

The Election (Beautiful Thing IV)

Matt. 27:11-25

April 10, 2017

Peter Hiatt

All images by Peter Hiatt unless otherwise credited.

Message

So this is Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week.

It was on a Sunday that Jesus rode a donkey down the Mount of Olives and up Mount Zion into Jerusalem. He went up the mountain the way Abraham and Isaac went up the very same mountain over a thousand years before. But now, on the mountain there was a city; she was named Jerusalem.

As He approached the city people cried, “Hosanna”—it means, “Save us please!” “Hosanna to the Son of David”—The Son of David was the prophesied prince of peace, the Messiah, the King.

The crowd chanted, but Luke records that Jesus was weeping and saying,

“Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace... But now they are hidden from your eyes... And the days will come... when your enemies will surround you, and tear you down, and not leave one stone on top of another...for you did not know the time of your visitation.”

—Luke 19:41-44

So this is an incredibly ironic day, and it’s a little weird that we would ask the kids to wave Palm fronds, for they were originally waved by people that didn’t have a clue as to what they were doing . . . and would be chanting, “Crucify!” in just five days.¹

In five days, Pilate would hold an election and they would all vote for king. Now you may say, “Hey... wait a minute; you don’t vote for king. And even if you did, how would you know that a king is a king?”

Clip from *Monty Python and The Holy Grail*

¹ Some say there’s no way that the crowd could’ve changed so dramatically in five days. Well, the crowd didn’t change—that’s the tragedy.

They didn’t change, but the true character of Jesus was revealed.

They chanted, “Save us please,” but they didn’t know what salvation is.

They chanted, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord” (Luke 19:38), but they didn’t know what a true King is.

[Arthur and Patsy "ride" through the village]

Large Man: *Who's that then?*

Dead Collector: *I dunno. Must be a king.*

Large Man: *Why?*

Dead Collector: *He hasn't got shit all over him.*

King Arthur: *Old woman!*

Dennis: *Man.*

King Arthur: *Man, sorry. What knight lives in that castle over there?*

Dennis: *I'm 37.*

King Arthur: *What?*

Dennis: *I'm 37. I'm not old.*

King Arthur: *Well I can't just call you "man".*

Dennis: *Well you could say "Dennis".*

King Arthur: *I didn't know you were called Dennis.*

Dennis: *Well you didn't bother to find out, did you?*

King Arthur: *I did say sorry about the "old woman", but from behind you looked...*

Dennis: *What I object to is you automatically treat me like an inferior.*

King Arthur: *Well, I am king.*

Dennis: *Oh, king eh? Very nice. And how'd you get that, eh? By exploiting the workers. By hanging on to outdated imperialist dogma which perpetuates the economic and social differences in our society. If there's ever gonna be any progress...*

Peasant Woman: *Dennis! There's some lovely filth down here... Oh! How do you do?*

[Dennis joins the Peasant Woman in the nearby filth patch]

King Arthur: *How do you do, good lady? I am Arthur, king of the Britons. Whose castle is that?*

Peasant Woman: *King of the who?*

King Arthur: *The Britons.*

Peasant Woman: *Who're the "Britons"?*

King Arthur: *Well, we all are. We're all Britons, and I am your king.*

Peasant Woman: *Didn't know we had a king. I thought we were an autonomous collective.*

Dennis: *You're fooling yourself. We're living in a dictatorship! A self-perpetuating autocracy, in which the working classes...*

Peasant Woman: *Oh, there you go, bringing class into it again.*

Dennis: *Well, that's what it's all about! If only people would--*

King Arthur: *Please, please, good people, I am in haste. Who lives in that castle?*

Peasant Woman: *No one lives there.*

King Arthur: *Then who is your lord?*

Peasant Woman: *We don't have a lord.*

King Arthur: *What?*

Dennis: *I told you, we're an anarcho-syndicalist commune. We take it in turns to act as sort of executive officer for the week...*

King Arthur: *Yes...*

Dennis: ...but all the decisions of that officer have to be ratified at a special bi-weekly meeting...

King Arthur: Yes I see...

Dennis: ...by a simple majority in the case of purely internal affairs...

King Arthur: Be quiet!

Dennis: ...but by a two thirds majority in the case of more...

King Arthur: Be quiet! I order you to be quiet!

Peasant Woman: "Order", eh? Who does he think he is?

