

# Song of the Savior

## What Child Is This?

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

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How good are you and I at following the will of God? Many of us grew up in a church tradition where we said the Lord's prayer every single Sunday, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. We have done message series talking about this prayer, but today I want to focus specifically on the line that says, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." You see, when we are praying these words, whether it's collectively in church or whether it's at home or we're using it to teach our children, we are making a very profound and difficult statement.

When we say, "Thy will be done," we are asking for our Father's will to be accomplished even at the expense of our own. When you say this prayer, whether personally or corporately, do you really mean that? Father, may your will be done even at the expense of my own. Are you willing to sacrifice your plans, your desires, your will in order to pursue His?

Now you're sitting in church or you're watching online or listening on the radio. And so you might easily say, "Yes, of course, pastor. That's why I am here. Of course, I would sacrifice my plans. But what do we really do when the rubber meets the road? Because sometimes following God and His will over your own is costly. Sometimes following God's will is painful. Sometimes, following God's will requires us to take a different path than we intended in life.

And this is precisely what happened with the Magi when they traveled to see Jesus. They had in their mind an itinerary of how this was going to play out, but God interrupted that and said, "Nope, we need to change this a little bit." Let's read Matthew chapter 2, starting in verse 1. "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the East came to Jerusalem and they asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?

We saw his star when it rose, and we have come to worship him." We jump to verse nine. "After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star that they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. The Magi had already sacrificed a lot to go and visit Jesus. It's very possible that they had sacrificed finances and time and energy and maybe even their health as they made the long journey to see the baby Jesus.

Again, they had made their plans. They had an itinerary. This is how we're going to go. This is how we're going to come back. And God asked them to change their route. This was going to add time to an already difficult and long journey that they had made. But that probably wasn't the worst part of it. The worst part of it was that it was going to put them at odds with King Herod, and that was never a good position to be in.

And yet, the Magi decided to submit themselves to God's will and obey. You know, not everyone in the Bible, not every story that we have in Scripture ends with that same conclusion that they obeyed God even to the detriment of their own will or their own desires. Today, I want to look at two men in Scripture, two examples, both from the New Testament, who are called by Jesus to follow Him.

Both of these men are called by the Son of God to be a part of His journey, but not both will follow. Only one will choose to follow Jesus, and it may shock you which of the two it is. So if you have your Bibles, I encourage you to open up with me to Luke chapter 18. Luke chapter 18, we're going to start in verse 18, and we're going to jump to chapter 19 as well.

So Luke chapter 18, starting in verse 18, let me pray, and then we will read the first part together. Heavenly Father, sometimes, if we are honest, it is difficult to sacrifice our own wills, our own desires in order to follow you. But at the same time, we know that the only way we will find fulfillment in this life is if we choose to follow you.

And so help us to submit and truly proclaim you as Lord of our lives. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen. Luke chapter 18, starting in verse 18, Luke tells us that there was a certain ruler who came up to Jesus and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answered, "Why do you call me good?"

No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. Honor your father and mother. "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. So we are introduced to our first gentleman, a young ruler, who seems to have life by the tail. He has it altogether.

He is asking the right questions of the right person. What do I need to do to inherit eternal life? That's the question. That's a great question. That's a question that every single one of us should ask. And he is asking the right person. He seems to be a religious man. He probably attends synagogue every week, and he does his best to follow the rules, the commandments. How many of us could look at Jesus and say, "Yup, I have followed all 10 perfectly since I was a boy or a girl." Not many.

He says, "I kept all these, Jesus. What else do I need to do?" We also know that he was wealthy. You don't know this yet, but we will be told later about that. This is really the kind of young man that if you had daughters, this is the type of young man that you would want your daughters to bring home. You would love for them to marry a young man like this. He seems to be the type of man that every one of us who has sons wants our son to turn into.

Now we're going to contrast this man. We're going to pause that story if you want to flip a little later to Luke chapter 19. And we are going to see somebody that really feels the exact opposite of this young ruler, Luke 19 verses 1 and 2, where Luke tells us that Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, and he also was wealthy.

We know this guy, right? If you grew up in church, Zacchaeus was a wee little man. A wee little man was he. He climbed up in the sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see. You guys heard the same song I did growing up. We all know about Zacchaeus. Besides being wealthy, Zacchaeus was the exact opposite of this young ruler. For Zacchaeus was a tax collector.

And a tax collector meant that he was a traitor to his own people, the Israelites. According to the Jewish standards, this man would have been the furthest thing from a religious person. He cheated his own people

out of their money, and he partnered with Rome to extort God's people. It's more than likely that Zacchaeus' parents would have been ashamed of him. And if your daughter brought somebody home like Zacchaeus, you would probably not even welcome him in.

Simply put, he was a scumbag. This is Zacchaeus. Not coincidentally, Luke puts these stories back-to-back, and both of these men are going to be called by Jesus to change their trajectory in life, to change their path, and to follow Him, just as the Magi were called to do that. Let's look at their response, starting with the rich young ruler. So go back to Luke chapter 18, verse 22.

How is this young ruler going to respond to Jesus? When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "Young man, you still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me." And when the young ruler heard this, he became very sad. Why? Because he was very wealthy. You see, Jesus knew this young man's heart.

On the outside, it looked like he had it all put together. He had all of the answers to the questions. But unfortunately, money had a hold on this guy's heart. Jesus wanted this young man to join his caravan, to be a part of his journey, to be a part of his group. But he also knew it was impossible for anybody to serve two masters. This young man had to make a choice.

Was he going to serve Jesus or was he going to serve money? Was this young man going to use his wealth for his own benefit, or would he use his money as a tool to fix and repair the lives of others? Unfortunately, as we read in the story, this man goes away sad. He chooses his own path. He chooses his own will over following Jesus. Why? Because change is difficult.

