

I Want It That Way
Matthew 6: 25-34

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A few weeks ago, I was talking with my youngest and he told me that he wanted me to adopt him. He has mentioned this before. I told him that I wanted to adopt him too. I also told him that I cared for him very much but I didn't know how things would work out. He responded by saying, "I know, sometimes we don't always get what we want." What wisdom and truth to that statement. Sometimes we don't always get what we want. Some of our wants are superficial while many are deeply spiritual. How does our faith in Kingdom living collide with our earthy desires? How does our desire to want bring out our worries, fears, and insecurities?

A young girl wants a bicycle. A new teenage driver hopes and dreams for his first car. A high school senior hopes to get into the college of his dreams. A young adult wants to secure his first job, buy his first house and meet the right girl. A young couple is preparing to have a baby. They want a girl but more importantly, they want a healthy baby. A man in the middle of his life struggles with his marriage; he wants desperately to salvage it but he doesn't see any hope. A 70 year old woman has endured so much, the loss of loved ones, a battle with cancer, and now she questions her own spirituality. She wants desperately to fix her relationship with God, but there is so much that holds her back.

What do you want? Is it a nicer car, a bigger house, a promotion at work? Or maybe is it something much deeper and spiritually driven. Physical healing from an illness, respite from the stress of a situation, a release from a painful addition or maybe acceptance from others for who you are? Whatever it may be, we must voice our desires to God. But what happens when our wants are not fulfilled. We don't get the promotion, our financial situation doesn't get better but turns for the worse, a loved one dies, our deep struggle with sins worsen. How do we live with the realization that we don't always get what we want?

As a foster parent, I struggle with this greatly. Too often the system is broken. The children are stuck in the middle, and often their opinions and desires are not held with regard to the level they should be. Their own wants and desires are often complicated and difficult. Nothing is more difficult for a child who still has feelings for an abusive parent.

I don't believe there is anything wrong with expressing our wants and desires and hoping for a certain outcome, but the goal of kingdom living must drive our wants and desires. But what exactly is kingdom living? Kingdom living requires us to consider how God is working through our hopes and dreams. Kingdom living requires us to put our trust in God even when our wants are not fulfilled. Kingdom living requires us to trust that God continues to work in our waiting. When our wants are not fulfilled, we can become anxious

and filled with worry. When we worry or experience anxiousness, our feelings can lead us to wants that fall short of kingdom living.

Don't worry. Jesus instructs us not to worry in this section of the beatitudes. Don't worry about life. How would life be drastically different if we took this approach? We would certainly bypass much stress in our life. The pureness and simplicity of kingdom living requires us to let go of worrying. We must let go of the things we cannot control and focus on that which we can control. While our human nature causes us to worry, our goal should be letting go and letting God take control. The more we let go, the more glimpses of kingdom living that we will encounter. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

There are things that I want and hope for. Some I know will happen and some that I know the outcome will not be what I want. I pray each day for what I hope for but I also pray for this. Lord, give me the peace that passes all understanding to accept whatever happens. Give me clarity to see Your goodness even when the result is not what I want. I believe that what this does is that it gives us the ability to look past what is right in front of us and look forward and upward to the One who we can trust and put our faith in. Is worrying trusting more in our own understanding and less in the providence of God? The problem with that is that we don't see the full picture. 1 Corinthians 13:12 says, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." Often in our situations of need, we don't see the full picture and our experiences, when not so positive, prevent us from seeing God's goodness through a painful and difficult situation. Time and perspective allows us to see glimpses of God's goodness through the most difficult of situations.

Our key Bible verse for VBS this week came from Isaiah 43, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. What we want will come with a cost and it will not always turn out the way that we want, but God is faithful and God is with us. There was a song that we sang this past week that reminds me of the hope we have in God as we wait. It was entitled "I Will Be with You." In your darkness night, I'll be by your side, you are not alone. You don't have to hide all the hurt you feel inside cause you are not alone. No matter where you are or where you go, I will be with you. I will fight for you. You're strength will be renewed. When you're too weak to stand.

What happens when our deepest and most spiritual wants are not fulfilled. We can feel alone. We can feel distant from God. We can become angry with God. We internalize the hurt that we feel inside. We worry about all this and what is to come. We worry about what happens next. Our worries can lead us to a paralyzing and crippling standstill. But Christ calls us onward saying, Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Don't worry.

When Jesus presented the beatitudes, he was speaking to a group of people who were economically disadvantaged. They worried much about physical possessions and wants and needs. But Christ's message is to all, regardless of your position in society. God is

good. God's ways are good. God is working all things for good. Let us focus on letting God. Let us focus in trusting less in ourselves and more in God's providence. May we come to know that God is faithful and true. May we come to know that God's wants and desires for us run deeper than we will ever know. May we want less and seek more the kingdom of God. May that be enough. Amen.