

# John 6:38 “Doing God’s Will”

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[ 0 : 00 ] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Wow, that's beautiful. Thank you. And not just beautiful singing and harmonies, but the message. For I know a lot of you who are hurting, who feel the heavy load that that song tells about. The beautiful hope.

We heard it read from Isaiah 11 of what God is going to do to make everything right. To renew us in his whole creation. And that's the hope that we look forward to even as we bend.

Even as we're weary. Even as we feel darkness in us and around us, we look to that hope because of Christmas.

[ 0 : 58 ] That's what we've been talking about this Advent season. We've been listening to Jesus tell us why he came. Why the first Christmas happened.

There's all sorts of historical evidence that a baby was born. That this person named Jesus really did live about 33 years.

That he really did die on a cross. But from his perspective, why? What was the purpose? Jesus speaks to that quite often.

We've already heard him say for fulfillment of the Old Testament promises and demands. For the seeking and saving of lost people needing light.

This morning I want to look at another passage that I almost skipped over. Because we're going to be back to John chapter 6 in January in our study of John's gospel.

[ 1 : 58 ] And I didn't want to preach it twice in a row. But then I just couldn't. You know how it is, right? When you're preaching and you just can't skip that passage. Okay. Sometimes you feel like this.

I've just got to preach this one as a part of this. The more I consider this passage, especially the one verse that I'm about to read. The more amazing it is to me.

The more it causes me to rejoice in Christmas. So I wanted to go ahead and look at it with you now. We'll look as we go at the context.

A few other verses around this that will be helpful. But for now I'll read only verse 38 of John 6. Why Christmas? Jesus tells us.

I have come down from heaven. Not to do my own will. But the will of him who sent me. This is God's word.

[ 2 : 55 ] Father, we need your help. We ask for your spirit. We pray that you would open the eyes of our hearts. That you would cause us to marvel at something that sounds pretty simple.

Don't let us overcomplicate it. But don't let us miss the glory of our Savior here. And we ask it in his name. Amen.

Amen. We marvel at missionaries of the past who gave their lives to share the gospel with people who hadn't heard.

Some packing all of their belongings into a coffin before they set out on the journey knowing that they would not be coming back to this life. Feeling sent by God, Peter Milne left for Scotland.

He left Scotland and went to the New Hebrides in the South Pacific around 1870. He and his wife and eventually their children dedicated their lives to the people of Nguna Island who had previously killed every missionary who had been sent to their island.

[ 4 : 13 ] They did whatever the people needed. Whatever it took to care for them day after day.

They lived. You tell us what you want us to do. They lived for them. Fifty years later when Peter Milne died there on the island, it's said that the people of the island wrote on his tombstone, When he came, there was no light.

When he left, there was no darkness. He lived his life for theirs. We marvel. We marvel at people who leave careers and homes and friends and are sent to care for aging loved ones, spouses, to do whatever they need day after day while it appears the end is nearing, but sometimes it is many days of caring over and over.

Whatever they need, I'll do. We marvel at soldiers who are sent across the world from the people and the places that they grew up with to live their lives and in some cases give their lives for the sake of people they've never met thousands of miles away from home.

[ 5 : 33 ] We marvel. We marvel. So certainly this morning we will marvel at Jesus because none of these others had to go nearly as far.

They weren't sent nearly as far on their mission. They didn't give up nearly as much as Jesus. Jesus came down from heaven, he says.

Not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. Will you ponder that reality with me for just a minute? Just think about what that means.

Jesus lived in heaven with the Father. With all the freedom. All the power. Endless riches at his disposal.

The greatest comfort possible. The comfort of glory. Perfect glory. He's surrounded by it all the time. And he decides what?

[ 6 : 41 ] To come down from heaven. To be born in a lowly manger. He decides that he would even enter into this broken world that is in rebellion against his kingship.

We've been singing this morning that Jesus is the king. That this newborn baby is the king. But he comes to a world that is rejecting that idea.

That is rebelling against his kingship. Is that not astonishing? That he would choose to go there. It's a massive part of Jesus' humiliation. Just coming.

Christmas. Is huge. But that's not all. Jesus comes into the world that he has created.

The world that he has sustained. By the word of his power. By his utter might. And he doesn't lord that authority over everyone and everything in the creation, does he?

[ 7 : 48 ] Instead he submits his own will. To his father's will. He is sent on a mission to do the will of the one who sent him.

Why Christmas? Jesus says very simply, Jesus came to do the will of his father. Why Christmas, Jesus? Jesus.

He says I, the king of kings, the lord of lords, wanted to live a life completely shaped and directed by the desires and the plans and the purposes of someone else.

Jesus. Wow. This verse may be the most direct statement in scripture of this life shaping purpose that Jesus has.