Jesus was calling this young man to totally change his identity. This young man had his identity in his stuff and in his status, and Jesus tells him, "If you want to find eternal life," remember that was the question he was asking. "If you want to find eternal life, then young man, your identity needs to be found in Jesus. In me," Jesus says. This would change or alter everything about this guy.

It would probably change his friends. It would change how he had to live. It would change how others would see him. And sadly, he was unwilling to change. Here was a young man who had amazing potential, everything going for him, but he chose poorly. Here is this young man. How do you and I identify this young man as we see the heading of the story? The story is about the rich young ruler.

That's what he will forever be known as, not as a disciple of Jesus. Think about the difference. Now let's talk about Zacchaeus, the tax collector. How is he going to respond to the call of Jesus? You can flip forward again to Luke 19 where we left off in verse 3. Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short, he could not see over the crowd.

So he ran ahead and he climbed a sycamore fig tree in order to see him since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and he said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So Zacchaeus came down and at once, he welcomed Jesus gladly.

All of the people that were standing around saw this and they began to mutter, "Jesus has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood up amongst the crowd and he said, "Lord, look, here and now, I give half of my possessions to the poor.

And if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today, Zacchaeus, salvation has come to this house because this man, too, is a son of Abraham." Notice the stark difference between the rich young ruler and Zacchaeus. He immediately responds to the call of Jesus. Zacchaeus is ready to change.

His heart is ripe. He understands that saying yes to Jesus will require some radical changes moving forward, but he is too excited to care. One yes to Jesus truly would change the entire journey for the rest of

Zacchaeus' life. This was a U-turn in his life. It would change the way he lives. It would change how people would see him. It would change who he spends time with.

It would even change his politics and his theology. I wish that I could say it was going to make his life easier, but that wasn't true. This change for Zacchaeus of following Jesus from what we know meant that he would have to learn to live with less income. He was going to have to learn to live with less political power and less influence in certain areas of life. But none of that mattered to Zacchaeus.

He was ready for change. You and I need to recognize that dedication and following Jesus can be costly. In agreeing to following Jesus, Zacchaeus agreed to give away half of his income, not just that year, but every year moving forward, I give away half of my income to the poor as an offering and as a way to say thank you, Jesus. And not just that. He wants to make things right from the past as well.

And so Zacchaeus says, "You know what? That's not enough. I'm not just going to give away half of my income moving forward. I'm going to go back and look in my books. And everybody that I have cheated out of anything, I'm going to pay back four times what I owe them because what I did was wrong. Can you imagine living life on half your income? Think about that right now. Think if Jesus came in here and called you.

He says, "I want you to follow me." And to respond yes to that, not because he asked you, but because you felt in your heart, "I'm going to live on half my income." This was real change. Think about cutting your standard of living. Zacchaeus' heart had been transformed, and he was going to prove it by his actions. Here we have two men who experienced this call to follow Jesus. Jesus says, "Come and follow me." One said yes, and the other went home.

One continued to follow his own will. The other said, "I'm going to follow Jesus." One went away sad. The other was joyfully fulfilled. One of the truths that we need to learn about life is that nothing in this world will fulfill us except Jesus. Everything else is temporary. It may bring temporary happiness.

It may bring temporary fulfillment, but it will leave you empty. Here was the rich man who had everything going for him. He was a ruler. He had power. He had wealth. But he went away sad because he was missing the one thing he really needed. And here we have Zacchaeus, despised by his own people. Though he had wealth, he couldn't enjoy it with anybody because nobody wanted to be his friend.

And he goes away joyfully fulfilled because he has submitted to Jesus. The Magi, like Zacchaeus, decided to be obedient to the will of God. They said, "We will return home by a different way and we will bypass King Herod because that's what you are calling us to do." And so I asked the question, "What about you? What is God calling you to do?" Every calling is different. I don't know the calling that God has put on your heart for some.

It might have to do with finances like it did for the rich young ruler and Zacchaeus. For others, it might have nothing to do with finances. It might have to do with certain relationships. Relationships that God is telling you you need to develop or relationships that God is telling you, "You know what? That needs to be cut off." For others, it might be a step that you need to take in your own personal journey to submit to the will of God. It's God's desire. It's God's will that we would fellowship with others, that we would do life together.

And so for some of you, maybe you're watching online, you're listening on the radio, and God is saying, "You know what? You need to connect with a body of believers. You need to start going to church. You need to start attending so you can make friendships and relationships." And here at Fairview, we often talk about life groups. You need to have a group of people that you can go through life with, you can grow with. For others, it might be about a job change.

Maybe today God is calling you to give up your job to go into full-time Christian ministry, and that just scares you more than you could ever imagine. For some of you, maybe God is calling you out of full-time Christian

ministry because that's not the only way that we can share the love of Jesus. All change is difficult. But if God is calling you to do it, then only obedience will bring you peace.

If you come here today with a lack of peace, at least be willing to ask the question, "God, am I following my own will and desires? Do I need to submit to you? Embrace the change. Run toward Jesus.

Be willing to take the different route that maybe doesn't even make sense to family and friends and neighbors because the only thing that will satisfy the only thing that will fulfill is the person of Jesus Christ. This child is the king. We sing the song, "What child is this?" This is the child that changes everything if you will simply submit to Him.

Let's close in prayer. Heavenly Father, if we are honest, every single one of us has had things in our life that we have held onto too tightly. Things that sometimes have taken your place in our lives.

So we repent of that knowing that those things only left us empty. You are the only one that can truly fulfill. Give us the courage. Give us the discipline to sacrifice our own wills and desires for yours so that we can truly say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Amen.