



EXODUS

TRIUMPH OF GRACE

EXODUS - WEEK 14

The Power of God's Will

Opening prayer

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Daniel Garcia and Emmaus Church San Bernadino.

Closing prayer

Introduction:

Most of the time, when we think of God's power, we think in terms of the Holy Spirit moving and manifesting Himself. There's good reason for that. It's because that's how the

power of God is often displayed in the pages of Scripture. God's power is seen in creation, something Scripture says God shares His power. The demons flee when Jesus commands them by the power of His word. He gave the apostles power to cast out demons. People in the New Testament sought to touch Jesus because power came out from Him. He promises to cloth us with power from on high. This treasure of God's power is found in our jars of clay, our earthen vessels, our bodies.

But there are other ways the Scripture explains God's power. Paul says the gospel is God's power. In the simple act of explaining the points of the gospel, which doesn't look as dramatic as other manifestations of the Holy Spirit, God is doing a miraculous work in a person's heart and mind when all that appears to be happening is someone is listening while someone is talking.

Another way Scripture presents a simple manifestation of God's power in doing God's will, because in doing God's will God moves

with us. In other words, God honors His Word by upholding us when we obey His Word. So, His power can look as simple as an encouraging word from a friend.

Big Idea: There is power in doing the will of God.

When we act upon God's Word, this is where we will find God. When we obey a simple command, we find God is there with us. And not just in a "I know it in my head" kind of way, but in an experiential way.

1. God's will is not confusing.

Exodus 14:1-9

14 Then the Lord said to Moses, 2 “Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth (Pie-ha-hi-reth), between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon (Bail-z-fun); you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, ‘They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.’⁴ And I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and he will

pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.” And they did so.

They followed God’s will. God gave Moses and the people of Israel directions. He revealed His will to them, in other words. It wasn’t complex. God’s will isn’t complex. Is it hard? That’s another issue. It’s hard when we don’t trust. But it’s clear. It’s not confusing.

I can’t get on board with the idea that God’s will for us is mysterious. Is life mysterious?

Sure. That's another issue. We're talking about God's will in a given situation. If we can't know God's will in a given situation, then how can we do it? How can we be held accountable for something we don't know or understand?

- *The Manifest*
- God has revealed His will in His Word — it's not confusing.

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his

servants was changed toward the people, and they said, “What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” ⁶ So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, ⁷ and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.

So, God tells the Israelites, “Here’s what I want you to do. And when you do this, here’s what’s going to happen.” That’s pretty clear, isn’t it?

It's no different for us today. God says, "I want you to have the same attitude that Christ had. And when you do, you'll get some flak, because everyone who lives as Christ lived will suffer persecution."

God's will for us is found in His Word. It's not complex. Is it hard? That's another issue.

8 And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. 9 The Egyptians pursued them,

all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

2. Doing God's Will is a spiritual battle.

Spiritual forces of darkness want to prevent the will of God from being fulfilled. We are being pursued, the same way the Israelites were being pursued by the Egyptians. The church is being pursued by powers of

darkness. With what goal in mind? To stop us and bring us back in line with the ways and thinking of the world. In short, they want to stop us from doing God's will.

The Thought Police are in full force today. Make no mistake about it. When people no longer care that the heartbeat of a baby constitutes life in the womb, when every contestant on some talent show shares how their church background stifled them because they are gay, when the British government uses Bible verses to argue that Christianity is

not a peaceful religion... these are not happenstance occurrences. These are powers that pursue in order to stop. What do they want to stop? They want to stop the proclamation of the truth – they want to stop people from believing God, because when you don't believe God you don't do His will.

1 John 1:5-6

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have

fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

It's not complex, but people don't often like clarity when it comes to spiritual matters. They like cloudiness. Why? Well, how can you be held responsible to do something when you don't know if it's the right thing to do?

People don't like this clarity and if gospel of Jesus Christ is anything it is clear. "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus." And all

throughout Scripture it's pretty clear that there is no other Person who can save us besides Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God in the flesh.

- Barbara Brown Taylor

If God's will has been revealed, then we can know — is the point.

Exodus 14:10-22

10 When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord.

So, this is interesting. They were doing God's will, but it felt like they were losing. They feared. They cried out, but not in faith. Let's think about this. God told them what His plans were (in other words, His will) — Pharaoh's going to pursue you. I'm going to harden his heart, but I'll prove to the Egyptians that I am

the Lord. And yet once they were in the circumstances they were full of doubt.

Does any of this sound familiar?

