

Take a Hike

Revelation 12: 7-17

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Prayer

Lord God, we ask that you would hold us, that you would remind us who you are, that you, Lord God, would help us to preach through the power of your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name we ask it, Amen.

Message

Edited Clip from *Knocked Up*

A lady in a hospital bed, in the process of giving birth is begging for an epidural. Her doctor informs her that it is too late for one. She begs and pleads for one, but the doctor explains that it's impossible. Between contractions, she continues to beg for an epidural. She even says, "I'll make sure it doesn't come out!" While almost pushing she grunts, "I'll stop pushing!! I'll stop pushing! Please!" The doctor responds, "You'll just have to do it the natural way. The way you wanted to." She finally concedes and begins to push through screams and pain. So much so that the nurse standing beside her requests that she "keep it down" in order not to scare the other pregnant women.

The scene changes to the waiting area where friends and others hear her in pain. They discuss the situation, and finally, a young man decides to check on her. He enters the room right as the baby is crowning. The lady notices him, turns to the door and screams, "Get out!" The young man backs out of the door quickly in apology. The screams continue.

The father returns to the waiting room. A friend asks, "You all right buddy." He nods a bit, then sits down gasping for air." His friend continues, "What'd it look like?" The young father responds, "I shouldn't have gone in there! Promise me you won't go in there!"

The screaming continues, and the doctor coaches the mom through the labor. The baby is born and the mother smiles, leans back to rest, and the baby is handed to her. Her partner kisses her saying, "I love you so much!" The scene ends.

That's where we left off last week. We said that doing the will of God is like that. But for some reason, we think "*doing the will of God*" is like taking knowledge of the will of God—like you might take fruit from a tree, not "*bearing fruit*," but "*manipulating fruit*." We think "*doing the will of God*" is taking knowledge of the will of God and then imitating the will of God, which would not be doing the will of God, but faking the will of God . . . like a Pharisee or basically all human religion.

So, "*doing the will of God*" is not trying really hard to act good. "*Doing the will of God*" is giving birth to the Good in flesh, that's Jesus. Jesus is the will of God in flesh, and you just sitting here are His Mother! I know that sounds insane, but it's not my idea, it's God's idea-Jesus.

In Mark 3:34, Jesus looks at the people just sitting around Him and listening to the word. And He says, "*Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother*" (Mark 3:34-35) You are the mother of Jesus. That's crazy, I know!!

And it gets a bit crazier than that. He said, "*brother, and sister, and mother.*" Well, if you're the mother of Jesus, you're also the mother of His brothers and sisters. And His brothers and sisters are those sitting around listening to the word, which means you are the mother of the other people in this room. (Look around; you've got some messed up kids.)

And it gets a bit crazier than that. You yourself are a "*brother or sister*" of Jesus, and so you are the mother of yourself. You are the mother of your *new* self—your true self, which is Christ's self in you. You are giving birth to the "*will of God*" in flesh. You are literally the Bride of Christ, giving birth to the body of Christ.

You see: my body just *does* my will; my hand does not will to "do my will." My hand does not choose to "do my choice." My hand does not say, "I agree with Peter's will, therefore I *will* to do his will."

So then, *beginning* to do God's will is giving birth to God's will in flesh. It's giving birth to the life of Christ in yourself and those around you. It's giving birth like Katherine Heigl in the video clip. It's giving birth.

We'd all like to think (and we religious types certainly like to advertise) that doing the will of God is something understandable, and therefore choose-able, and therefore teachable, and therefore manageable and marketable. We'd like to think it's our own accomplishment, but doing the will of God is giving birth: confusing, mysterious, painful, humiliating, and wonderful!

The will of God is the Word of God, that's Jesus. And Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*" Jesus said, "*My Father's commandment is eternal life*" (John 12:50). You can't just decide to have eternal life, but you will give birth to eternal life—Jesus. So that's where we left off last week: The sermon was titled, "Happy Mother's Day." And this week it's titled, "Take a Hike."

Last week, I referenced Revelation 12. It describes our situation and then it prescribes a therapy for our situation.

Revelation 12:1-17 (ESV)

(Now it would help if you'd forget all the movies you've seen about the end of the world and every cheap novel you've ever read about those "Left Behind.")

Revelation 12:1 - 17 (ESV)

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his head seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who is about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

People have debated the identity of this woman, for 2000 years, but it's clear that she is Jesus' mother.