King Arthur: I am your king.

Peasant Woman: Well, I didn't vote for you.

King Arthur: You don't vote for kings.

Peasant Woman: Well, how'd you become king, then?

[Angelic music plays...]

King Arthur: The Lady of the Lake, her arm clad in the purest shimmering samite, held aloft Excalibur from the bosom of the water, signifying by divine providence that I, Arthur, was to carry Excalibur. That is why I am your king.

Dennis: Listen. Strange women lying in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government. Supreme executive power derives from a mandate from the masses, not from some farcical aquatic ceremony.

Arthur: Be quiet!

Dennis: You can't expect to wield supreme executive power just 'cause some watery tart threw a sword at you!

Arthur: Shut up!

Dennis: I mean, if I went around saying I was an emperor just because some moistened bint had lobbed a scimitar at me, they'd put me away!

Arthur: [grabs Dennis] Shut up! Will you shut up?!

Dennis: Ah, now we see the violence inherent in the system!

Arthur: [shakes Dennis] Shut up!

Dennis: Oh! Come and see the violence inherent in the system! Help, help, I'm being repressed!

Arthur: Bloody Peasant!

Dennis: Ooh, what a giveaway! Did you hear that? Did you hear that, eh?

How do you know he's a king? Well, "He hasn't got poop all over him..." That's how the world recognizes kings; they're powerful enough and wise enough to never get our poop all over themselves. He hasn't got poop all over him.

But I would remind you that King Jesus was born just a few miles from this spot where they all chant, "Blessed is the King," but they didn't recognize Him then because He had poop all over Him—or at least around Him. But they didn't recognize Him because He had poop all over Him or at least around Him. He was born in a barn, wrapped in swaddling clothes and placed in a food trough.

Well as I was saying, on Palm Sunday they all chanted, "Hosanna, blessed is the king," for they heard that He could raise the dead, walk on water, etc. etc. . . . but in five days they held an election.

Honestly, I think we Americans are so arrogant—we act as if we're the first society to ever hold a free election. In our text today, Pilate, the Roman Governor, calls for a free election. He asks Jerusalem to vote for "King of the Jews. "

Matthew 27:11-26

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the feast [of the Passover] the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious [note-worthy] prisoner called Barabbas [barabban]. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas [some ancient manuscripts: Iesous (Jesus) Barabban], or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas [barabban]." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" And he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people [ho laos] answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

So, just to be clear "*ho laos*" (the people) all voted to nail "*ho Adam*" (the *eschatos* Adam) to a tree in a garden, on the very spot, which was believed to be the garden of Eden had been located, on top of Mount Moriah where Abraham bound Isaac and placed him on a pile of wood, just before God provided a grown lamb to sacrifice in Isaac's place.

In Matthew's day, "*ho laos*" had become a technical term used to refer to the elect of God, the people of God, Judah in Jerusalem—so, the elect elected Barabbas and rejected Jesus.

Many ancient manuscripts record that Barabbas had a first name, and that name was Jesus—which as you know means "savior," in specific, "God is salvation."

So Pilate is asking, "What kind of savior, what kind of Jesus, do you want?"

"Jesus Barabbas or Jesus Christ (which means anointed)?"

And remember Jesus had just been anointed at the house of Simon the leper, by the strange woman in the last chapter.

"Jesus called Christ or Jesus Bar-abbas (or *barrabon* in Greek)?"

Bar means "son" or "son of" and scholars debate what the *abbas*, or *abban*, refers to...

Some argue that it refers to father so Pilate is asking,
"Which Jesus son of the father, do you prefer?"

Others including some of the early church fathers say it refers to “rabbi”
—Jesus son of the Rabbi as opposed to Jesus the Anointed.

I think that’s interesting, for in Matthew the only person that calls Jesus “rabbi” is Judas—the rest call Him Lord.

A Rabbi (which means teacher) dispenses the knowledge of good and evil—that is “the law...”

But “Lord” means master. . .

According to 1 Peter 3:6 this is how Sarah and the holy women of old addressed their husbands—their helpmates. That’s not politically correct—for it’s also the way a slave addresses her master—her lord.

Well, You take knowledge of good and evil from a rabbi and apply it to your life, like you might take fruit from a tree and eat it to feed your flesh.

