

John 6:38–40 | “Born to Do The Will of the Father”
Preached on December 21, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles to John 6, and we will be covering verses 38–40 this morning.
[pauseee]

We have taken a short break from the book of Ephesians to look at a couple passages in John that are related to the birth of Jesus. *[pause]*

Last Sunday, we saw how Jesus’ coming brings us atonement, and now we will see how Jesus’ coming brings us life. *[pauseeeee]*

When a business wants to build a new building, there’s a lot that goes into it. *[pause]*

First, they have to design, plan, and think through tons of details before they can do *any* physical work. *[pause]*

So what they do is they put in hours upon hours, and spend months upon months determining exactly what they want the building to look like. *[pauseee]*

So coming up with the plan is step #1 and it *has* to be step #1 because you can’t build a building with no plan.

But then when all of the planning is done, a big, monumental moment arrives and it’s when it’s time to “break ground.” *[pause]*

There’s a reason why there’s usually a ‘ground breaking ceremony’ because it’s a big deal.

It means that the plan is finally coming to be—it’s actually happening! *[pauseee]*

The plan wasn’t all just a dream, but it’s becoming reality, and breaking ground is the first glimpse of that plan coming to fruition.

And so it’s a time of excitement and hope, for it signals that the plan is in motion. *[pauseee]*

Well in a much greater way, Jesus’ birth is like the ‘ground breaking’ part of God’s plan...

God had a plan to give a people eternal life through His Son, and that plan didn’t remain unfulfilled. *[pause]*

It was no great plan that just never came to be, like we often have.

No, He had a plan, and Jesus’ birth is a signal that that plan was in motion. *[pause]*

It was a big deal, for it showed that His plan was coming true, so no wonder the shepherds were filled with excitement when they saw that Jesus was born.¹ *[pauseeeee]*

¹ A reference to Luke 2:20.

Listen as I read what Jesus says about Himself in relation to the Father's plan, and I'll read verses 35–40 to get some context. *[READ]*

In the context, Jesus is interacting with the crowds about bread.

And they are seeking literal bread to fill their bellies, but Jesus points them to something better: Himself. *[pause]*

He calls Himself “the bread of life,” and then goes on to speak about how it is that He is able to give this life.

And it's in this context that we find our passage this morning. *[pauseeee]*

So as we look closer at verses 38–40, what do we see? First...

I. The Father's will is for people to receive eternal life through Christ.

There's a lot of talk about the will of God in our day. *[pause]*

People wonder, “What is the will of God for my life?”

And they are thinking about what His plan is for where to go to college, who to marry, or what job to take. *[pauseee]*

Now obviously those kinds of things matter, and there are different aspects to the will of God.

But if we talk about the will of God *only* in those terms, we miss out on some deep and massive truths about the will of God. *[pauseeee]*

Here we see that the Father's will is for people to receive eternal life through Christ.

So how often are people dwelling upon *that* will, compared to how often they dwell on lesser things? *[pauseeee]*

Before we get into the content of the Father's will, let's first think generally about God's will. *[pause]*

In some passages, God's will can refer to His *moral* will.

So this is like in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” *[pauseee]*

So ‘giving thanks’ is a part of God's moral will for us, meaning, He commands and desires for us to follow what He has said, but we often fail at that. *[pauseeee]*

But God's *sovereign* will is what He has determined and so it's what He will bring about.

His sovereign will doesn't fail, but it's always upheld. *[pauseeee]*

Well when Jesus talks here, He's talking about God's sovereign will. *[pause]*

God has a desire, which flows into a grand, determined plan. *[pauseeee]*

This shows us that God is not a robot.

He's not some impersonal force, but He desires, has a plan, wills, and is purposeful. *[pauseeee]*

Nor does God act on mere emotions or whims, but He's an unchanging God, whose plan is always connected to His character and power. *[pauseeee]*

We make choices based on emotional highs or emotional lows sometimes, and it doesn't usually turn out well. *[pause]*

We also sometimes make plans that flop or fail, for we can't perceive the future or we aren't always knowledgeable or wise enough.