- Psalm two describes how Jesus is to “*rule the nations with a rod of iron.*”
- And we know that Jesus was caught up to Heaven at His ascension and John has already seen Him, as the slaughtered Lamb, on the throne of God.

So this woman is Jesus' mother.

- That's why some have argued that she's Mary (and I suppose that she's *at least* Mary). But she's clothed with the sun, moon and twelve stars, which matches the description of Joseph's family and a dream he received in Genesis 37.
- So some have argued that the woman is Israel (that is-Joseph's family).
- Some have argued that the woman is Eve.
- Some argue it's all the women in Jesus' lineage leading up to His birth through Mary: Eve through Mary. And that would explain why the dragon is so angry, for God said that the “*seed of the woman would crush the head of the snake*” (Gen. 3:15).

And we'll soon read, the dragon is the snake, who is also the devil.

So, the woman may be Eve, Israel and Mary,
but not just Eve, Israel and Mary.

The woman will also give birth to those, “*that keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus*” (Rev. 12:17).

- That's y'all sitting here listening to the word.
- The woman gives birth to y'all, and the woman is y'all.
- The woman is the mother of Jesus and according to Jesus, “that's y'all.”

She's crying out in birth pains, like Katherine Heigl in *Knocked Up*.

She's crying out in birth pains, and the “*agony of delivery*” like you cry out saying, “My God, where are you? What are you doing? Why does this hurt so badly? Why have you forsaken me? I thought I was doing your will, but how can this be your will?”

She's crying out in pain and travail, and she's harassed by the devil, but God has prepared a place for her in the wilderness for 1,260 days. 1260 days is three and a half years according to the Jewish lunar calendar. Three and a half is “Time, times, and one half a time.” “Time” (the singular) is one and “times” (the plural), which is two, and one half equals three and a half.

Three and a half is half of seven. Seven is the number of completion. Three and a half is a broken seven. It's a number that shows up in the book of Daniel and here. It appears to reference several things, but all of them refer to our time of struggle in this world, before the consummation of history.

Well, during this time of struggle, after Jesus has ascended and before He consummates history, God has a place prepared for the woman in the wilderness. Wilderness means “Wild-ness.” It's a place where men and women have not created anything. It's wild.

The first act of disobedience to an explicit command of God, after the fall, appears to have been the construction of a city.

- When Cain murders his brother Abel, God sentences him to wandering in the wilderness, but he builds a city. Cities insulate people from the wilderness. Canaanites and Jews build Jerusalem, but God reduces it to wilderness before the New Jerusalem—built by God (not built by human hands)—descends from Heaven.
- The Israelites must wander in the wilderness for forty years before they enter the Promised Land.
- Jesus must wander in the wilderness forty days before He begins His ministry.
- The Prophets, including John the Baptist, are also called to the wilderness before they speak God's word.
- Saint Paul went into Arabia before he preached the word (Galatians 1:17).
- Saint John was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he saw this vision.
- Jesus often retreated to the wilderness and prescribed the wilderness for His tired disciples.

Well, there's a place prepared by God, for this woman, in the wilderness.

Revelation 12:7-12 (ESV)

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now is the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and see, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

The devil knows that he's lost. The battle is now manifest on earth, but the devil has already lost. Devil means "accuser." But he can no longer accuse Jesus and His brothers and sisters before God, because the Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world. And it appears that everyone who's anyone is Jesus' brother or sister, for the accuser has no accusations left to speak before God.

- On the cross, the devil was disarmed according to Paul in Colossians 2.
- John tells us that Jesus came to "*destroy the works of the evil one.*" (1 John 3:5).
- On the cross His Work is "*finished.*"

And so, resurrected from the dead, Jesus says to His disciples, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Going therefore, disciple all peoples, baptize and teach...*" (Matt. 28:18-19)

- The devil knows that he's lost. And yet, still allowed to speak his lies on earth.

- God must have a purpose, even for the devil and his lies.
Maybe He wants to show the woman that His Word is the Truth, and He conquers.

The devil knows that he has lost. But the woman still doesn't know—not the way Jesus wants her to know.

Revelation 12:13-14 (ESV)

And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.¹

Through Moses, in Exodus 19:4, God speaks to the Israelites in the wilderness saying, “I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.”

Revelation 12:14-17 (ESV)

But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, and those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

He's summoning the beast from the sea that some call the “antichrist.” We'll talk about the antichrist next week, but now I'd like to focus on verses 15-16. The serpent battles the woman with the river, that issues from his mouth . . . but the earth helps the woman by opening her mouth and swallowing the river.