You *take* from a rabbi . . . but you *surrender* to a Lord—the way a bride might surrender to her groom on her honeymoon night in the sacrament of their covenant of communion and bear the fruit of that communion, which is life.

So as I was saying, the choice is: Jesus Barabbas or Jesus Anointed—by the strange woman in the last chapter.

Most Scholars agree that Jesus Christ, would’ve looked something like this:

[Image from *The Passion* of Jesus with Pontius Pilate]

- He has a crown of thorns, *but* He doesn’t look like a king because He’s got crap all over Him.
- Just before the election, He had been beaten and spit upon and the house of the high priest; He would’ve literally been covered in human excreta.

Above is how Jesus Anointed looked when they took the vote...

And we’re pretty sure the picture below is how Jesus Barabbas looked when they took the vote:

[Image of President Donald Trump with a crown on his head]

[laughter]

Now, not all scholars agree on this, some think he looked more like this:

[Image of President Donald Trump with a crown on his head]

[laughter]

Now of course, I’m joking! They didn’t have photography in Jesus’ day...

So they had to draw a portrait to record someone’s image.

All Scholars agree that he looked like this:

[Image of George Washington]

[laughter]

John refers to Barabbas as a “*lestes*.”

- *Lestis* comes from a root word that means “to take” or “to win.”
- It was used to refer to zealots and insurgents, who take the kingdom by force.
- Luke records that Barabbas was in prison for insurrection...
- See? It appears that Barabbas was a revolutionary who was opposed to “taxation without our representation,” and the rule of King Caesar.
- Matthew calls him “notorious” or noteworthy; he was a popular revolutionary commander

Now some of you are thinking, “Hey George Washington wasn’t a king!” That’s right. In America we vote for our king, and then call him president.

Well, king or president, in this world we expect them to legislate. To legislate is to enact laws, which are “the knowledge of good and evil.” We expect them to make laws and then enforce those laws with threats of punishment in order to protect our “rights.”

That’s what it means to be “free”—to claim our rights. That’s what we say. This is the “land of the free.” That’s what we say! “We Americans are free!” . . .

Well, Barabbas represents the “principalities and powers of this world.” Barabbas is the kind of king they all wanted Jesus to be on Palm Sunday. Clearly a guy who raised the dead and walked on water should have the power to lead an insurrection. But instead of leading an insurrection against Rome, He was getting Himself crucified.

Barabbas would never *let* . . . *allow* himself be crucified . . . voluntarily.

And so some think Barabbas looked like this:

[Image of silhouetted Mohammed]

This is a silhouette because I’m not supposed to show you a picture of Mohammed—under penalty of death—Mohammed is easily offended.

In the Koran, Mohammed basically says that all the stuff about Jesus is true except for the fact that He would have poop all over Him or ever let Himself be crucified. That’s offensive to Moslems . . . and many Jews.

I think many American Christians would actually be more at home with Mohammed than Jesus. And certainly more at home with Moses, than Jesus.

[Image of Moses holding the Ten Commandments]

Maybe Barabbas looked like that.

- Islam is a religion of law that basically rejects the historical Jesus. Why? Because He was covered in poop and let himself be crucified.
- Judaism can also be a religion of law that rejects the historical Jesus. Why? Because He was covered in poop and let himself be crucified.
- And sadly, Christianity is often also a religion of law that rejects Jesus Christ. Why? Because He was covered in poop and let himself be crucified.

I think the crowd was probably looking for a “Left Behind” Jesus. . .

[Image of a shiny Jesus riding on a white horse on the clouds with an army clothed in white behind him]

. . . riding a white horse, coming on the clouds of heaven . . .

And now you may be thinking—“Hey Peter that’s a description of Christ’s coming right out of Revelation 19 and even the Gospel of Matthew...?” And it is, and it’s true, and it’s happening wherever the Gospel is preached. Revelation 19:13, “The name by which he is called is the Word of God.”

That’s right! Did you know that just an hour or two before Pilate held the election, Jesus stood before the high priest covered in spit and said the following: *“From now on you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”* (Matt. 26:64)

I happen to believe the Scriptures are true and that Jesus never lies . . .

- And that means that Jesus, called “the Word” in Rev. 19, has been coming on the clouds of heaven, conquering the kings of the earth for at least two thousand years . . .
- And it means that He was coming on the clouds of heaven even as He stood before King Pilate that day covered in bruises, blood and spit the *laos*, the people, just couldn’t—or wouldn’t—see it.

