

I. Introduction

- A. Are you ready for some good news?
- B. That's where we're headed today.
- C. The first and greatest influence in your life is the family that raised you.
- D. Your family gave you a massive shove in a certain direction.
 - 1. That direction might be really healthy.
 - 2. That direction might be really sick.
 - 3. It might be violent. It might be heartbreaking. It might be confusing, addictive, or totally messed up.
- E. If you come from an awesome family that's amazing.
- F. But if you come from a destructive or scary or heartbreaking family, I want to show you some good news today. I want to show you that you can change direction. If your family shoved you in a messed up direction, you can change direction.
- G. You can move into wholeness and happiness and joy.
- H. Today is part 3 in our Summer series. We are talking about the Fatherhood of God. And we are trying to get beyond any messed up ideas we may have inherited that make God a bad father.
- I. In truth, God in Heaven is the best father any kid could ever imagine, hope for, pray for, and Long for.
- J. Here's our key Bible verse for today, and then we'll get into our message.
 - 1. *"Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart."* (Psalm 37:4)
- K. I invite you to think with me about today's topic, which is:
 - 1. **The Desires of Your Heart**
- L. And by that I mean the really deep desires. The big ones. The ones that determine the course of your life.
- M. I wanna show you that this really goes against what a lot of people think about being a Christian. There's a religious instinct that makes us think that whatever we want, God's gonna give us the opposite.
- N. Let's shatter that religious instinct in a million pieces right now. Here's what Jesus said.
 - 1. *"What man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"* (Matthew 7:9-11)
- O. Your father wants what's best for you. Your father wants good things for you. God did not design the Christian life to be miserable. To your father in heaven, your heart is a tender and fragile thing. He handles it with care. And your desires are precious to him.
 - 1. You don't have a father who wants to take from you.
 - 2. And you don't have a father, who wants to take out on you his frustrations. God has no frustrations.
- P. Whatever negative programming you received from your earthly father, you need to let it go. You need to rehab your thinking.
- Q. God is always right beside you. He works in the shadows. Whatever this fallen world throws at you, he is re-purposing to bring about something beautiful and good for you.
- R. Whatever wholesome and beautiful desires live in your heart, your Father is working to make them live in your experience too.
- S. Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- T. But there's a difficulty here.
- U. The difficulty is that so many times, so many of us are out of touch with the desires of our heart.
- V. So I want to give you a couple stories and then get into some heavy duty theology. Buckle up.

II. Out of Touch: Story One

- A. I had two really similar conversations with some friends a while back. It was surprising how alike the two conversations were.
- B. The first time I was talking with a married couple who were missionaries. They had served deep inside Africa for many years. Super great people. But everything was changing for them. They had to leave the country they were in. They also had to decide whether or not they would continue to even be missionaries.
- C. They were really torn and stressed out about the decision. And a big part of that was because they wanted to please God. They really wanted to find God's Will for their life.
- D. That is awesome. I totally admire that spirit.
- E. So I asked a question that surprised them.
 - 1. I asked, "What do you want?"
- F. And they started telling me, "We want God's will. We want to do what God wants us to do." And I said that's awesome. But that's not what I'm asking you. I'm asking, What do YOU want?
- G. They looked at me like I was speaking in a foreign language. As lifelong Christians, and as lifelong missionaries, it had never occurred to them to even consider the desires of their own hearts.
- H. The wife actually started crying and shaking her head. She said, "It doesn't matter what we want. It only matters what God wants."
- I. And I love that spirit, and I love that level of respect for the Lord, but I don't think that's how God wants us to operate.

III. Out of Touch: Story Two

- A. The second story is pretty much, the same, only this time it was with a friend who is a pastor. He's been pastoring for a very long time. And his church closed down. He and his wife are really broken up about it.
- B. He went on and on about trying to find God's will, for what was next in his life. And of course, I agree with that. We are to do the will of God.
- C. But I asked him the same question. I asked, What do you want?
- D. He said I just want to do the will of God.
- E. I get that, I said. That's awesome! But that's not what I'm asking you. I am asking you what do you want?