Pretty amazing!

- In John's writings the term “world” usually refers to the way in which this fallen world operates—the world of men, which we have created.
- But when he uses the term “earth,” he's usually referring to God's creation.

So, in the wilderness, the earth swallows the river that comes from the serpent's mouth.

¹ Years ago, I preached through the revelation and one night, in preparation, I read this verse and then I prayed, “God this is so cool. We are the woman! You beat the devil, but who is this eagle?” In the morning, I got a call from a friend. She said, “You wouldn't believe what I saw out of the windows at the church, during the worship singing last weekend. I saw an immense eagle. Its wings were stretched out over the mountains, and it was looking at us, screeching. At first I thought it was anger and then I realized it was holiness. It was the Lord, and I heard these words: ‘Church of the living God, I gave you all power and dominion to accomplish my will on earth as it is in heaven; take hold of what I give you. Let Christ be your banner and song. His banner over you is love.’”

Some argue that this describes the flight of Christians in 66 A.D. as they fled Jerusalem and hid from the Roman army in the wilderness of Judea . . . and maybe it does.

Some, like Hal Lindsey, have argued that this describes the flight of end times Jewish Christians, who get airlifted to safety in the wilderness, by the US Air Force, who's insignia is the eagle. So, the US saves end times super Jews from the antichrist and some sort of freaky flood.

I suppose that's within the realm of possibility, but the woman is not just first century Christians or last century super Jews; the woman is us. Us: that's the people sitting around listening to Jesus in Mark 3. And it's you, sitting around listening to the word of God on May 15, 2016. It's anyone that "does the will of God". . . like, at all.

So people argue over what this means, but I think I have an idea as to what it means.

At times, I felt like I'm just drowning in a river.

Upon reflection, I realized it's a river of lies. . .

(And you know Satan is the father of lies. That's what comes out of his mouth.)

At times, I feel like I'm just drowning in a river.

So, in desperation, I'll flee the city and just go for a hike, and it's like the earth opens her mouth and swallows the river . . .

Sometimes, I feel this intense pressure—perhaps the best word to describe would be "agony" or "anguish"—anguish that I am to "make life happen," and I don't have the ability to make it happen.

- I don't know how to make my children's life happen, my church life happen, or my own life happen.
- I don't know how to be "fruitful and multiply."

And remember, that's God's first commandment; that is "doing God's will." Be fruitful: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith, self-control and multiply: disciple, baptize, and teach all the peoples. God's commandment is "Be fruitful and multiply." God's commandment is eternal life, and I don't know how to make it happen. I don't know how to do God's will. I can't *make* God's will happen.

For the last eight years, I've felt this pressure to produce something and this profound sense of failure that I can't make it happen.

- I don't know how to grow a church.
- I don't know how to solve your problems.
- I don't know how to help my mom.
- I don't know how to help my kids.
- I don't know how to keep myself from having a heart attack . . .

It seems that I used to, but I don't anymore.

At times I can't sleep. I can't seem to pray without constantly whining. I may read the Bible, but then I start writing sermon outlines in my head, out of fear and that doesn't help. I get depressed, and ruminate on my own depression. I'm just miserable to be around. Then I panic thinking, "I don't have enough strength to make it happen. And I don't have enough space or time to make it happen. And then in desperation, unable to sit still . . . I'll just go for a hike.

We live on the west side of town, near the Home Depot on Quincy and C-470. So, it's a short little drive from my house to Mount Falcon Park. My house was built sixteen years ago on Pierre Shale that was deposited on the bottom of a shallow inland sea. When they excavated our foundation, my kids and I found a bunch of these:



This is a Baculite, which was a type of Ammonite that lived in the late Cretaceous period . . .

[Image entitled "Baulites" with strange creatures swimming in the ocean]

- Which means, this funny looking creature that looked like a squid with a shell was swimming around my yard about 69 million years ago . . .

Some people think the Bible teaches that the world is only 10,000 years old according to the way we measure time. I don't believe the Bible teaches that, or that we even understand time, but I do believe that when God made this Baculite, He knew that kids and I would pick it up 69 million years later and say, "Wow!"

The rocks near my house have been tilted up on their side by the formation of the Rocky Mountains, so when I leave my house and drive west, it's like I'm driving back in time. In just about two minutes, I drive past the Niobrara Formation where the kids and I found this fossilized Inoceramid clam:



Some people think that science competes with God, but science helps me worship God!