They didn’t know what power is. They didn’t know what glory is.
They didn’t know “The Word of God” and “the time of their visitation.”

So listen up:

- If you spend all your time worried about that old Jerusalem that the Jews and the Moslems are always fighting over . . .
- And all your time looking at the sky waiting for Christ to return on the clouds in glory . . .
 Maybe you’re already “Left behind...”

But don’t worry.

It’s never too late to believe the Gospel and surrender to the Word.

I’m *not saying* that you’ll never see the picture that’s portrayed there on the screen.

I’m just saying that the power and the Glory is The Word—The Word of Love.

And by now, I hope I’ve offended the hell out of you, all of you, all of us . . . and I mean that literally because I’m saying that we all vote for Jesus Barabbas.

We the people vote for the principalities and powers of this world.

 In other words . . .

 Eve takes the knowledge of good and evil to make herself in the image of God.

 In other words . . .

Jerusalem is a whore who elects to crucify her Groom,
But her Groom is God who elects to make her His bride.²

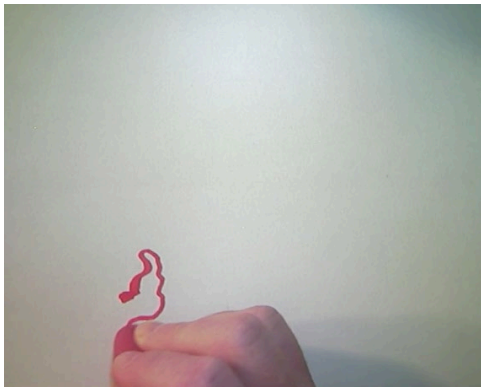
We all vote for Barabbas, because we think he can save us and set us free.

And this is what we mean by “salvation” and what we mean by “free.”

This is you:



And this is your will:



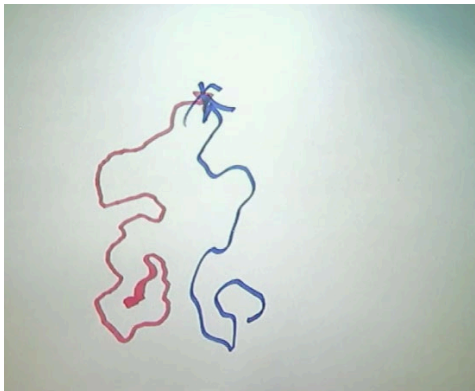
We think a free will is willing what you want . . .

² In the Gospel of John, Pilate says, “*Behold ha adam—the man.*” But the bride can’t see Him and chooses to take His life on the tree in the garden.



Which is like going where you will. . .

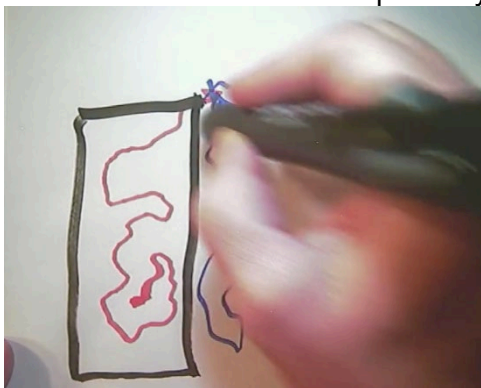
The only problem is that my will can bump into your will. . .



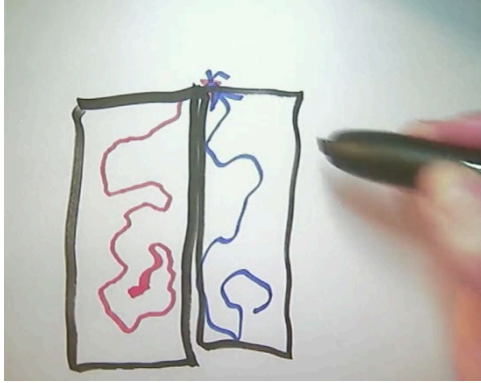
The one who gets his will is called the master and the one who must surrender his will is called the slave.

So, we vote for presidents, kings, and Barabbas *because* they promise to enact laws.