Greater is He who is in you than He who is in the world. I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. My power will come upon you to be my witnesses. Death has been defeated. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Sounds pretty promising, doesn't it?

And yet we turn around and act just like people being pursued by Pharaoh. “Where’s God at? Does He love me? Is He for us? What’s going on? We’re going to die here!”

11 They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

I should have never followed God's will here, because I was better off where I was. Maybe I missed God's will.

13 And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.

Stand firm. What's the opposite of standing firm? Wavering. “I'm positive this is the

course set before us... well, I think I'm sure. Okay, I'm not so sure. Maybe we shouldn't go this way at all... I think we should turn around." "But the Lord said..." "Oh, I know what the Lord said, but look at things. Look at the circumstances. God can't be in this."

What we have here is an issue of – Immediacy verses Eternity. I mentioned this last week, we live in a technological culture. We want things to happen now and faster than now. Immediacy. If things don't happen

and quickly, well, let's try something different and quick. Immediacy verses Eternity.

Church life, the Christian life, is about Eternity – eternal values, eternal results. What God works in your soul you do not notice immediately, do you? His goals for you are bigger than your goals for you. This is why we can stand firm and hold our ground as these forces pursue us.

3. God's goal for us is bigger than our goal for us.

14 The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

15 The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward.

Here's something hard to get our minds around. The Lord will fight for us, but we move forward. You see, if you don't move forward God is not going to fight for you. You

have to move forward toward the battle. That's when you'll see God fight for you. Too many of us want to sit back, let go and let God. But that's a false concept. The Lord will do the fighting as you do the moving forward. How can you expect the Lord to honor and uphold His word if you are not moving forward and obeying His word?

4. The Lord will do the fighting as we do the moving.

16 Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground. 17 And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Moses moves forward, God does the fighting.
Moses obeys, God upholds His word.

18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”

There is spiritual victory in this battle, because the Lord does the fighting.

19 Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them, 20 coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the

cloud and the darkness. And it lit up the night without one coming near the other all night.

The Lord has us covered, behind, before, beneath, above. In every way possible, God has you covered.

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Notice that the Lord does the miraculous here through natural means. He does the supernatural by using the natural – “the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.” Now, it’s still a miracle and it’s still supernatural, but He simply used natural means.

This is a great reminder to us that the Christian friend who called you the other day to see how you were is God using natural means to care for you. But that doesn’t make

it any less supernatural, because God put you on your friend's heart. Don't discount the mundane, the everyday things we experience, just because they don't come with fireworks. God uses natural means in a supernatural way to accomplish His purposes.

22 And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Now, this is where the natural means leaves the realm of the natural and the explanation is supernatural. This wind blew all night and the water became a wall. That doesn't happen every day.

Can you imagine walking through two walls of water while doubting God has your best interests at heart? If they didn't have the blood of the Passover Lamb in mind, they would doubt God in this situation. They would look at the walls of water and think, "What if they come crashing down on us? How do we

know God won't destroy us by this water?" That's when their friend reminds them — Remember the blood of the Lamb? God has saved us from death. Will He not save us from the waters we walk through in life?

Isaiah 43:2

**^2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be**

**burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.**

We give to much church failure and tragedy
good spin.

Exodus 14:23-31

23 The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian

forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic,²⁵ clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.”

26 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen.”

Notice something about the obedience of Moses here... it comes in stages. He gains an

understanding of God's will, he goes and does it and sees God act, then he gets his next assignment, so to speak, goes and does it, sees God act, etc.

Obey what you understand and you'll gain more understanding to obey more. But if you're not obedient in what you know, then don't expect any deeper understanding of God's will.

5. The most mature Christians aren't those who know the most, but those who simply obey what they know.

And this isn't legalism or works-righteousness I'm talking about. Here's a biblical truth – with faith comes obedience and with obedience comes God's power. With unbelief comes legalism and with legalism comes powerlessness. This is why legalists often

seem like good Christians, but they are powerless Christians.

27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. **28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained.** **29 But the people of Israel walked on dry ground**

through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

³⁰ Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. ³¹ Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

So, our sixth and final point mirrors our first point:

6. Because they obeyed they saw the power of God.

When the Lord moves, He moves in power. They saw the power of God. And what did this do for them — they feared the Lord and believed in Him.

We believe the gospel because we experience the power of God. That's what the gospel is — the power of God. When you believe it you've experienced the power of God.

When you deal with souls, you come to realize, all my good arguments, which I win most of the time, aren't doing the trick. The person I'm speaking to needs something more. It's not that they don't need good arguments, but they need something more than a good argument. They need to see the power of God.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in

demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.