- In fact, God knew that this clam would help us worship Him today when He placed it in the bottom of the sea 70 million years ago.

Well, I drive over Cretaceous sediment and hit the Jurassic sediment at the hogback.

- In the Dakota sandstone, you can see ripple marks from waves that crashed on the beach 100 million years ago.
- Then I drive across the Morrison formation packed with the bones of giant dinosaurs that waded through swamps and bogs 150 million years ago.

After crossing over sandstone from an ancient desert larger than the Sahara, I parked my car on sediment that now forms the red rocks—sediment that washed off the ancestral Rockies 300 million years ago.

As I hike up the trail, the rocks change from red sandstone to Gracious and Gneiss rocks formed under incredible heat and pressure 1.7 billion years ago as island archipelagos collided with the North American plate as it slowly ground across the surface of the globe.

And then . . . I'll see a flower.

(I was a Geology major in college, so I like rocks. But you all recognize the flower.)

[Painting of a flower]

This is the painting of a flower, which recently sold for \$44 *million*. Forty-four million dollars! A person created this imitation of a flower and another person bought the imitation for \$44 million and hung it on a wall in a city. But on my hike, I see flowers way prettier than this . . . In fact, the fields are full of them. Even if no person ever looks at them, they're there—millions and billions of them, not planted by people and don't need to be seen by people. Just glorious!

But last October, I watched them die (like the Baculite died in my backyard 69 million years ago.) I watched them die, but last Thursday, they were back.

On my hike:

- I'll stop for fuzzy caterpillars crawling across the trail.
- I'll hear birds sing. I'll watch hawks soar.
- I'll stop and smell the junipers and listen to the breeze blowing through the branches.
- Sometimes lightning will crash over my head.
- I'll feel my heart pounding in my chest.
- When I get to the top, I look one way over 2 million anxious people . . . And the other way over the foothills into the Continental Divide. And by the time I get back to the car. . . I'm okay.

I leave my house totally distressed and anxious over my inability to make life work . . . And somewhere on my walk, in a way that I can't even consciously comprehend or describe, something whispers deep in my soul,

“Peter I got this.”

. . . And I'm okay . . . I'm nourished and okay.

And you don't have to be a pastor, or a geologist, or even go on a hike. You just have to encounter the wilderness (the wildness)—something that you know a human being DID NOT

create. Even a dandelion will do. You didn't put it there, but it's pretty amazing once you get a good look at it.

This year's January issue of *National Geographic* had a fascinating article titled: "Your Brain on Nature."

- It cites all sorts of scientific studies regarding the effects of the wilderness on mental, emotional, and physical health.
- Researchers in England report that people living near green space report less mental distress.
- Dutch researchers have found a lower incidence of fifteen diseases in people who live within a half-mile of green space—even if they never used the green space for exercise.

The researchers are a bit bewildered as to why this is the case.

- Japanese researchers report that a fifteen minute walk in the woods causes significant measurable changes in physiology, which do not occur to a person walking in a city.
- In Oregon, correctional officers report a significantly decreased level of aggression in prisoners who exercise in the gym with nature videos as opposed to the gym without nature videos.
- In Finland, doctors have designed and prescribed nature trails with signs that say things like, "Bend down and touch the flower."
- In South Korea, the government has designated three official "healing forests."
- Korean researchers have observed that when volunteers look at urban scenes, their brains show more blood flow to the amygdala, which processes fear and anxiety. But when they view wilderness scenes, areas of the brain associated with empathy and altruism are activated.
- Researchers at Stanford University studied the brains of thirty-eight volunteers who took ninety-minute walks either in a large park or on a sidewalk in the city. Unlike the city workers, the nature walkers showed "decreased activity in the subgenual prefrontal cortex (a part of the brain tied to "depressive rumination).

Depressive rumination—that's my problem!

The *National Geographic* article ends with the author stating that there are all sorts of theories as to why nature affects the brain the way it does, but in the end it's still a mystery.

But maybe it's not a total mystery.

Maybe we really are the woman in Revelation 12, and we have an enemy who battles us with the river of lies that issues from his lifeless lips. But our Lord calls us to the wilderness where the earth opens her mouth and swallows the river of lies.

What lies?

Well, Satan's lies are manifold and profoundly subtle. And yet all his lies begin with one lie that was spoken to the woman in the garden long ago: it wasn't even an outright lie but a suggestion.

God had said that He would make humanity in His own image and likeness:

He is Good and in Him is Life.

He will make us, and He will cause us to multiply.