That he's born with, lives with, dies with. But the Bible shows it to us from the beginning to the end of his life, doesn't it? Remember as a young boy when his parents are looking for him and finally they find him where?

[ 8 : 58 ] At the temple. Because, he says, didn't you know that I must be about my father's business? He's at his father's house.

He's studying his father's word. He's learning his father's will from an early age. He must be about that. In John chapter 4, now having begun his public ministry, Jesus says to his disciples, my food is not the bread you're chasing after.

My food is to do the will of him who sent me. It's what fulfills him. It's what drives his mission. It's what sustains his passion.

The will of God. It's why we see Jesus drawing away regularly to pray. To talk with his father. To ask for his father's direction. Especially before significant decisions.

We find Jesus has removed himself from everyone else to talk to the one person he needs to hear from. He delights in God's will, says Psalm 40.

[ 10 : 09 ] Which Hebrews 10 quotes of Jesus. Behold, I have come to do your will. Oh God.

To be the true king. The ideal Israelite. Delighting in his whole life with his whole heart to do the whole will of God.

To follow all of it. So much so that when his life on earth is ending. When he faces the unimaginable agony of death on a cross.

The torment of separation from his father for the first moment. There's drops of blood coming out of his pores.

And Jesus prays again. And three times we're told he says what? Father, not my will. But your will be done.

[11:16] Jesus lives with a strong sense of being sent. Doesn't he? He knows what he is here for. He has this clear confidence that he can trust the heart.

And follow the will of the one who sent him. Think about it. Think about all the things we read about Jesus doing. He preaches the message of the kingdom in places he knows are going to reject it. He invests in men that he knows will abandon him at the crucial hour. He goes to Jerusalem where he knows that what awaits him is tortures and beatings.

He washes the feet of a friend that he knows is about to go betray him to his death. So it's only fitting, isn't it?

That he agrees to go to a cross where he knows that his body and his spirit will be torn apart. He has lived a pattern of doing not what feels good to him.

[12:18] But what his father has sent him to do. Isn't our savior wonderful? Isn't that glorious? That the king over all who could do anything he wanted says, I'm going to follow.

I'm going to come do my father's will. I hope you're marveling in a fresh way that the baby in the manger is there.

Because every breath that he will take will be for someone else. In the service of someone else. Shouldn't we be amazed as we look back on that first Christmas that the one in charge of armies of angels came to follow orders rather than to give them.

And I want to be clear about this. There is absolutely no weakness in this submission. In this humiliation of Jesus. As though he were defeated. As though he were forced into this.

As though he were somehow lesser as he submits his will to his fathers. By no means. The king is willingly becoming the servant. The leader is willingly following the direction of another.

[13:35] With the absolute certainty that as he does so. He will conquer all of his enemies. And rescue his friends. Jesus came to do the will of the father.

Glory. Wonder. Thank you. Thank you Jesus. That you were willing to set aside what was comfortable and easy for you. To live all of your life.

And even go to a cross. Because you were sent there. By your father. That's an amazing reality. It's a remarkable reality.

It's made me ask a lot of questions about myself this week. They're uncomfortable questions. If you call yourself a follower of Jesus. You might find them very uncomfortable.

As I did. If I'm following Jesus. Then theoretically I'm walking along that same path that he did.

Right? Would you ask yourself a question like. Is the father's will really my life's purpose?

[14:39] Sometimes it is. I've been in places this week where with my family. Where I intentionally planned to be with them.

And felt right where God wanted me. I've also been in a couple conversations this week about. About the glories of Christmas. The good news of Jesus.

That I never saw coming. I didn't plan for him. In fact I was supposed to be doing something else. But I followed God's lead. Right where he wanted me. And what a joy it is. Do you know that feeling?

When you find yourself somewhere. And you didn't mean to be there. And you realize this is exactly where God wanted me. You're right there in his will. You know that feeling? We can have the same sense of being sent on a mission to do God's will that Jesus had.

After all remember what he said when he's praying for his disciples. And all of us who will follow after them in John chapter 17. He says father as you sent me into the world. So I have sent them into the world.

[15:42] You're not just here accidentally. You're not just floating through life purposelessly. You're here on a mission.

Sent by the God who sent his son. It's easy to forget that we're sent here every day isn't it? It's easy to lose sight of that mission that we're sent on very quickly.

Right? I lose sight of that when my wife sends me to the grocery store. Right? I even write it down. Milk and eggs. Milk and eggs.

Even when all I want to do is get in quickly and get out and get home. I don't want to be at the store very long. It's very easy for milk and eggs to turn into donuts. And cereal.

And light bulbs. And milk and eggs if I'm lucky. If I'm lucky I get the milk and eggs. I feel sometimes like a toddler on this show we've seen a couple episodes of called Old Enough.