- F. My friend actually got mad at me for that. He shook his head again and again, and said no, no no no, no! That is not the right question! That is absolutely not the right question!
- G. And when I pressed him on it, he started crying.
- H. He has been a pastor for 30 years. But he was completely out of touch with his deepest wants.
- I. Why does this happen?

IV. There's more.

- A. It's not just Christians. It's not just missionaries and pastors. It's not just people in Ministry. Who are out of touch with what I want.
- B. I've seen this everywhere, and in all kind of people.
- C. We're all trying to find ourselves. We're all trying to figure out our hearts' deepest desires.
- D. It's especially hard for students. You're still a teenager and you have to figure out if you're gonna go to college or not, what your career is going to be, what your major is going to be... It's like you have to have all these big life questions answered before you've ever gotten to try anything.
- E. What are you gonna be when you grow up? You got that and there's a voice in your heart saying I don't know. Quit asking me.
- F. Are you make something up and then get stuck with it.
- G. Let's talk about the desires of your heart.

V. The Desires of Your Heart

A. CREATION: When God created the human race, he created us with built-in royalty. The Bible calls this dominion.

1. *"Then God said, 'Let Us make mankind in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"* (Genesis 1:26)
2. God put a crown on the head of Adam and Eve. They ruled. They reigned. God created human beings to be royalty. To occupy the throne of earth.
3. This is our nature. This is God's plan. This is what we were designed for.
4. Let me go deeper with us. Genesis tells us that God made us in his image.
5. That means that God embedded into us, some of his own qualities, his own characteristics, his own attributes.
6. One of God's qualities is called sovereignty.
 - a) **Sovereignty means that God is the caring and powerful ruler over all things.**
 - b) *"For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation... He does according to His will in the army of heaven..."* (Daniel 4:34-35)
7. When God created us in his image, he sliced off a sliver of his own sovereignty. Don't worry, he won't run out, he has an infinity of it.
8. He embedded that tiny sliver of sovereignty into us. Meaning that we have dominion, we have the right to rule.
9. You were created with mini-sovereignty. Dominion.
 - a) God does, according to his will, which is omnipotence and unlimited.
 - b) And we get to do according to our free will, which is limited in power and limited in scope.
10. All of that is to say that in God's original plan, you were created to know what you want and to want what you want. This is a holy and good thing, and God's original creation.
11. All that got ruined, and one terrible horrible no good very bad day.

B. CHAOS: When the human race invited sin into the world, the human race lost its dominion and went into servitude.

1. We are fallen members of a fallen race, and that means that there are handcuffs on the part of us that makes choices and has desires.
2. That part of you is called your will. The more technical word is your volition. Human free will was shackled on the day that Adam and Eve sinned.
 - a) When my friends were unable to say what they wanted, that was a manifestation of these handcuffs.
 - b) Or when you or I or anyone of us use our free will to make choices that hurt ourselves, hurt other people, or disrespect God, that is another manifestation of these handcuffs.
3. The Bible uses words like slavery, bondage, and servitude, to describe the forces of darkness that intruded into our place of dominion on that cataclysmic, apocalyptic day called the Fall.
 - a) **Sin took dominion over you. (Romans 7:23, John 8:34)**
 - b) **Satan took dominion over you. (Ephesians 2:2,3)**
 - c) **Corruption took dominion over you. (Romans 8:21)**
 - d) **Legalism took dominion over you. (Galatians 4:24, 25)**
 - e) **Death took dominion over you. (Hebrews 2:15)**
4. Sin is not just a thing a person does wrong once in a while. Sin is a large scale bondage to dark forces.
 - a) It doesn't just apply to humans, it applies to the whole created order. All of creation is under bondage because of human scent.
5. Sin is the cataclysmic destruction of original perfection, the wreckage of original Paradise, and the subjugation of every man woman and child to pain, brutality, and death.
 - a) When you look within your own heart, and try to figure out who you are, and try to figure out what you really really want, and you can't, and all you see is chaos, that is a manifestation of the bondage of the will, and the corruption of our dominion.

