



NOVEMBER 7-8, 2020

A HEART TO HEART *with* **PASTOR HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY**

"Is the outcome of the election a True Revelation of the Divine Will of God?"

A SERMON BY REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY, SENIOR PASTOR

#HEART2HEART @PASTORHJW

Sunday, November 8, 2020

Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley

Sermon: A Heart to Heart



**CURRICULUM
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Sermon Summary

As we journey through these uncertain times there are days that we have and will experience a plethora of emotions. Our human minds and emotions can only handle so many stressful situations before we begin to reach our limits. Over 200,000 people have died from the coronavirus disease in the United States. Some people have lost jobs and some people still have not been able to see their elderly parents in nursing facilities. Every single day there is conflicting news about the pandemic, with no real comprehensive plan in place to get this pandemic under control! Even though some are celebrating the results of the election, the election process has further polarized our country and has underscored that the stark reality of systematic racism looms over our world like ominous clouds.

In this week's conversational sermon, Pastor Wesley shared with us that he feels like Jacob who has been left alone to wrestle with God. He lamented that he has struggled with feelings of anxiety, anger and a loss of faith in the principles of our nation, all resulting in an "inescapable restlessness" as he wrestles with the will of God.

Notes for Facilitators:

Key Points:

Revelations about God's will to think about and ponder:

1. When sin interacts with God's will it can have a direct impact on the outcome of our lives.
2. Our desires can detour us from God's will.
3. Is God's will inevitable when human choice is involved?
4. The outcome of our lives may not be aligned with the will of God, BUT God works all things together for good for them that love the Lord, that are called according to his purpose.

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. This election has revealed several truths about our nation that require healing. What other revelations have you discovered?
2. Pastor Wesley described a week of images. We've seen protests, long polling lines, and ongoing press conferences. Think through all that you have seen this week. What image sticks out to you most?
3. What has been your prayer this week?

INTO THE BIBLE QUESTIONS:

Into the Bible:

1. Jeremiah 29:11 says, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” How does this scripture affirm or refute your understanding of God’s will and free will?
2. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18, Paul encourages us to “rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances.” But the truth is, rejoicing always and giving thanks in all things is no easy feat. In fact, some may argue that these are impossible commands. But then Paul closes with “...for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Discuss the significance of verse 18. How does verse 18 influence verses 16-17.
3. Pastor Wesley referenced Romans 8:28, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” What does this scripture say to you after all that we have experienced as a people in 2020? Is there anything about this scripture you hear differently now then when you first heard it?
4. Pastor Wesley mentioned “Imago Dei” which in Latin means created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). What can you do this week for others that will help them to see the God in you?

"Can I Push It?"

1. In this sermon, we learn that sometimes our sin will lead us to a longer, more difficult route. In your view, what have been the sins of this nation and how have we done to contribute to these difficult times? How have you seen God's grace and love win in spite of it?
2. Pastor Wesley references Matthew 5:46: "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?" How have you navigated interactions with people that may not love you? What has been your biggest struggle dealing with those with different political positions than you, those that oppress you or those you perceive as your enemy?

Activity:

1. In groups, talk about a time you had a Jacob-like experience in dealing with the will of God.
2. Q&A: Pastor Wesley paused to ask himself a few questions in this week's sermon. Take a moment to follow his lead and talk with a fellow Villager about the questions you are wrestling with this week. It can be anything from "I'm not sure how to talk to my child about the election," to "how do I talk to my family when we disagree?" Don't strive for perfect answers. Instead, give yourself room to explore.
3. Roundtable: Black women have been a crucial part of the national conversation this week. From Stacey Abrams' work in battleground states to the historical nature of Vice President Elect Kamala Harris as the first Black, Woman, South-Asian ever to hold that office, among other firsts. In small groups, talk about a significant black woman in your life. What have you learned from them, admired about them, or appreciated about them? In a week where Black Women made history, spread the love to those in your circle.
4. An integral part of practicing religion is one's faith — an act of trusting in God. As Christians, we believe in justification by faith — that through our belief in Jesus, we can have a right relationship with God. But what do we do when our faith is tested? How do you reconcile the will of God, when you pray sincerely for something to happen and it does not?



Life Application Questions:

1. Pastor Wesley opens this week's sermon talking about his own wrestling through this year's presidential election. What wrestling, election related or not, have you experienced this week?
2. Pastor Wesley admits that during this time he has lost faith in the election and some of our nation's principles ("in liberty and justice for all" and "that all are created equal"), causing him to wrestle with God. What "limps" do you have in your own life and journey of faith? Do they help you trust in God, or do you often find yourself continuing to wrestle?
3. Traditionally, in most wrestling matches they end with a winner and a loser. What about when we face issues that cause us to wrestle with God? Who wins this match? How is the win revealed? Pastor Wesley quotes Dr. Valerie Bridgeman who teaches us that where you stand, determines what you see. How does where you stand (age, race, gender, class, occupation, etc.) influence your response to this electoral process?
4. This sermon reminds us that sometimes we can take our heart's own desire and force God on to our will. How have you seen this behavior in yourself? What have you claimed to be God's will that was actually your own desire at work?
5. Pastor Wesley taught us that our hands, hearts, and desires are part of the equation of the outcomes of our lives. In what ways do we blame God for the outcome of the work of our own hands? How are you seeing that play out in your own life or the nation?

Spirit Work:

Have you ever written your own *psalm*? Pastor Wesley shared his feelings as a result of the election. He expressed feelings of anxiousness, anger, and frustration. The power and beauty of psalms is that they reflect human feelings before God. They encourage people to come before God in their weakness and need, as well as in their strength. Read and meditate on Psalm 43. David penned these words as he journeyed through a season of stress. Be courageous and begin constructing your own psalm. There are generally 5 kinds of psalms: praise, wisdom, royal, thanksgiving and lament. Begin “penning” your first Psalm! Let it be a psalm written as a **Conqueror**, who cries out to God.

We have just witnessed a record voter turnout, in a pandemic no less. This was due to the tireless work of volunteers, organizers, nonprofit organizations, and faith communities, all committed to giving everyone access to their right to vote. We know names like Stacey Abrams and Tameika Atkins. But there were many others behind the scenes who we do not know. Take a moment this week to thank, donate to, or recognize the people who do not always get recognized for their work.

Readings for this Week:

Monday, November 9 th	John 14:27
Tuesday, November 10 th	Psalms 34:17-18
Wednesday, November 11 th	Phillipians 4:6
Thursday, November 12 th	Proverbs 12:25
Friday, November 13 th	Romans 15:13