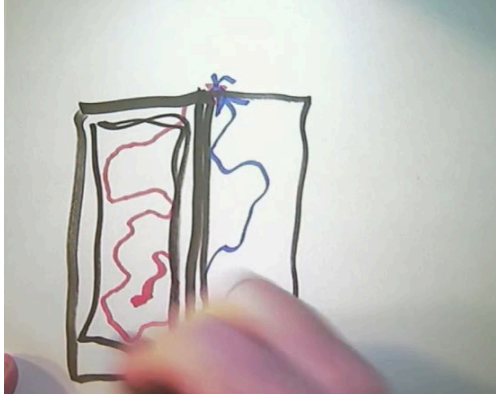
The laws are like boxes that protect your will from my will . . .



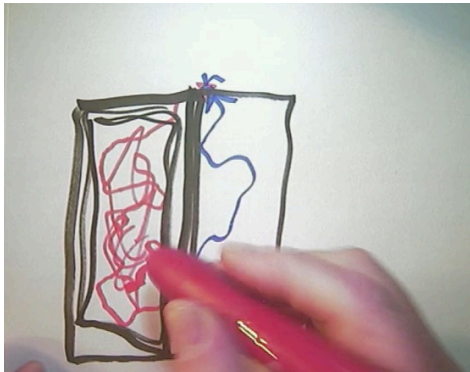
And my will from your will . . .



If I violate the law, the king shrinks my box.



- The area inside my box, I refer to as “my rights”
- And claiming my rights and moving around inside my box, I call freedom or “free will.”



It's ironic, but the very thing I turn to in order to protect my freedom... actually limits my freedom, and enslaves “me” —and I call this “salvation.”

It's like a walled city—the walls are meant to protect and save the citizens, but in the end, the walls trap the citizens, turning the city into a prison—a living hell, just like Jerusalem would turn into a living hell over the next forty years because she did not know the time of her visitation...

She elected Barabbas.

We love, I love, to draw boxes because then I don't have to deal with your poop. I pretend I'm

free—and yet I’m not free to love, and love is life—and I feel awfully *alone*.

- We Americans think we’re better than the Russians because we can draw better boxes—but we’re still just drawing boxes.
- And we Christians think we’re better than the Moslems because we can draw better boxes—but if we’re drawing boxes, we’re still just drawing boxes.
- In the Old Testament, God even helps Moses and the people draw boxes—it’s like He says, “You want knowledge of good and evil? You want boxes? I’ll help you draw boxes...”

[Coloring book image of “Starry Night” by Van Gogh]

Read Leviticus. It’s like “paint by number.” Do you see all the boxes in the paint by number picture above?

It imitates the beautiful thing but it’s not the beautiful thing...
And the boxes are so confining they’ll kill you.

Not only do God’s people build stonewalls around Jerusalem; they build stonewalls around their hearts. They vote for Jesus Barabbas and condemn Jesus Messiah. We call it “free will...” but it’s bad will.

The people are enslaved by bad will . . .

And think they are the box that they have chosen . . .

Which means that each of them is their own deepest prison.

Ironically their “free will” is a prison and they’re utterly terrified of freedom.

In other words, Jesus scares them...

Until this day, they had never encountered a will as free as that of Jesus.

They could not, and we can barely, even begin to conceive of His Freedom.

Think about it:

It’s not only the will of *other people* that we bump into—

It’s the will of *God* ... and the will of God is called reality.

Yet, Jesus had walked on water. He had turned water into wine.

He could say to a mountain, “Move” and the mountain would move.

As if reality itself was His will. That’s some pretty amazing free will.

And yet it wasn’t just the power of His will; it was the character of His will.

For now they saw that the Man that raised the dead, was choosing to die . . . at the hands of His enemies... in the most horrific way they could imagine.

In other words, His will is Love . . . and all *reality* cannot change it.

All the principalities and powers of this world cannot change it.

It terrified Pilate. He had never met a will he couldn’t change—a will he couldn’t break . . . with beatings, scourging and the threat of a cross...

In a few hours Jesus would hang on the tree in the garden...

- The principalities and powers would do their worst...

- Creation itself would deny Him His life...

- And even His Father would seem to have forsaken Him...

And still He cried,
“Father Forgive them” and “into your hands I commit my spirit.”
Still He loved God and loved us—His neighbor.

Jesus is free will. He is the Good Free Will of God in human flesh—even our flesh, our earthen vessel covered in crap . . . our dark box. He was choosing from inside your box.