- b) Even more, when you have a habit that you cannot break, when you have a temptation that no matter how much you want to deny, you just can't say no, when you have an addiction that is deadening your emotions and breaking your heart, and your free will is not enough to overcome it, that is a manifestation of the ruin we call the Fall.
- 6. Try to go one day without sinning in word, thought, or deed, and you will see that will power is not enough, and never will be enough, to bring back Paradise.
- C. CHRIST: When Jesus died on the cross, and when he rose again, he broke the power of every dark force, and restored your dominion over every area of your life.**
 - 1. Jesus broke the power of sin, he crushed the power of Satan, he reversed the power of corruption, he nullified the power of legalism, and he broke the chains of death.
 - 2. That day of the crucifixion of Christ is the single most monumental and impactful day, in all of cosmic history.
 - a) *"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."* (Hebrews 2:14-15)
 - 3. And when he was hanging on the cross, he did it, because he loved you. All that agony. All that suffering. All that pain. All the horror. The condemnation. The judgment of heaven. The mocking. The scourging. The unspeakable pain. The humiliation.
 - a) There has never been a greater demonstration of the awfulness of sin than the death of Jesus on the cross.
 - b) And there has never been a greater demonstration of the boundless love of God, than the death of Jesus on the cross.
 - 4. He knew you before you were born. As he was dying on the cross, he was thinking of you by name.
 - 5. And he died, not only to forgive you, but to set you free. And not only to set you free, but to give you back the right to rule your own life.
 - 6. Getting saved us so much more than having your sins, forgiven and heaven, heaven guaranteed.
 - 7. Salvation is a complete transformation of who you are and what you have and a complete restoration of your lost dominion.
- D. CONQUERORS: When you get saved, you step into the victory that has already been won by Jesus... so that you're not fighting your battles for victory, but from victory. (Romans 8:38, 5:17).**
 - 1. I think that this is one of the most overlooked an important Bible verses about what it means to be a Christian. Let this deep inside you.
 - a) *"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."* (Romans 5:17)
 - 2. There is so much in here. But the one thing I want you to notice is that this is definition of who you are.
 - a) You are a person who has received an abundance of grace.
 - b) You are a person who has received the gift of righteousness.
 - c) Therefore, you are a person who will reign in life.
 - (1) This is you getting your dominion back. This is you getting the scepter of your life back. This is you receiving the free gift of salvation from the hand of Jesus, and along with that salvation, having a crown placed on your head, a scepter placed in your hands, and a charter of freedom placed in your eternal records.
 - 3. Sin is not the boss of you. Temptation is not the boss of you. Depression is not the boss of you. Your peers are not the boss of you. The things that make you ashamed are not the boss of you. Your failures are not the boss of you. Your disabilities are not the boss of you. Your anger is not the boss of you. Your enemies, your ex, your losses, your failures, your heartbreaks, your addictions, your dysfunctions, your illnesses, your mental illnesses, your debt, your fears, your weirdness, you're anything else you can think of, is not the boss of you.
 - 4. You are the boss of you, under the mighty lordship of Jesus Christ.
 - a) *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."* (Romans 8:37)
 - 5. And the most important thing a Christian can ever do is to rehab. You're thinking to believe that what God says about you is true.
 - 6. That is the healing that it takes to shatter the strongholds, and break out of the matrix, and really come to life.
- E. CHOOSE: God's will, for you is that you would choose a grand and glorious adventure that flows from the deepest desires of your heart, as it has been healed by the grace of Christ.**
 - 1. Don't give up. Don't settle. Don't quit.
 - 2. When the father sees you following your heart, he has a giant smile on his face. It brings him joy.
 - 3. That is the opposite of what my friends were taught, who thought that God had zero interest in their hearts' desires.
 - 4. For me to stand here and teach, this has been a struggle for me, that has lasted for a lot of years. I was taught the opposite of this.
 - 5. One of the things I was taught in my church why is that, as a good Christian, I needed to annihilate my ego. Literally. Those are the words they used. Annihilate my ego. Die to myself. Put all my wants on the altar and only do what God wants.
 - 6. Of course, we submit to God. Of course, he is Lord of all. If God says, go to Nineveh, then Jonah go to Nineveh. But if God says that, and you don't wanna do it, it shows there are places in your heart that have not been healed. You haven't stepped into your dominion. You're still in bondage, emotionally, even though you've been set free.
 - 7. I am preaching this message today to liberate you and to motivate you.
 - 8. I want to liberate you by giving you the freedom to the deep within your heart and figure out what you really really really want. What are the deep desires of your heart? What are the longings of your heart? Don't be superficial. Don't be shallow. Go deep. It's OK to want what you want. It's actually healthy to want what you want.
 - a) **Because whatever voice in your head tells you you'll never get what you want (or blocks you from even knowing what you want), that voice is from the dark side and not from God.**

