**YET NOT WHAT I WILL, BUT WHAT YOU WILL**

Mark 14:27-52 (Key Verse: 14:36)

“‘Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’”

Today’s passage covers the darkest time of Jesus’ life on earth. Jesus was betrayed by his beloved disciple Judas. His other disciples could not understand him and fell asleep during his greatest agony. No one was with him. The cup he drank was too bitter and painful to endure. This passage is uniquely about Jesus, who alone could take the cup to save us from our sins. No one else could do this. Jesus’ obedience was not natural; it came through an intense struggle in his full humanity. Through Jesus’ obedience we can be saved. At the same time, we should learn from Jesus’ example how to win the victory in our life struggles. There is so many books written on the subject of God’s will. As Christians we may find ourselves falling into certain situations in life that requires of us to ask this very important question, what is the will of God for me? For example, a decision to relocate to another place due to a job offer, lord is his your will for me? A decision to marry such and such a person, Lord is it your will? As a couple you have been trying for years to have a child, but with no success, Lord is it your will, should we give up? In this passage, Jesus cried out in prayer, just few hours before his arrest. “Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” First part of this passage is about Jesus shephered heart. Secondly its about Jesus prayer. How can we pray when confronted with a life changing decision. What does it mean to say, yet not what I will but your will be done? May the Lord help us learn one word from this passage. Amen!

**Part I: Jesus Shepherd Heart for His Disciples (27 to 31),** Look at what Jesus tells his disciples in verse 27, “You will all fall away,” Jesus told them, “for it is written: “ ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ Jesus was informing his disciples that he will be struck and killed, as a result they will be scattered. Because Sheep without a shepherd is lost. However, that is not permanent look at verse 28, “But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.” Jesus also foretells them what will happen, that he will be risen from the dead and go ahead of them into Galilee. This means that, he will be restored as a shepherd over them.

Look at verse 29-31, “29Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.” 30“Truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “today—yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” 31But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same.” Peter and all the disciples, insisted that they will never disown Jesus. Peter even said, even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you. However, instead of the disciples accepting their weaknesses and short comings, in their pride, they boldly declared they would never be lost sheep. They boldly declared that they would rather die with Jesus if it came to that, as though they were in a competition of loyalty. As Proverbs 16:8 says, “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Jesus was in a dark situation and In dark situations it is easy to become helpless and hopeless, thinking that God is not in control. However, we can see that Jesus trusted God and consistently believed that God rules everything, even in the time of betrayal. Jesus planted resurrection faith and hope in his disciples’ hearts and gave them clear direction to meet him in Galilee. Indeed, this happened. He invited them, “Come and have breakfast.” Then he entrusted his flock to his disciples, saying, “Feed my lambs” (Jn 21:15-17). In this way, the Risen Jesus restored their love relationship. The Risen Jesus was still their Shepherd. Jesus knew Peter better than Peter knew himself. So Jesus predicted that Peter’s passionate feeling would not last long. Jesus did not rebuke Peter, but just bore with him silently. Though they were not loyal and not committed to following Jesus initially, Jesus was committed and hopeful in raising them as fishers of men. Jesus gives us hope no matter our condition or situation. Though we may fail or fall away, Jesus’ hope never fails. Jesus’ hope draws us by his power to remain in him. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who knows his sheep and patiently bears their weaknesses. Thanks be to Jesus, our Good Shepherd!

**Part II: Jesus prayer to obey God’s will (32-57)**, they then went to Gethsemane, where Jesus went to pray, he said to his disciple, “sit here while I pray” [32]. Jesus life was characterized by prayer. From the beginning Jesus relied on God in prayer to do his work. Through prayer, Jesus was empowered and received wisdom from above. Through much prayer, Jesus could know God’s will and through much prayer Jesus could follow God’s direction. Gethsemane prayer is the climax of Jesus’ prayer life. Jesus knew that our real enemy is Satan (Eph 6:12). Gethsemane prayer was Jesus’ final battle against Satan to fully obey God’s will. Look at verse 33-34, “He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,” he said to them. “Stay here and keep watch.” Jesus began to reveal his venerability before his disciples. He began to be deeply distressed and troubled. Even saying that his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.

All along Jesus had done amazing things, stopped crippling storms, healed the sick, multiplied bread and so on. What could really be causing him such deep distress and trouble? What could be making Jesus feel his soul overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death? Many people including us, can feel distressed by a number of things, upcoming exams, poor performance at our workplaces and so on. However, for Jesus it was non of these things. It was not even the pain of the cross and being rejected by people. What deeply troubled Jesus was the anticipated separation from God. It was the wrath of God that was coming upon him because of sin. It was the spiritual exchange, where Jesus becomes sin in our place. Jesus had never known separation from God, him and the father had always been one. And so he did not hide how he felt with the disciples. Ultimately his distress was because he knew the will of God. However its one thing to know God’s will for your life, its another to surrender your will to God’s will.