But God is different from us, for He is unchanging, all-knowing, and all-wise. *[pause]*

His will never changes, it's always right, and because He's all-powerful: it always comes to be. *[pauseeee]*

We can be confident that no matter what God sovereignly wills, it *will* happen. *[pauseeeee]*

I don't know what you are currently facing, but I want you to rest assured in the sovereign will of God. *[pause]*

Whatever He ordains comes true. *[pause]*

Whatever He decrees will be done. *[pause]*

You can have confident hope in your unchanging God and His unchanging will.

So read through the Scriptures and note the many instances of His will—rest your life upon them! *[pauseeeee]*

So God the Father has a will, but what is it?

It's that we would have eternal life in and through Jesus. *[pause]*

Jesus says that he was sent to do the will of the Father, and right after that, he says what this will is...

Listen to verses 39–40: “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” *[pauseeee]*

God the Father has willed that a people be given life, kept, and raised.

So just think about this: God's plan from the beginning was to show us grace and mercy by giving us life in Christ! *[pauseee]*

Wonder of wonders—God's grand plan is a gracious, merciful, and loving plan! *[pause]*

God has essentially determined to give life to prior rebels. *[pauseee]*

We sinned against Him, yet in love, He has willed that those who turn from their sin and trust in Jesus can have eternal life, be kept till the end, and be raised again. *[pause]*

Life to prior rebels! *[pauseee]*

Usually rebels face death, but we have received mercy in the face of our death. *[pauseee]*

God could have willed that every single person experience eternal death, for we deserved it by our rejection of Him.

Yet He chose to save a people out of sinful humanity to shower His grace upon through the giving of eternal life in Jesus.

So marvel at the mercy of God! *[pauseeeee]*

This is God's purpose and plan, and since God's will cannot be frustrated, then that means we can be assured of eternal life. *[pauseee]*

So what great confidence and assurance we can have about our salvation!

If we have believed in Jesus Christ, we are given eternal life, there's no doubt about it. *[pause]*

God won't go back on His will and say, "I know I willed for everyone who believes to receive eternal life, but it's *this* guy." *[pause]*

No way—"Everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him" receives eternal life! *[pauseee]*

God the Father has determined that life would be found only through His Son, and that's why Jesus can say that He is the 'bread of life'! *[pauseee]*

Listen up—salvation isn't found anywhere else, but through Jesus.

It's everyone *who looks on the Son and believes in him* that receives eternal life and is raised. *[pauseee]*

There aren't all of these multitude of ways, but there's *one* way.

So you want life? You have to receive it through Jesus. *[pauseee]*

So many people say, “Why does there have to be only one way? Why can’t there be many ways to life?”

And our response should be, “You’re upset that there’s only one way? We should be grateful that there’s *even* one way!” *[pauseeee]*

The fact that there’s even one way is lavish grace—so look on Him and believe in Him! *[pauseeee]*

So many in our world are pointing in all of these other directions to find life, but they will not do. *[pause]*

Many try to find lasting life by becoming obsessed with what they eat or how much they work out. *[pause]*

Others try to find enduring life by making sure they are extra, extra safe from every and all dangers. *[pause]*

Still others try to point to some false religion or some other form of spirituality, but God’s Word is clear: life is found in Christ. *[pause]*

The reason? Because God has willed it to be found in His precious Son. *[pauseeeee]*

What else do we see in this passage?...

II. The Father’s will is carried out by Jesus, who came down to do it!

We just learned about God’s will, but who is the prime one *carrying out* His will? Jesus Christ. *[pause]*

Jesus says in verse 38, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.” *[pauseeee]*

So Jesus is the *executor* of the Father’s will. *[pauseeeee]*

Now that’s encouraging!

