments of fear and in our moments of uncertainty, that we would each better trust and know that you have a loving will for our lives. I ask this in your name. Amen. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*