Well, His body broke upon the tree and His blood spilled out
And *that blood* sets us free.
All human words and explanations fall short at this point.

Suffice it to say: Jesus is King and you don't vote for King.
But the King votes for you . . . and His Will is Free.

Take another look at Matthew 27, verses 24-25:

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.” And all the people [ho laos] answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”

“His blood . . .”

Every week, we come here to do what? Break His body and drink His blood!

“His blood be on us and our children,” said the people.

Matthew 1:21 God says to Joseph, “[Mary] *will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his [the] people [ho laos] from their sins.*”

How does He save the people from their sins? . . . With His blood.
And how does the blood save them? . . . Well, it breaks all the boxes.

Do you remember what's poured out from the vessels of wrath in the Revelation, with which the wrath of God is finished (Rev. 15:1)?

- It's blood . . . blood from the Lamb standing on the throne of God.
- It's the same stuff that poured out of Jesus on the cross, as He cried, “It is finished.”

And do you remember what happened to the stone walls of Jerusalem, forty years after Jesus died? They were literally plowed into the ground by Romans—as Jesus prophesied.

And do you remember what John sees descending from heaven in the Revelation?

The New Jerusalem adorned as a bride for her husband.
Her gates are never shut by day and it's always day in the city.

“And so all Israel will be saved,” writes Paul in Romans.... *“all Israel”* and *“all... that died in Adam”* (Romans 5:15-21, 11:26, 32, 1 Cor. 15:22). We don't know how long some may, “weep and gnash their teeth in outer darkness,” before they surrender their will to God's Will, but they will surrender their will, for God has willed it, and His will is absolutely free.

The Good News *now* is that we can surrender right *now* and be free *now*.

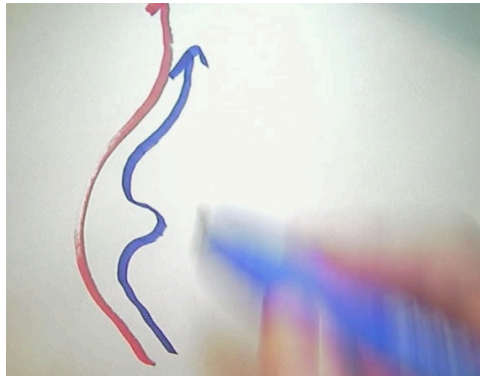
We don't vote for the King, *but* the King votes for us, *and then*, we *do* vote for the King, but we know that our vote is a gift. In other words, it's *free*. It's free of the box that I think is "me."

See? I think we can barely begin to imagine how free the Lord wills us to be.
But we can begin to imagine . . .

Two very good friends can begin to imagine . . .
A mother or father with a little child can begin to imagine . . .
A bride and groom in communion in the sacrament of their covenant
begin to imagine . . .

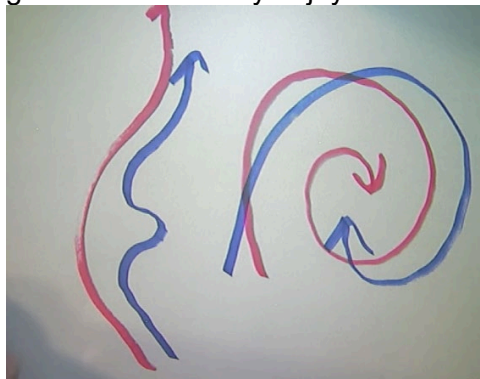
See? You can begin to imagine what it would be like if there was a communion of wills—rather than the construction of boxes . . .

It would be like instruments that harmonize in a symphony.



They don't make war; they make music. Like our worship leader, Vince Colbert and the worship band.

It's what it would be like if the bride's will actually enjoyed submitting to the groom's will *and* the groom's will actually enjoyed submitting to the bride's will.



That wouldn't be rape, but that would be ecstasy.
And it might result in life. (If I were Vincent Van Gogh, I could draw that better.)

And imagine what it would be like if all our wills were in harmony—such that we each willed

what all willed, and all willed what each willed, and willed that each and all would will.

Imagine a communion of wills in communion with the Creator's Will . . .

Maybe we'd paint the beautiful thing or *be* the beautiful thing . . .



Starry Night by Vincent van Gogh

But it wouldn't be paint by numbers . . .