He speaks a Word, and that Word is His Will, and so His Will happens.
His Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
He is called the *Eschatos* Adam . . . and we are His Bride.
And He makes us fruitful with His life and His penetrating presence—the presence of love.
He is the Word God speaks that makes all things and makes us in His image.
He is “the Good in flesh.”

But on the sixth day of creation, satan suggested to the woman that she take “knowledge of the good” from the tree in the middle of the garden—take “knowledge of the good” and use that good to make herself good and truly alive.
She took “knowledge of the good” and discovered she had become evil.
She took “knowledge of the life” and began to die.

We all take the life of “the Good,” hanging on a tree in a garden that we call “the cross.”

Well, I’m just pointing out that satan tempts all of us to take the life of “the Good” to create ourselves in the image of God. And he does it with an absolute river of lies.

But all of the lies are really this one lie:

“You must create yourself.”

Which means, “You must save yourself.”

Which means, “You must judge, justify, and redeem yourself.”

Which means, “You must make yourself fruitful.”

Satan tempts us to believe that we create ourselves with our own choices and the power of our own will . . . Some call it free will. As if the chooser that makes the choices is uncreated.
As if the will that wills the good is uncreated.

Satan tempts us to believe that we each, in and of ourselves, are our own uncreated Creator—that is God. That’s a lot of responsibility; no wonder we’re stressed out. It’s super hard to be God, and the older I get, the harder it is becoming.

The lie is that I create God. And the truth is that God creates me. Well, if you believe that you create yourself, that self that you think you create, can never be at peace in the presence of God—your Creator.

Close your eyes:

- Listen to your breath . . . Each breath is a gift from God.
- Maybe you can even hear your heart beat . . . Each heartbeat only happens because God wills it.
- Think about that thought . . . You only think that thought because God wills that thought and will it into existence. That’s quite a thought.

You continue to exist, moment by moment, upon the will of God, like a feather floats on the wind in a gentle breeze. If you are proud, if you think you deserve you, if you think you create you that you will be utterly destroyed by the manifest presence of God. Like darkness is destroyed by light.

Open your eyes. You see? It's rather shocking when you see it, and we often miss it, but salvation is simply being at peace with the fact that you are created. In other words, salvation is faith in grace. And that faith is a gift of grace.

Your will does not create you.

God's will creates you and creates faith within you.

God's will is God's Word, and God's Word is Jesus.

So Eve, it's *Jesus* that makes you (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faith), and He causes you to multiply!

- "*Doing God's will*" is not taking knowledge of good and then applying it to your life in the power of your flesh.
- "*Doing God's will*" is being known by Jesus the way He is to be known by Adam. It's to receive the Word of Grace in your place of shame and then give birth to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faith, and self-control. To "*Do the will of God*" is to give birth to the Will of God, who is Jesus, "*the way, the truth and the life.*"

I can't create life!

I can't make life happen!

The older I get, the more obvious that becomes: We're all going to die, and I can't stop it.

I can't make life happen!

But I live in a river of lies that tells me I must make it happen!

But I can't make it happen!

Yet, I feel this pressure inside me telling me that it must happen!

So, in anguish, I take a hike.

And somewhere on that hike my heart begins to realize:

"All of this happened without me; I didn't create it, and yet I see it: reason, order, beauty, goodness, life, flowers, dinosaurs, Baculites.

I didn't create it, and no human being created it.

- All of this happened without me.
- But all of this is happening to me.
- And maybe it will be even happen through me.

In other words:

- I'm not the Creator.
- But I am *being* created.
- I am created to create in the image of my Creator, who is Love.

In other words:

- I can't make life happen,
- But life is making me happen.
- And I will give birth to Life . . . maybe even my own life—eternal Life.

I realize that I can't make it happen.

And then it begins to happen—life—eternal Life.

I take a hike, the earth swallows the river of lies, and I hear another voice: it's a voice deeper than human words:

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day and to day pours forth speech, and night tonight declares knowledge (writes King David). There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the years and their words to the end of the world.

Psalm 19: 1-4 (NRSV)

Jesus, who is the Word, says it this way:

"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matthew 6: 25 ESV)

"Well Jesus . . . I don't know. There's like a river of life that tells us that life is exactly food and clothing, that life is what you consume and what you wear!

You may remember that after Eve listened to the snake, she saw that "the tree was good for food" so she consumed the good and everything died. (But life is not taking. It's giving.) And you may remember that, after she heard the lie, she closed herself in leaves from the tree. So she hid in the leaves and trapped herself in darkness all alone. (But life is not *seizing* control. Life is *surrendering* control.)