- (a) A spirit of religious legalism.
- (b) Incorrect teaching about God's Will, Christian liberty, and Personal Sovereignty
- (c) Abusiveness or bullying as a child.
- (d) Being labeled as a loser.
- (e) A deep-rooted fear of failure.
- (f) FOMO (fear of missing out).
- (g) Timid personality. Intimidated personality. Cowardice.
- (h) Perfectionism, as a coping mechanism for the fear of rejection.
- (i) Parental failure to cheer you beyond your inner resistance.

9. I am telling you that if you are a Christian, you can rise above all these things. You have victory over these things. They don't have to dominate you. They don't have to ruin your life.
 - a) I am preaching to liberate you.
10. I am also preaching to motivate you. There are some of you hearing me today who have put your life on pause. Good reasons. Bad reasons. Doesn't matter. Let's start where you are at today and get moving.
11. Start making choices.
12. Release the parking brake and hit the gas.
13. Get in touch with the desires of your heart. God will give them to you. He put them there in the first place. And he will bring them to pass.
14. Now reawaken them.
15. Let them become a fire in your belly. Go beyond your fears and beyond your excuses.
 - a) Launch the business.
 - b) Get fit, get healthy.
 - c) Ask someone out on a date.
 - d) Get involved in reEngage.
 - e) Choose the college. Send in the application. (If you want to go to Simpson university, our church can give you a 50% scholarship off tuition. Talk to one of our pastors.)
 - f) Sign up for Financial Peace University (training we offer to get your finances in order)
 - g) Go volunteer to help in the kids ministry.
 - h) Or the prayer ministry.
 - i) Or sign up for Veritas. Go deep and go big in your ministry.
 - j) End your resistance, and just get saved. Receive Jesus.
 - k) Push away from the porn, the alcohol, drugs, — whatever it is, keeping your life stuck in a bad place — and get the help you need.
 - (1) We have a ton of options at Pathway Church to get you unstuck.
 - l) Cut the check. Make the big donation.
 - m) I call on some of you to Un-Retire, and put your life in the service of the Gospel.
 - n) Get off the couch and into the game.
16. Liberation. Motivation.

VI. Own your identity as a child of God.

- A. That identity is a royal identity.
- B. Sometime in the limitless expanse of eternity past a universal tragedy occurred. God's most perfect creation, full of wisdom and beauty, an angel called Lucifer, had fallen.
- C. I could've destroyed him immediately. He could've answered Lucifer's challenge with raw omnipotence.
- D. But he did not. Instead, God chose a plan that baffled even the mighty angels.
- E. And that plan included the most lowly creatures, the double could ever imagine.
 1. *"What is mankind that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor."* (Psalms 8:4-5)
- F. And that glory on that honor, is your birthright Christian. It is your identity as a royal child of God.
- G. Because you, wanting your wants, and following your heart, and trusting your father, and rising up to your Royal stature, is the one thing that the devil fears most, the one thing the lost and dying world needs most, and the one thing that pleases your heavenly father most of all.