We would be the manifestation of six billion dancers each animated by one song, which each heard in the depths of their being, and then freely willed into existence with ecstatic joy.

We would be God's masterpiece created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we would walk in them or maybe dance in them (Eph. 2:8-10).

We would walk in them, and it wouldn't be bondage but absolute freedom, for we would will God's will, as if it were our own will because it was.

Just imagine if God's will were our will and our will were God's will, then reality itself would bend to each of our wills. But none of us would be trapped alone in our own reality, like a madman trapped in his own delusions. We'd all exist in one reality produced by our harmony of wills, in God's will—an absolutely free will—kinda like this:

Clip from *Dreams May Come*

Chris: *Nice place you've got here*

Albert: *No, no, nice place you've got here!*

Chris: *Me?*

Albert: *Sure. You're making all this. See? We're all pretty insecure at first so we see ourselves somewhere safe, comforting. We all paint our own surroundings, Chris. But you're the first guy I know to use real paint!*

[A bird flies by.]

Chris: *Can I make it dive?*

Albert: *You're the painter now! It's your world.*

[The bird dives and Chris and Albert cheer with excitement. Then the two men observe the bird; it dives again and poops on Chris's shoulder and head. There's awkward silence and Albert looks away. Then the two look at each other.]

Chris: *I didn't do that*

Albert: *No. I did. See? When we're together, it's like dual controls.*

[Albert pushes on a pre-cut hole and a window to a beautiful land is exposed.]

Chris: (smiling) *Ha! It's real. Where's all the paint?*

Albert: *You don't need it anymore. This is your world.*

[The scene changes to another scene. Chris is standing next to a woman observing all sorts of unique, beautiful and interesting scenery and people.]

Woman: *Up until now you've been painting your own world. This is mine. It's our city across the river we have to have a common vision.* [The camera pans out to reveal a beautiful city.]

The city is the harmony of wills united by a common vision.

The New Jerusalem is a city and the city is a Bride.

The city is comprised of people—but none of them are closed vessels.

All are open vessels—like blood vessels—through which flows a common life, united by a common vision of Jesus, the King and our Husband.

The man in the film clip is named Christi. He's just arrived in Heaven, but it turns out his own bride is stuck in her own hell—her own dark box, *because* she won't forgive herself. Her will is divided against itself.

Heaven is non-stop forgiving, which means non-stop "letting" or "allowing."

Heaven is non-stop forgiving, but she won't forgive herself and so she's trapped by her own bad will in her own dark box, where she weeps and gnashes her teeth alone in darkness.

She's trapped until Christi, or *Christee*—her husband, descends into her hell and chooses to commune with her in hell, such that her will becomes his will and his will becomes her will. They die together and rise together... the beautiful thing in a new creation filled with beauty, which is the beautiful Free Will of God.

Well, It's just a silly movie. They are trying to imagine real freedom.

My point is that when we idolize our own supposed "free will," we imprison ourselves in bad will .

..

Until Christ descends into our hell and gives us His will—
Until He gives us "*faith by grace... and this not of ourselves.*"

See the whole point of the doctrine of election is not:

- That you are elected and someone else is not elected OR
- That you are elected because you elected to be elected, which is to not be elected.

The whole point of the doctrine of election is that you are not the elector . . .

You *are* the elected.

And when you see that you *are* the elected, *then* you're free to elect—

You are *free* to love as you've been loved

You are *free* to love in freedom.

The *laos* of God—the people of God—are the elect of God.

God makes that abundantly clear throughout the Old Testament—the point is not that they elected God, but God elected them and this through no merit of their own. This point will now become painfully, obviously, wonderfully clear, for on Good Friday they not only did *not* elect God, they elected to *crucify* God. But their rejection of God only reveals their election by God. . . And so they cry out, "*His blood be on us and on our children.*"

Nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing is stronger than the election of God, who is the will of God, our Lord Jesus in flesh.

And there is no greater beauty, than the wonder working power of His blood.

“The doctrine of election is the sum of the Gospel,” writes Karl Barth, “because of all the words that can be said or heard it is the best: that God elects humanity; that God is for humanity too, ‘the One who loves in freedom’.”

- We don’t elect the King, but the King elects us—that we would elect Him in freedom as the very image of God.
- We don’t choose the King, but the King chooses us, so that we would choose him in freedom... not proud of our choice, but grateful, and therefore, free.
- As John puts it, *“We love, because he first loved us.”*
The King is our Husband.