[16:43] I don't know if you've heard of this. The premise of the show is that toddlers in Japan are sent walking to a store that's around the corner. Maybe a couple of blocks away.

With a couple of items that they are supposed to go purchase and then return home. And they're followed every step of the way by what must be hundreds of cameras.

I don't know. Seems like a city-wide event. But here they are. And as you can imagine they're very easily distracted. There's a lot of things along the way to the store. Toys. Even when they get there. Animals. Treats. And the whole time the tension is building. Will the toddler remember to get the eggs? I'm so easily distracted.

Really easily distracted. From the mission God has sent me on. It's why honestly I need to be in a grace group on Mondays. And in another one on Fridays.

[17:43] It's why I need to come back in here with you all every Sunday. It's why I need to be in God's word day by day. Every single day. To remind me what I'm sent for.

To remind me what the most important relationship in my life must be. To remind me what the Father's will is for me. Because how else am I going to live not by my own will?

I remember that quite well most of the time. I ask myself what I want to do a lot. Do I ask God what he wants me to do nearly as often? As I've reflected on that this week.

I think I often live with what I'll call a filter on God's will. I like God's will. He says lots of good things. I'm interested in what he thinks about my life.

I am. But then there are several layers of filter. If it fits into my schedule. That's a big one for me.

[18:46] I mean we have calendars for a reason, right? If that's not what I was going to do at two o'clock I wouldn't have put it on the calendar. This is what I'm doing, God. If it fits my schedule. If I have the resources to do it.

And I don't have to be stretched to a point of desperately trusting God to show up and come through. As long as I can comfortably do that. In fact, that's the third layer of my filter.

If it doesn't make me uncomfortable in any way. Because pain and conflict and inefficiency are bad. And I just hope God knows that. They're not in his will because I'm telling him they're not.

None of that stuff. So I read in God's word that his will for me is to find my life in knowing him. And my filter shows up and says, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

I agree with that. After I get my family and my career settled, that'll be what life's about. I hear that I'm supposed to share the reason for the hope that is in me.

[19:51] To declare the praises of him who called me out of darkness into his marvelous light. And I say, yeah, sure. If a convenient opportunity comes along that doesn't throw my schedule off too much. I read the will of God is my sanctification.

Denying myself. Taking up my cross. And following Jesus. And the filter comes in and says, unless I've had a long day. And I deserve a break and some indulgence.

Father, I repent. That's the way I often respond to your will. Please, please, Father, help me. Help us to stay on mission.

To stay with you. We need his help. What does that look like for you? For us as a church. How eager are you to learn God's will?

How eager are we to have our church and our grace groups reflect the kind of people who are a part of Jesus' kingdom. Even if it disrupts your life a bit.

[20:58] How eager are we to see our money spent on God's priorities? How eager are you to embrace the difficulties and the pains of life as part of God's plan to form you into his image?

That's what he says. And to send you, actually, into a world of difficulty and pain that desperately needs the comfort that he's given you. What filters are you using?

Y'all, I am really, really thankful that Jesus doesn't use my filters when he comes to do the Father's will.

If he had, there is no way he would have come. The mission he sent on would not have passed the comfort filter, the convenience filter, the self-serving filters that I use.

Not even for one day would it have passed through those. Listen to what Jesus means when he says, I have come to do the will of him who sent me.

[22:04] Yes, there's this general reality of in everything doing God's will as opposed to his own. It's a big part of that verse.

That should amaze us. But specifically, there's something specific about God's will that Jesus is talking about in this passage. The mission that he sends Jesus on here is one that should provide great assurance for us.

Look at verse 37. Jesus is talking about our relationship with him, our salvation. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out.

That's why I've come to do the Father's will. This is the will of him who sent me, verse 39, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

[ 23 : 14 ] Three times God's will there. What is it specifically? What's the specific will of God that sent Jesus? It's that you would find life in Jesus.

That you would be brought into relationship with him. That he would never let you go, but bring you home with him forever. This is God's will. The will Jesus came specifically to do above anything else.

It's actually a part of those other passages that we read earlier about Jesus doing God's will. It's there too. In John 4, the food of Jesus is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.

In context, in case you don't remember, Woman at the Well story, to accomplish his work is the bringing into the harvest of souls for eternal life. Hebrews 10 is talking about the need for a perfect sacrifice.

Because the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins. So Jesus has come to do God's will, which is what? To offer his body as a sacrifice for sins once for all.

[ 24 : 27 ] The righteous for the unrighteous to bring us to God. God, that's what Jesus is doing when he comes to do God's will. What is the will of God that sent the Son all the way from heaven to a manger to a cross?

As Tim Keller says, Christmas and the incarnation mean that God went to infinite lengths to make himself one we can know personally.

God's will is to have you in his family. To hold me in his arms.