Well Jesus, who is the *Eschatos* Adam—our Helper, continues:

"Beloved, look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" (Matthew 6: 26 ESV)

God feeds birds and God feeds you with Jesus, body broken and blood shed, "the way, the truth and the life—eternal Life. When you lose your illusion of life, God fills you with eternal Life. You must lose your temporal life to find your eternal life.

"And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

Matthew 6: 27 – 30 (ESV)

"Faith, hope and love abide" - they are eternal.

God will clothe you with faith.

"God will clothe you with me," says Jesus to His Bride.

So look at the birds. Consider the lilies. Take a hike!

You know, when Jesus said that, He was just sitting on a hillside talking to some peasants who were just sitting around Him listening to the Word. He was talking to His Bride, who would give

birth to His Body. He was talking to your Mother. Read the book of Acts and the Epistles and you'll realize that it was a confusing, painful, humiliating and wonderful process . . . But she "did the will of God." She gave birth to Life in you.

You know, when I listen to the "river of lies" rather than the Word, when I'm filled with anxiety and fear and refuse to take a hike, look at the birds, or consider the lilies, I'll often seize control of the process, take my knowledge of good and evil and try to make life happen . . . and something does happen.

Something like this:

Clip from *Frankenstein*

(In black and white images): A fan whirls and lights up followed by an explosion of electricity and billows of smoke. A mad scientist waves, his assistant squints as she looks at what is happening. She holds down a lever and sparks shoot out behind her. A mad scientist shouts: "Life!" (He whips off his goggles) "Life! Do you hear me?!" (He looks up, listening through his stethoscope) "Give my creation – L-i-i-i-i-fe!"

Electrical sounds and wind blows in the background as he looks back down at his creation. Lightning strikes and thunder rolls on a nearby mountain. Frankenstein lies lifelessly on a table inside the room.

I make a monster that imitates life, but it's not life.
I make human religion; it looks alive, but it's dead.
It doesn't do the Will of God, it fakes the Will of God.

But when I listen to the Word, surrender control, and realize I can't make life happen, Life begins to happen in me and through me!

Dr. Kuni: *One more big push!*

Allison: *Uhhh!*

Dr. Kuni: *Good!*

(The baby arrives.)

Allison: *Ahhh!* (sighs of relief)

(The female nurse suctions mucus out of the baby's mouth and the baby thinly cries.)

Allison: *uh, huh, huh!* (Sighs with joy as she looks at Ben). *I did it. Oh, I'm tired!*

Ben: (laughs) *Oh, ho! Oh, my God, you did it.*

(Dr Kuni hands the baby to Allison. The couple laughs as they take the baby.)

Ben: *I love you so much!*

So I take a hike, and I begin to see:

- I can't make Life,
- But I give birth to the Life.

Communion

For Life in flesh took bread and He broke it and said, "This is my body given to you; take and eat." And in the same manner, after supper, and having given thanks, He took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood. Drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me."

"The entire creation groans in travail," wrote Paul (Romans 8:22-23) "and you groan too."

The entire creation is giving birth. And you are giving birth to the Will of God—Jesus and all things with Him. This is the Will of God and you are His bride. Come to the table [Peter takes communion] and do His will.

The dark cup is wine, light cup is juice. They are both the love of God and the Life of God, eternal seed for you.

Worship Song

"How Great Thou Art"

Prayer

So Lord God, we Thank you that You are perceived in the things that have been made, the things that have been created. And Lord God, I even thank You that evil can be perceived in the things that have been desecrated. And Lord God, I thank You that You willed for us to see it, that You willed for your Bride to see how You, the Good, conquers the evil and makes all things new. And so Lord God, I think we would all feel it just a little bit this morning: You're pretty great! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Benediction

And so one day, I really believe that you will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and you will see the will of God in flesh. He will stand before you. And you will see wounds in His hands, in His feet, and in His side. And a voice will say something like, "This is how I created you. Are you okay with that?" And if you say, "Yup," that yep, that yes, was also created by God, and it's called faith. And if you say, "Yup," then He'll say, "Great! Time to party!" And that's salvation! But you already said, "Yup" this morning! And so you are already living with the eternal Life of God in you. And you are giving birth to that new creation in this world as you wait for the consummation and the great party. And so, like I said last week, "Happy Mother's Day." And this week, "Remember to take a hike!" In Jesus' name, Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.