Wayne Rice used to tell a story and I read somewhere that it was true.

Back in the 1800s, a young Englishman traveled to CA in search of gold. After several months of prospecting, he struck it rich. On his way home, he travelled through New Orleans, where he came upon a crowd of people all looking in the same direction. . . . He heard *“Sold!”* just as he joined the crowd. A middle-aged black man was taken away in chains.

Next a beautiful young girl was pushed up onto the platform and made to walk around so everyone could see. The bidding began... over the sound of vile jokes and comments that betrayed the wicked intentions of the men in that crowd.

Just before the final call, this young miner—from a land that had outlawed slavery years before—this young miner yelled out a price that was exactly twice the previous bid—an amount that exceeded the worth of any man. The crowd laughed in derision.

The girl walked down the steps of the platform until she was eye-to-eye with the miner. She spat straight in his face and through clenched teeth she said, “I hate you!” . . . The miner, without a word, wiped his face, paid the auctioneer, took the girl by the hand, and walked away from the still-laughing crowd.

He seemed to be looking for something in particular, as they walked up one street and down another. Finally he stopped in front of some sort of store. The slave girl did not know what type of store it was . . . but she saw the miner argue with the clerk and dump the rest of his gold onto the counter.

She looked away as the miner came out the door.

Stretching out his hand, he said to the girl, “Here are your manumission papers. You are free.”

The slave-girl did not look up.

He said, “Here, these are papers that say you’re free. Take ‘em..”

“I hate you. Don’t tease me.” She whimpered. “I’m not” he answered.

The girl looked at the papers, then looked at him...

“You just bought me . . . and now, you’re setting me free?”

“That’s why I bought you . . . to set you free,” said the young miner.

And at that, so the story goes, she dropped to her knees weeping...

then, clutching his muddy boots, the girl looked up at the young man and said, “All I want to do, all I will to do, is serve you!”

He elected her... and she elected him... in freedom.

Now I don't know if that story is true, but it would be a true *if*

- The miner were the King...
- And the slave girl were a harlot...
- And she didn't just hate the miner, but crucified the King...
- And so the King didn't just pay with gold, but with blood—His own life blood...

—It would be true *if* Jesus were the miner, and the slave girl was you . . .

For that's the way Jesus chooses you, and sets you free, to choose Him too.

So at the very beginning of the very day that the people elected Jesus Barabbas, Jesus the Messiah, elected the people . . . and nothing is stronger than His choice, for He is actually God's choice, which creates all things.

Communion

In other words [Peter picks up the bread and begins to serve communion], He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body given to you. Take and eat." And in the same manner He took the cup saying, "This is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you."

You have been chosen and purchased with blood.

You know I had some pretty strong opinions about the last election.

But if I'm true to the Gospel, I need to say,

"I don't think it really matters who you choose to be King...

As long as you believe that the King has chosen you...

For then you will choose Him too...

With every move you make, and every breath you take."

The thing that changes the world is not kings, governments or programs—including religious kings, like pastors and evangelists—or religious programs. The thing that changes the world is the free will of God welling up in you.

A smile that's not scripted,

A kind word that's not paint by number,

A heart felt and sincere "I'm sorry" or "I forgive" or "Father into your hands I commit my spirit."

You can't change the world by demanding rights and creating boxes.

The world changes when your box is destroyed,

The world changes when your heart of stone cracks and through it begins to flow a fountain that you did not create.

The world changes when you trust the election of Love.

The world changes when you believe the Gospel.

Listen closely my dear, you have been chosen and paid for with blood. So, come to the table. Amen.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are the rock. You are the Word of God, the Will of God. We wondered what God was up to and it was You! On Good Friday, you revealed that the Will of

God is absolutely good. On Easter you rose from the dead revealing that the Will of God is all-powerful. Lord, we thank you that your Word is Jesus, that what you mean is Jesus, and that we are destined to inherit all things in Him. In His name we thank you, Amen.

Benediction

We do all sorts of arguing about free will and pre-destination, but I think the Bible is saying, "You are predestined for free will. And free will is faith, hope, love, it's every good decision that a person could make." Another way of saying that is (and Paul clearly says this, yet few have the courage to believe it) you are freely and completely predestined to inherit all things.

Believe the Gospel 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.