

Who's In Control of Your Life?
FAIRVIEW TEXAS CHURCH OF GOD
February 2, 2008

“Have Thine Own Way, Lord! Have Thine own way!” We sing this in our song services, and many times I have brought up these words in my Bible studies and sermons – asking how much we really mean them. In our prayers, we say “Thy will be done”, but our actions show how little we mean it.



George C. Stebbins (1846-1945)

Words: [Adelaide A. Pollard](#), 1907. Pollard believed the Lord wanted her in Africa as a missionary, but she was unable to raise funds to go. In an uncertain state of mind, she attended a prayer meeting, where she heard an elderly woman pray, “It’s all right, Lord. It doesn’t matter what You bring into our lives, just have Your own way with us.” At home that night, much encouraged, she wrote this hymn.

Music: Adelaide, [George C. Stebbins](#), *Northfield Hymnal with Alexander’s Supplement*, 1907.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Thy will,

- How often we forget, it is His will that matters – not ours!

While I am waiting, yielded and still.

- Are we waiting? Or are we trying to force our time frame on Him?

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- Are we yielding? Or are we trying to force our will on Him?
- Are we still? Or are we pushing our wills too strongly?

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Search me and try me, Master, today!

- What will He find if He tests what we say and what we think?

Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,

- We can only be whiter than snow through Him.

As in Thy presence humbly I bow.

- Are we humble?

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!

- Wounded and weary – we got this one right!

Power, all power, surely is Thine!
Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!

- Absolute sway? Are we willing to allow that? Or do we insist on some control?

Fill with Thy Spirit 'till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me.

- Do we really and truly want people to see Christ in us by the way we live daily?

While I was in *the Salt Lake City airport* on Wednesday, September 25, 1992, I saw a woman trying to board a plane. She had a little girl, probably about 4 years old, with her. The little girl was crying and the woman had to nearly drag her up to the flight attendant. I believe I heard the woman say they were going to see grandma. I'm sure that prior to their arrival at the airport, they had discussed in very happy terms about going to see grandma. But, when the little girl saw that she had to walk down this long, dark, damp, jet way, then get on the airplane and go high up into the air – well, she wasn't so sure she wanted to see grandma that much after all. Maybe it would be better if grandma came here!

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How does this compare to our reaction to the Gospel, the Good News, of the Bible? We read about the wonderful plan that God has for us; we read about the Kingdom; we read that God will take care of us – more than the lilies of the field – and we get all excited. We study and gain understanding. We talk about how great it will be! But, then, when we have to do something – well, we just sort of fall apart.

On Sunday, September 22, 1992, the French approved the Maastricht Treaty, which opened the way for the creation of the Euro Dollar, the creation of a European Central Bank and the breakdown of many of the geographic travel barriers throughout Europe. The next day, headlines read “French Vote Good News for everybody”. Supporters said Maastricht was the key to making Europe an economic powerhouse. “Unity means lower interest rates and higher world growth,” said Wayne Gantt, a U.S. economist.

Other articles of that day observed “every major industrialized nation’s economy is struggling, and there is no sign that any will gain strength soon. Recessions are rolling around the world.”

How have those predictions panned out? The effects of the Maastricht Treaty have been slow in coming. During our last trip to Europe, the only real evidence of change was the ease of moving between countries. The old currencies were still in effect, although the Euro Dollar has since gained more presence. Certainly, the last 9 years have not been economically disastrous for the US.

Despite all of our predictions and analysis, God’s plan will be done. In Acts 5, Luke tells us that Gamaliel spouted wisely that “... if this plan is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it – lest you even be found to fight against God.”

Jesus told us that even He did not know all of God’s plan – He does not know the day and time of His return. Jesus knew what we have difficulty really believing – sometimes, in this life, we need to let others win! Jesus knew what His job was; and He knew that God was really in control of events.

We play board games with children and grandchildren – and sometimes, we let them win. As they grow older, and their skills develop, we play more according to our real abilities – matching their growth. When they make mistakes, we all laugh – we’re tolerant – because we know they are learning.

God lets us win sometimes. He has given us our instructions – in the Bible. He tries to teach us. God grants us His grace when we mess up. We don’t deserve it, but He is using our mistakes to teach us and to help us to grow in understanding of His way.

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Remember the battle of *the Spanish Armada* against England in 1588. The Armada was a giant formation of combat vessels and was called Invincible. The King of Spain, Phillip II, sent the Armada against England. The Spanish had 129 vessels, 65 of which were over 700 tons, with 8,000 sailors and 19,000 Castilian and Portuguese soldiers. To oppose the Armada, Queen Elizabeth I of England could gather only 80 ships, of which a mere 30 were ships of the line... The English defeated the Armada, and its final destruction was completed by the storms. Only 54 vessels returned to Spanish ports. The failure of the Armada saved English ... independence and marked the fall of Spanish naval power.

No matter how much planning was done by the Spaniards, no matter how comparatively weak were the English forces – God's plan was fulfilled.

The world is playing by its own set of rules. Everyone is doing what they think is right.

On the show "The World's Funniest Videos" there was a *T-ball game* where the little boy hit the ball and ran to third base. Through the chaos that ensued, while the fielders continued to drop the ball and throw to wrong players, the batter continued to run the bases backwards, eventually scoring. The umpires counted the run and everyone cheered. I'm sure the grown man that had been that little boy has grown to know the rules.

We are sometimes like that little boy – breaking God's rules and being totally oblivious to it. As we study the Bible and continue to learn, He expects us to improve and to follow what we have learned. Until then, he will let our runs count.

We all try to control things and to predict outcomes.

With all that being said, there are *those who would be fatalistic*. What does it matter what I do, if God already has the outcome preplanned? Why should I do anything at all, if I cannot influence the outcome? If everything is "predestined", what is the purpose?

Let's turn to Matthew 25 to find God's answer to these questions.

Matthew 25:

- 1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.
- 2 "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.
- 3 "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,
- 4 "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
- 5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.
- 6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'
- 7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

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- 8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'
- 9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'
- 10 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.
- 11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'
- 12 "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'
- 13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.
 - if we don't do our part, we will be left out of the kingdom

It is no accident that this parable immediately follows Jesus description of the end time.

We are to be prepared!

Matthew 25:

- 14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.
- 15 "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.
- 16 "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.
- 17 "And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.
- 18 "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.
- 19 "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.
- 20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'
- 21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'
- 22 "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.'
- 23 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'
- 24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have

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- not scattered seed.
- 25 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'
 - 26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.'
 - 27 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.'
 - 28 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.'
 - 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.'
 - 30 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
 - "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

We are to be productive!

Matthew 25.32-46 = *Jesus will judge our actions*

Matthew 25:

- 32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.
- 33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.
- 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:
- 35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;
- 36 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'
- 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?'
- 38 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?'
- 39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'
- 40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'
- 41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:
- 42 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;
- 43 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me,

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sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

- 44 "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'
- 45 "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'
- 46 "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

We are to take advantage of opportunities to serve others!!

God's plan will prevail; our participation in His plan is up to us.

Be prepared! Be productive! Serve others!

And always remember who is really in control!