Jesus then went a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible, the hour might pass from him [35]. Let us all read verse 36 for Jesus prayer, “Abba, Father,” he said, “everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” **Firstly Jesus prayer reveals deep intimacy with God.** The word, “Abba” is an Aramaic word that means “daddy” or “papa”. It reveals the intimate relationship Jeus had with the father. That God is not some distant being but very close to us. Problem with this affiliation of the word daddy or papa could be that, not all of us have/had good experiences with our fathers. Even with good experiences, they would simply be a picture of what it should be like, however our real daddy is God. God is our creator, He knew about us before we were even formed in the womb. The bible also teaches that, John 1:12-13, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.”

**Secondly, Jesus prayer acknowledges that God is in full control.** Jesus cried out in prayer, “papa, father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me….” In his prayer, Jesus is acknowledging that, the cup of God’s wrath, God can take away if He wills. That actually God can end every future pain and suffering for him. That God can decide not to proceed with inputting of our sin upon him, which will result in Jesus being utterly separated from God. In essence Jesus is acknowledging that God is in full control of this whole situation and events. The question is never “Can God do this?” but rather, “Is this God’s will?” If it is God’s will, anything is possible.

**Thirdly, Jesus prayed in order to surrender his will and accept God’s will for his life**. And as Jesus is praying, time and time and again. Asking the same thing. He further says, “…yet not what I will, but what you will.” because Jesus is assured of God’s love, he is able to surrender his will and accept God’s will for his life. This was the turning point in his prayer. He turned from his will to God’s will. Jesus did not please himself; he pleased God. Jesus did not pray to avoid God’s will; he prayed to submit to God’s will. This submission did not come naturally for Jesus. Jesus knew fully well that when he came to Jerusalem it was in order to die for our sins. But when the moment came, when the popo hit the fence, when push came to shove, it was not easy. Jesus had to decide to die to obey God’s will. This was the most intense moment in Jesus life, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. A situation that reach deep into his soul. We read in Luke 22:44 that Jesus struggle in prayer was so intense that “his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground”.

In this way, Jesus surrendered himself to God’s will to die on the cross. By his death, Jesus destroyed the one who holds the power of death that is the devil and frees those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Heb 2:14-15). Through Jesus’ painful obedience, we are saved and become God’s children. Thanks be to Jesus! Let’s always remember what Jesus has done for us and what he is continuing to do, I hope we can be filled with thanksgiving.

As Jesus’ disciples, we also learn from him how to pray. Firstly just to pray, is to acknowledge that God is God, king of my life. Secondly, Prayer is to deny our will and submit to God’s will. However, we are quite different from Jesus. Jesus was a perfect man with a perfect will. On the other hand, as Martin Luther taught, our wills are corrupted by sin. So we naturally seek our own selfish gain and self-glory. When we follow our own dreams and desires, we displease God and burden others. How can we be changed? Only Jesus can do this. When Jesus reigns in our hearts as Savior and Lord, a miracle happens. God works in us to will and to act according to his good purpose (Php 2:13). As we are renewed by God’s word, we understand that God’s will is good, pleasing and perfect (Ro 12:2). We begin to want God’s will to be done in and through us. God wills his kingdom to come. Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father in heaven… your kingdom come, your will be done…” (Mt 6:10). As we pray like this, we surrender to God’s will. This transforms our purpose of life. We can study and work for the glory of God, and serve our families and ministry with Christ’s heart. We need to deny the desires of our self-will and to pray for God’s will to be done. At times we feel that we are dying. That is good. It means we are growing. As Jesus’ disciples, sanctified by grace, let’s learn to pray, “Yet not what I will, but what you will.”

Our big stumbling block is the flesh. When Jesus returned he found the disciples sleeping, they could not even keep watch for an hour [37]. Look at verse 38, “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Jesus warned that our flesh is weak, when we don’t pray we give in to our flesh. And we then start being ineffective before God. However, when we pray we strengthen the spirit man inside of us, and because he was already willing, now through prayer will have strength to overcome the weak flesh and obey the will of God.

