

December 1, 2024

The Reason He Came

Advent # 1: "To Do the Father's Will"

John 6:38-40

**Intro:**

It seems that every year when we get close to Christmas, there is more and more emphasis on being busy and on a material focus to the season. The parties and concerts start earlier, the stores are filled with Christmas decoration and promotions earlier, and everything seems to scream out at us that if we don't get/buy/do all these things right away we will somehow not only ruin Christmas, but we just might miss it all together.

In the midst of this especially commercially driven season, the Church tries to speak out in an attempt to reorient people to why this season of Christmas even exists, with billboards and posters carrying statements such as "Keep Christ in Christmas", and "Jesus is the reason for the season."

"Jesus is the reason for the season." It's not a bad phrase really. The birth of Jesus is – or at least used to be – central to the whole Christmas holiday. There was a time when most people came to church at Christmas, even if they never darkened the door at any other time in the year. At this time of year, singing songs that blatantly speak about Jesus and His importance is acceptable by the religious and secular alike. You can find nativity scenes at more than just church buildings.

In spite of what the materialism of the Christmas season suggests, for many people, Jesus is still very central in Christmas and He is still the reason for the season. What is lost, perhaps, is not Jesus as the reason, but rather a sense of understanding His reason for coming. With that in mind, this Advent season we are going to detour from the usual Advent Scripture passages and instead explore the reason that Jesus came. We only have four Sundays in Advent, and so we won't cover all that could be said, but I hope we will gain some deeper understanding and appreciation through what we will cover. All of what we will

be talking about over these next four Sundays comes from the Gospel of John, if you want to do further reading.

### **To Do the Father's Will:**

The first reason Jesus came was to do the Father's will, as Jesus states in John 6, which we have read just a few moments ago.

Jesus did not come to earth to exert His own will over creation. Jesus came in submission to the Father's will. The obvious question here is "what is the Father's will?"

For those of you who have a longer relationship with Jesus, or have been around church for a while, this might seem like an easy question to answer. Obviously, the will of God the Father is to restore creation and to undo the effects of sin in the world. But what about social justice and mercy? The Bible does talk about those things being important to God in several places, so that must mean those are part of God's will as well. Or maybe they are God's will, and not the part about redeeming or restoring creation. One could argue that the will of God is for his name to be made known among the nations. Or maybe, as it applies more specifically to Jesus, his will is for Jesus to be the final sacrifice/payment for sin in the world and thus to move the human/Divine dynamic away from religiosity and into relationship. There are many more arguments and reasons that could be brought forward, but we will focus on the one Jesus gives in John 6.

Jesus states that the Father's will is that He "should not lose even one of those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day." (John 6:39) The next verse expands this by clarifying that this will is that people who believe in Jesus will have eternal life. The will of God, as we see it in these words, is hope. It isn't just about being brought to Jesus, it is the confidence that we can have in knowing that there is eternal life for those who believe.

Jesus is the bread of life. This comes from the verses just before the ones we read. But not just life as we know it – the physical existence we are in right now,

but life everlasting. Life that is fully satisfying in all aspects. Life that says Jesus is all that we need. He is the bread that will sustain, and he will not run out. Jesus came to be this life for us. This is what the Father's will is. And Jesus takes this very seriously.

Jesus does not impose his own will into this. What is being asked of Him by the father will lead to the cross. Jesus doesn't go willingly to that cross because it was the best plan he could come up with at the time. No, he went because that was the Father's will for him, and he submitted to that. He went because He knew that the only way to make sure that none who believe in Jesus would be lost, that every one of those people – past, present, and future would be able to experience eternal life would be to go to that cross. Yes, to pay the sacrificial price for sin once and for all, but also because Jesus walked the full road that eternal life would require. Often we skip over some of this when we engage in Good Friday and Easter, because we want to celebrate the resurrection and the victory, but in order for none to be lost, Jesus had to go to the cross first.

There is a path we as believers take to eternal life. It is a path that first starts with heading to a condemned life – all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and the wages of sin is death. That is the road we are on. Jesus walked that road at the cross. He took on himself the responsibility for our sin and as such entered into the hell that humanity is tracking towards. But He did not stay there. He made a way out so that anyone who follows Him will be able to find that same way out. He knows the path that we walk. He knows the pitfalls and the temptations. He knows what it takes to “keep on going”. – I was given a magnet many years ago, during a particularly hard time, with the words (attributed to Winston Churchill) “When you are going through Hell.... Keep going” on it. Jesus has made that way to keep going.

Jesus's own will might have led to something different. Jesus' own will might have been to try a different way than what was placed before Him. We get a glimpse of that tension and temptation in his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane where he

asks to have the cup of crucifixion taken away from him. But in the end he submitted to the will of His Father.

**Conclusion:**

And so we have hope. Hope for life eternal. We can be confident in this hope because Jesus was faithful in obedience to the will of God who sent him. We can be confident that each person who is given to Jesus by the father – which is everyone! – can have forgiveness and eternal life, and that Jesus won't lose us in the shuffle somewhere.

You might wonder about free choice at this point, and think that we don't have a choice if the Father has already given us to Jesus. Jesus clarifies this for us as well in these verses. This hope is for anyone who sees the Son and believes in Him. The Father shows us the Son, but it is up to us to look at him and believe. Many do not make this choice. They are lost, not because Jesus has lost them (and thus failing to do the Father's will), but because they have chosen to remain lost. But those who do choose to see and believe will never be lost by Jesus. He will never leave you. He will never abandon you. He will never refuse life to you.

That sounds like a pretty good reason for the season to me.

Let's pray.