We can be assured that God’s will will be done because God the Father is the one willing it.

But that’s not all, for God the Son carries out the Father’s will. *[pauseeeee]*

You might have a great person planning something, but if another person doesn’t carry out that plan well, then it kinda flops.

But this will of God is planned by the Father and carried out by the Son. *[pauseeee]*

How can we be despairing and hopeless people when we serve such a God?!

No, we should confidently stand upon His work through Christ. *[pause]*

We can have bounding confidence in the salvation that God has provided because we know that God was in control the whole time—not only planning it all, but carrying it out. *[pauseeee]*

So why did Jesus come? *[pause]*

Many times when we think about that question we think of how He came to be with us. *[pause]*

We think about how He came to die for us. *[pauseeee]*

Others think about how He came to teach or do miracles or something like that.

Yet how often do we think, “Jesus came to do the Father’s will?” *[pauseeee]*

If you read the Gospel of John, scattered throughout it, Jesus emphasizes that very thing...

His food is to do the Father’s will, He seeks the will of the One who sent him, he speaks what the Father told him, and does what’s pleasing to Him.² *[pauseeee]*

Sometimes when we think of Christmas, we just think of it as this cute, little holiday. *[pause]*

We think about the fun Christmas songs played on the radio.

We dwell upon the little manger scenes. *[pauseeee]*

Now there’s nothing wrong with enjoying the small, little joys of Christmastime, but if that’s all Christmas is to us then we have missed something massive, global, and cosmic. *[pauseeee]*

The truths that we celebrate at Christmas are big, not small. *[pause]*

Jesus was born in order to fulfill God the Father’s grand, glorious, redemptive plan to give life to the dead! *[pauseeee]*

So the baby born in Bethlehem is a part of a global, eternal plan being carried out. *[pauseeee]*

When we celebrate Christmas, we are not celebrating a regional event, nor even a national event. *[pause]*

We are not celebrating a small act of kindness. *[pause]*

Though Jesus was small as a baby in the manger, his coming was not a small thing...

For we are rejoicing in the Father’s plan *for the world* that was unfolding in Jesus. *[pauseeee]*

Many times when we make plans, they never come to be...

² References to John 4:34, 5:30, 8:28–29, 12:49–50.

Consider all of the New Year's resolutions that you have made that never came to be. *[pause]*

You said that you would lose 10 pounds, but instead, your weight went up rather than down. *[pause]*

You said that you would read more, but that flopped. *[pauseeee]*

Or think of those vacation plans that you make...

You had your itinerary all planned out to the day and hour. *[pause]*

You would go here at this time, enjoy this event on this day, or go out to eat at that restaurant.

But what happened?

Something came up, and it didn't happen. *[pause]*

That restaurant was closed for some odd reason, that event got rained out, or someone got sick.

Our lives are strewn with unfulfilled plans, yet Jesus' coming was a big sign saying, "God's will is being carried out!" *[pauseeee]*

You see, Jesus didn't come to be with us, and simply say, "Oh, so this is what it's like to live down here."

No, he came to carry out the Father's will for the world. *[pauseeee]*

So every time that we celebrate Christmas can be once again a reminder that it was all going according to God's loving plan.

And if a moment like that was going according to God's plan, why do you think that *today* is not under His control? *[pause]*

Why do you think that your trial is not in His hand? *[pauseeee]*

The Father's will is carried out by Jesus, but what is His will? To give life. *[pause]*

That means that Jesus' birth signals that life is here! *[pauseeeee]*

There is so much darkness and death in our world. *[pause]*

We hear about terrorist attacks, abortion, and cancer.

We hear about suffering, sorrow, and suicide. *[pause]*

We are surrounded by death on every side, and our own death can feel like it's looming over us, too.