To live forever in relationship with us. That's his will. As certainly as the Father wills it, the Son accomplishes it.

Though it cost him his very life, it is his heartbeat, it is his food, it is his top priority from which nothing can distract him. It is why at a young age he sets his eyes to Jerusalem and he tells his friends that he must suffer and that he must die.

[ 25 : 37 ] And then he goes and submits one last time in that garden to the eternal plan of the divine trinity. Can you believe that? Why he did that? Because of his love for you.

Because he loves you he did that. That's why. That's why he submitted his will to his Father. The cross keeps coming up, doesn't it?

It keeps being a part of all these reasons Jesus says he came. Verse 40. That everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.

Looks on the Son like the serpent in the wilderness. Jesus told us in John 3. He must be lifted up, in his case, on the cross. That everyone who looks to him, who believes in him, should have eternal life.

The life like that of the age to come where you have fellowship with God himself. Verse 39. That I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day.

[ 26 : 48 ] Did you hear that? Lose nothing. Nothing. Not a single person of all of those who trust in him. No one slips through his fingers. No one can be snatched out of his hand.

No. Nothing will be lost. He will raise you up. He will bring you body and soul into his eternal glory where you live the way that he created you to do in the first place.

When he knit you together fearfully and wonderfully in your mother's womb. He'll bring you to that kind of life with him. What rich assurance, right? What rich assurance, brother or sister, desperately struggling to find life in trusting Jesus.

Desperately struggling to figure out where is hope. Desperately looking to Jesus for life, for hope. Hear me.

He is not leaving it up to you to hang on tightly and make it home at the end of the ride. No. It is the Father's will that you come home.

[ 27 : 57 ] And so it is the absolute commitment of the Son to raise you up and never let you go. When he bursts from the grave, having endured death in your place, having conquered death for you, he brings you to life with him.

So that even on the day that you die, yet shall you live. Amen. Forever. That day and never again to die.

Friend, if you haven't trusted yourself to Jesus, would you cast yourself on him right now? Would you rest in his strong promise to rescue you, to bring you home?

That's what we talked about last week, that Jesus came on a rescue mission. Seeking not top performers, but people admitting they need him.

And he promises for all of those who admit that need, who cling to him, that for all those for whom he died, he will bring them to life with him forever.

[ 29 : 07 ] The Father cares so deeply for you that he puts your name and picture on a missing sign. You know the signs I'm talking about, right? You see them around your neighborhood.

You see them at the grocery store. Someone or something is lost. The Father puts your name and face on a missing sign, but he doesn't post it on a street sign or a telephone pole.

He posted it on a cross. Jesus said, Jesus has done that.

He came to do that. God rest ye, gentlemen and ladies, let nothing you dismay. Remember Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray.

Oh, tidings of comfort and joy. What comfort? Lord, he loves you. When you think of how long he has been loving you, pursuing you, securing your salvation, is there any way that he's going to forsake you now to leave you alone today?

[ 30 : 37 ] No way. No way. No way. No way. No way. No way. No way. No way. You're his beloved. No way. Even when you don't act like it, you are his beloved. His eyes are on you always.

That is his smile that you see delighting in you. It's his gaze that is ensuring your safe return home, watching you every step of the way.

Is that not a gaze that you want to return? Is that not a God whose eyes you can meet as you bask in his smile, as you know his delight?

Do you not want to be looking at him and listening to him and following towards him every moment of every day? Think about his love. His utter delight in you, his sacrificial death in your place, his unwavering commitment to raise you up with him forever, his absolute insistence that nothing in this world, height nor depth nor anything else in all creation could separate you from his love.

Is that not a love you want to return? Is that not a God who watches you, who loves you, whose will you delight to do?

[ 31 : 55 ] Is that not what stirs your heart? To say, okay, there's a lot of other people's wills that I'm not going to be driven by. Oh, but God, if you love me like that, if you watch over me like that, I'll follow you anywhere.

I'll do your will every moment of every day. Could anything possibly be better than the life that he has for you, than the path that he has laid before you to walk on?

Could anything else, even the one that looks good to you, be better than his will for you? This is no mere sentimental story.

Jesus came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but to do the will of his father. Marvel at that. The father who sent him, he came to do that. And what good news, what life-changing tidings of comfort and joy that is for us.

[ 32 : 59 ] Let's pray. Jesus, we worship you and we thank you that you are king.

The one who deserved to reign over everyone else came not to do your own will. Oh, forgive us, because we so regularly feel we live to do our own will.

What makes us feel good, what we hope will make us look good or be successful. We praise you, Jesus, for loving us, for seeing us, for watching over us, for never letting go of us, for bringing us home.

We worship you and we thank you in your name. Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org. that goes to our channel.

We hope that you have a deep Push