

## ***God Wants What I Want***

**Intro:** (cell phone demonstration) Four and five weeks ago I did a couple of sermons on work, money, and the “health and wealth” or “prosperity” gospel. The myth that God is all about making you comfortable, rich, and healthy is a tough one to kill. We took it behind the barn once and we will have to do that again...

But this week covers more material than just prosperity. Remember: God made us in His image and ever since, we have tried to make Him into our image. That is the root of the majority of our religious divisions, personal angst, and spiritual dwarfism.

### **I. Helping God Do What We Want Him to Do**

- A.** The letter from my friend: she is angry at God. She was sure He wanted her to marry this fellow. Then she was sure God wanted her to move to Florida. Then she was sure God wanted her to marry this other fellow. Then she was sure... you get the idea.
- B.** Now she is broken, hurting, and doubting God’s goodness or, at least, His interest in her. God has become a trickster, or apathetic, or He is punishing her for something.
- C.** It really comes down to: what does God want?
- D.** Even when God tells us what He wants, we can get it wrong by trying to help Him out. (Sara formed a committee with Hagar and ended up plunging the world into thousands of years of war)
- E.** A wise elder (Dean Tripp) told me that it wasn’t helpful to ask God what His will was. We know His will. If we follow Him, His will will be done in our lives.

### **II. So What’s His Will?**

- A.** The book of Ecclesiastes has a lot to say about this. Let’s do a quick check of the prosperity gospel again. Is it God’s will that we be rich? 5:10-12.
- B.** The writer of Ecclesiastes checks wealth, reputation, power, sex, and accomplishments up against eternity and sees only a passing value to any of them. What matters? 12:13,14

1. Fear God and keep His commandments.
  2. Our deeds will judge us because they will be matched against His will.
- C.** Scared? What commandments? Good question. There are 613 of them in the Old Testament alone! However, it is fairly easy to see what is truly important to God...and it isn't what is usually most important to us!
1. Micah 6:6-8: *“With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”*
  2. How busy would those three things keep you? What if you abandoned the search for prosperity, health, and wealth; what if you abandoned your search for a great, mysterious “will of God for my life” and, instead, focused on acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God?
- D.** Matthew 22:36-40. Jesus makes it plain what it important to him.
- E.** Need more? What about Galatians 5:13-23. I would submit that this is enough to keep us busy.

### **III. But What About...?**

- A.** My talents and my professional direction? God wants you to serve Him where you are with what you have.
1. Don't talk to God about what you could do for Him if you had a better wife or husband, or if you could've gone to school, or if you weren't sick or old.
  2. Don't talk to God about what you would give if you hit the lotto. Make sure the two quarters in your pocket are available to Him at any moment.
- B.** Why is this frustrating? Two reasons:

1. We want more – more drama, more meaning, more importance (which really means self-importance). We think, by doing this, we are helping out God and His reputation.
2. When we put all that aside and say we serve Him at every moment, in every place, with whatever happens to be in our hand – that removes all excuses. It removes all self-importance. It removes our safety net. (of inactivity, hesitance, or cushion)
3. Like some of our old songs, it says “nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling” or “anywhere with Jesus” or “none of self and all of Thee.”

God's will? That you belong to Him – now, tonight, tomorrow, when you are hungry, when you are full, when you are sad, when you are happy, when you are lonely and scared, and when your chest is puffed with pride. The urban myth needs to die: God doesn't want you rich or poor, healthy or sick, up or down. God wants YOU.