

2026-06-07 Points

Title: The Whole Will of God: Beyond Belief to Obedience

Sermon Summary: This sermon challenges believers to move beyond a superficial faith that merely accepts Jesus as Savior to a transformative relationship that involves complete surrender and obedience to God's Word. Using the analogy of playing cards to represent different approaches to Scripture, the pastor emphasizes the importance of engaging with the entire Bible rather than clinging to isolated verses or familiar stories. The message confronts American Christianity's tendency to seek comfort and prosperity while avoiding the costly discipleship Jesus calls for. True Christianity requires daily cross-bearing, repentance, loving enemies, generous giving, and prioritizing God's kingdom over earthly security. The sermon stresses that salvation is not a one-time event but an ongoing journey of renewal, where believers continually submit new areas of their lives to Christ's lordship. Jesus calls followers to leave everything behind, fill their cleansed lives with the Holy Spirit, and actively obey God's Word rather than simply possessing it.

Key Points:

- Many Christians treat the Bible like unopened playing cards, keeping it pristine but unused, or like a single card, clinging to one favorite verse
- Following Jesus requires leaving everything behind and daily taking up the cross, not just accepting salvation
- True discipleship involves ongoing repentance and renewal, not a one-time decision
- God blesses those who are poor, hungry, mourning, and persecuted for Christ's sake, with rewards awaiting in heaven
- Believers are called to love enemies, do good to those who hate them, and give without expecting return
- The family of God consists of those who hear God's Word and obey it, not just those who profess belief
- Anyone who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God
- More blessed than Mary bearing Christ are those who hear God's Word

and put it into practice

- Christians must surrender their will to God's will, praying "not my will but yours be done"
- Independence and self-sufficiency are contrary to the interdependent body of Christ

Scripture Reference:

- Luke 4:5-8 (Jesus' temptation by Satan)
- Luke 4:18 (Jesus' mission to proclaim freedom)
- Luke 5:8-11 (Peter's call to follow Jesus)
- Luke 5:27-32 (Levi's call and Jesus dining with sinners)
- Luke 6:20-38 (Blessings and woes, loving enemies, giving)
- Luke 8:19-21 (Jesus' true family)
- Luke 9:23-26 (Taking up the cross daily)
- Luke 9:57-62 (The cost of following Jesus)
- Luke 11:2-4 (The Lord's Prayer)
- Luke 11:23-28 (Evil spirits returning, hearing and obeying God's Word)
- Acts 20 (Paul proclaiming the whole will of God)
- Romans 12 (Transformation by renewing the mind)
- Deuteronomy (God giving ability to produce wealth)

Stories:

- The analogy of unopened playing cards representing different approaches to Scripture: pristine unused Bibles, children's Bible stories only, single favorite verses, or random verse selection
- The illustration of a man opening his Bible randomly three times and getting "Judas went out and hung himself," "go and do likewise," and "don't tarry, do it quickly"
- Peter's encounter with Jesus resulting in an overwhelming catch of fish, leading him to fall on his knees recognizing his sinfulness
- Levi (Matthew) the tax collector immediately leaving everything to follow Jesus
- The parable of the evil spirit returning with seven others to a cleaned but empty house
- The woman who blessed Jesus' mother, and Jesus redirecting praise to those who hear and obey God's Word

- Jesus in Gethsemane (the olive press) praying "not my will but yours be done"
- The rabbi teaching about followers being covered in dust from walking so closely behind their teacher
- Reference to Lot's wife looking back
- The story of a man who kept wedding playing cards from September 2006 perfectly preserved