

Theme: **Thy will be done, Even to Death**

Text: Mark 8:27 – 38

Season: 2nd Sunday in Lent

Date: February 25, 2018

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and peace to you as you let God's Will be done in your life, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**And Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" (Mk 8:27)**

In the fall of 1993, Glenda and I got the incredible opportunity to visit Israel and during our trip we walked down the streets of the city of Caesarea Philippi. Now Caesarea Philippi was built in a valley with the city buildings being built on one side of a beautiful crystal clear stream and on the other side there was a sheer rock wall with monument after monument to the gods of the Roman culture of that time carved into them. The city was in ruins when we were there but you could easily imagine the grandeur of that city at the time when Jesus walk down those streets of Caesarea Philippi and asked His disciples "**Who do people say that I am?**"

All of us have been to those places in our world that are incredible beautiful or to those places where mankind has built some incredible structures, as you remember those places in your mind ask yourself the question that Jesus asked of His disciple, "**Who do people say that I am?**"

Is Jesus just a person who stood up and proclaimed a very important truth that all mankind needs to learn like John the Baptist, Abraham Lincoln or Mahatma Gandhi did? Is Jesus just a man who warned the people of His time to be weary of the corruption of our society and the need to change our ways like Elijah, Stalin or Martin Luther King did? Is Jesus just man who started a religion like Buddha, Muhammad, or Joseph Smith did? Or is Jesus the creator and redeemer of all the world. If Jesus Christ is just a man than we have a problem as the Apostle Paul tell us, "**If Christ has not been raised, our faith is futile and we are still in our sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.**" (1 Cor. 15:17 – 20)

So who do you say that Jesus Christ is? **Simon Peter answered Him, “You are the Christ.”** (Mk 8:29) If that’s your answer then I have to ask, ‘What does Jesus Christ mean to you?’ The words ‘Jesus Christ’ literal mean: ‘The one who saves us by accomplishing the task that God has anointed Him for.’ Is that who Jesus Christ is in your life?

The evangelist Mark tells us, “**And Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.**” (Mk. 8:31) What have you learned about Jesus Christ? It was God’s Will that Jesus lived a life of suffering. He suffered all the pains and anguishes that we have had to face and was tempted by Satan beyond our ability. Still He remained perfectly righteous in every way and accomplished God’s will for us. By Jesus’ life He was able to accomplish what we could not do and that was to obey God’s Will in every way, at all times. Yet, it was God’s Will that Jesus would die for all our sins by what most would say is the worst way to die. He was crucified on the cross of Calvary and abandoned by His friends and His Heavenly Father, which is what hell will be like. He did this to make the full and final payment for all our sins. By Jesus’ life and death He accomplish God’s Will and destroyed sin, death and the power of Satan. Still it was God’s Will that Jesus rise from the grave on the three day to give each of us eternal life in the heavenly Kingdom He has prepared for us.

God’s will was to love us for all eternity and Jesus Christ came into this world to give us God’s love now and for all eternity. God’s will was to make peace with us now and for all eternity and Jesus Christ secured that peace for us by taking our sins, making the payment for them on the cross of Calvary and given us His perfect righteousness so that we can live in the presence of God now and for all eternity. God’s will is for us to live in perfect joy and Jesus Christ accomplished that for us by giving us a hope that is beyond this world by His resurrection for the assurance that there is a better world and life waiting for us if we only believe in Him.

Jesus taught this clearly; plainly and sternly to His disciples but **Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But turning and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”** (Mk. 8:32-33) What kind of Christ do you want in your life? The Christ that matches your expectations or the one who accomplishes all of God’s will to be

done? Satan, the world and our sinful nature doesn't want Jesus to live a perfect life for us, but He accomplishes that for us so that He can give us the perfect life that we were created to live in, free from sin, death and the power of Satan. Satan, the world and our sinful nature didn't want Jesus to go to the Cross of Calvary and suffer hell for us, but Jesus knowing the agony and pain that He would suffer still goes to the Cross of Calvary in our place. Satan, the world and our sinful nature doesn't want Jesus to rise on the third day because that means the end of the rule of Satan and his influence over our world and our lives. Christ love for each of us was shown to us by His life, death and resurrection so that we can tell about God's love for us and show it to others. God's mercy for us came not because of what we have done in this world but because of what Christ has done for us, Grace, God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

So what is your response to the Christ God gave to you? **And Jesus called to Him the crowd with His disciples and said to them, "If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."** (Mk 8:34 - 35)

God's will is for each of us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. That means that the world and Satan are going to reject us and cause chaos in our life as we continue to strive to do God's will in this world. The cross that we might have to take up on our shoulders might be heavy and burdensome, but we have the promise that Jesus will always be with us every step of the way and at times, if we let Him, He will carry us through those difficult times. God's will is not the will of our self centered ways of life but when we let the Holy Spirit go to work in our life through God's Word and Sacraments, He will realign our lives to His will and in the end we will have a perfect life in God's love, peace and joy for eternity.

It's God's gift to us through Jesus Christ but it's our choice. We all have a choice and that choice makes a world of difference. Jesus said it this way, **"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my Words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."** (Mk 8:36-38)

God's will is that all of us will want to live with Him in the heavenly home that He has prepared for us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If our will is the world and what we can get out of it, we will lose the eternal love, peace and joy that God wants to give to us and that's the eternal death that God doesn't want us to have.

You can look at it in many different ways but what it comes down to is this, who do you want to spend eternity with, Jesus, the Son of God, or Satan, the enemy of God. It is my hope that you will let God's Will be done in your life now and forever, which means sharing the love, hope and joy that God has given to you with others. Amen.