We need to pray to overcome our weaknesses. Jesus said, “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” Since we are weak, the best thing we can ever do, is not to give into social media or make our lives busy with much things to do. The best thing is to keep watch and pray. If we think we are strong, we will not pray. But those who recognize their weakness humbly pray to God moment by moment. They depend on God who is full of power and wisdom. Prayer is a sure sign that we depend on God, how can you show you depend on God without a serious life of prayer? Yet you have a serious work life because you depend on your job. Yet you take serious your studied, study hard, make those submissions because you depend on the wits certificate for success. Through this passage I yet again reminded of the importance of prayer, it is like oxygen for a spiritual Christian life. We know this well. But it is not easy to practice. Yet without practicing prayer, we cannot fully know God’s will and surrender our lives to his will. As we pray we can overcome laziness and disgusting bad habits, and be empowered to study and work hard for God’s glory. As we pray, we can overcome discouragement due to rejection and persevere in preaching the gospel on campus. As we pray we can overcome loneliness, frustration and depression, and be a blessing. As we pray we can overcome all kinds of hardships to serve God’s redemptive work.

Jesus prayed with the same prayer topic three times. Jesus prayed until he surrendered to God’s will. Jesus prayed until he received strength from above to be tried, condemned and crucified. Before prayer, Jesus was in sorrow, deep distress and anguish–to the point of death. After prayer, Jesus was full of conviction and courage. He could boldly tell the disciples, look at verse 41b-42, “Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 42Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

Jesus prayer became so meaningful to me during my marriage decision. I took a long time to make decision on who to marry. At some point I even wondered whether I will ever get married. When shepherdess Becca was proposed to me for marriage by the leaders. We entered into a courtship for a month which did not last because I struggled to be firm and confident with my decision. Later on in that year, I ended up even liking one lady who was doing her final year in master’s studies at the University. However, I still could not have the peace in my heart that it was the lords direction for my life. The more I tried to proceed, the more it was becoming clear to me that. I had a choice to make. It was as though the lord was saying to me, If I proceed with her for marriage then I cannot continue as a campus shepherd, I would have to forfeit my calling in our ministry. Even though at some point shepherd Christian had said I could invite her for Sunday services. Off course I tried to make all kinds of reasons in my head. That serving as campus shepherd in our ministry is not the only way to follow Jesus. Same time, it was not even clear, if I leave where the lord was then calling me to. And this bothered me a lot, if God is leading me elsewhere, should he not make it clear and how come he is leading me elsewhere because of a woman. The more I prayed and listen to other ministers on the issue of faith, there more the conviction that I was simply doing my own thing not God’s leading. One distant friend of mine, after hearing my situation, used this very passage, Jesus prayer at Gasamene on me. However, I could not say, “not my will be done but your will be done from my heart”. As I continued to meditate on the bible, I could not remove Gasemene from my mind and heart. As I continued to pray, through the grace of God, I could begin to relate and for the first time in my life I could taste a drop in the ocean of what Jesus was going through. I became deeply convicted in my heart, to surrender all things into Jesus hands, and genuinely accept the will of God. I felt like I was dying because it was so painful in my heart to part ways with the lady and somehow same time I could receive a deep seated tiny sense of peace. At this moment shepherdess Becca is not even in the picture. I then new what I had to do and I had all the courage and faith to do it. I could then end every hope related to a possibility of marriage between me and the lady at Wits over a phone call. This was around December because I was in India when this happened. Come new year we had the academy based on the book of Haggai and my conviction was fully sealed. Based on Haggai 1:8-9, Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, **so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored**,” says the LORD. “You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?” declares the LORD Almighty. “**Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house.** From this I felt rebuked for prioritizing my life (what I wanted, what I desired, how I wanted things) instead of prioritizing to please and honor God for my marriage decision. My calling was to build his church/ministry and not build a pleasure seeking and self centered life. I am also thankful to God who is reminding me of my marriage key verse, Haggai 1:8. I thank God, through the help of the holy spirit, worked in my heart, so I could surrender my will and accept God’s will for my life (marriage decision). It is my prayer that God through the Holy Spirit, may continue to help me surrender to his will and not my human will as lead er of my home (family), in ministry and workplace. Amen!

In our ministry one of the challenging areas have been around dating and marriage, relationships between woman and man. And this challenge is not only among brothers and sisters but also among our leaders. The past three years have been the most challenging in this area. And this is because, we all made of flesh, it does not matter our position in ministry. The flesh is fundamentally weak, whereas the spirit is willing. It is my prayer that we may all take prayer seriously, and develop a serious life of prayer so that we too like Jesus can surrender our lives to the will of God. We should not only pray to know His will, but pray to also surrender your life to His will. Amen!

**In conclusion**, Jesus new God’s will, he kept telling disciples what would happen in other passages. However, when the time came. When it was now simply few hours before the popo hit the fence. The reality of the cross and God’s wrath, separation from God became real. Instead drowning in distress and anxiety. Jesus prayed and allowed himself to be fully venerable even before the disciples. He could strengthen the sprit man who was fully willing to engage with God by prayer. Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” It is my prayer that we can grow to pray like Jesus, because then in our toughest moments of either temptation to sin or moments for decision making. We can follow and surrender to the will of God and live purposeful and meaningful lives. Amen!