Yet in a world of darkness and death, Jesus' birth shone forth with bright hope of the arrival of life. *[pauseeeee]*

Imagine that you are caught in a flood. *[pause]*

The water just keeps gushing forth, you are struggling to stay afloat, and all hope seems lost. *[pause]*

You think that it's the end, as you are about to give up the fight.

But all of a sudden in the distance you see something coming towards you—a rescue helicopter is coming towards you! *[pauseee]*

That helicopter's arrival signals something to you doesn't it?

It signals hope and life. *[pauseeee]*

You were bound for death, but now, life is on the way.

And that's like Jesus' coming—it said to the world, "Life is here!" for that was his purpose in coming. *[pauseeeee]*

Jesus came down to do the will of the Father, and this will is spelled out for us here...

God has determined that Jesus would give those who believe in Him eternal life, not lose them, but raise them up. *[pauseeee]*

So I see three different parts of the content of God's will here, but they are tied together...

First, we see that "everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life." *[pauseeee]*

What a promise—*everyone* who trusts in Christ receives eternal life. *[pause]*

You aren't barred from eternal life, if you were born in some far away country. *[pause]*

You aren't prevented from receiving eternal life because of your messed up past.

No, if you look on and believe in Christ, then you *will* receive eternal life. *[pauseeee]*

The only condition is that you must trust in Him. *[pauseeeee]*

What grace of God!

He doesn't make us climb mountains, do a million good works, or do anything like that, but we must simply put our faith in Jesus. *[pauseeee]*

Everyone is looking to live longer, and here God promises you that you will not simply live a little longer, but you will be able to live eternally. *[pause]*

Life that has no end—just think of it! *[pauseeee]*

Though we have sinned against God and deserve death, yet we can live eternally?

Yep! So look on and believe in Jesus, if you haven't already.

Trust in Him and receive eternal life! *[pauseeee]*

God the Father has willed that Jesus be the One who gives eternal life, but also that he should lose nothing of all is given him. *[pause]*

This points to the security of the believer—we are kept by Christ. *[pausee]*

Those who believe in Christ will never be cast out or lost.

And this is both by the will of the Father and the power of the Son that we are kept secure. *[pauseeee]*

You can be assured that if you truly believe in Christ, you will not be lost.

He won't get tired of you and drive you away.

He won't be reckless and lose you. *[pause]*

If you lost your salvation, then that would mean that God's will didn't happen and that Christ didn't perform his Father's will.

And we know that both of those things are *impossible*. *[pauseeee]*

Jesus came to do the Father's will of giving eternal life, keeping those who believe, and lastly, raising them up.

This speaks of the believer's future, bodily resurrection. *[pausee]*

If we trust in Christ, we will be raised up by Christ.

Isn't that such good news? *[pause]*

It means that as Christ followers, our physical death isn't the end.

It may look like the end, but it's not. *[pause]*

Our bodies will be resurrected one day, and what a glorious hope that is! *[pauseeee]*

In this earthly life, we face weakness, pain, and suffering. *[pause]*

Our physical death sometimes seems like it's so close. *[pause]*

Physical life is fragile, but because of Christ, we can look forward with joy to our bodily resurrection someday. *[pause]*

These lowly bodies of ours will be transformed to be glorified bodies that will live on forever. *[pauseeee]*

You know, sometimes a grave is called a “final resting place,” but do not call it that.

The grave is not the final resting place for our bodies, for Jesus will raise us up on the last day. *[pauseeee]*

Our bodily resurrection is a part of the will of the Father for Jesus to carry out.

So know that He will do it, do not doubt that! *[pause]*

As sure as He came, as sure as He died, as sure as He rose again, so that’s how sure you can be that you will be raised up someday, if you believe in Him. *[pauseeee]*

As we put this all together, what we see in this passage is that...

In accordance with the Father’s will, Jesus came so that we could have life!

As we go through life, life can sometimes feel chaotic and out of control. *[pause]*

Crazy events happen, unforeseen moments change things, and you don’t always know what’s coming next. *[pauseeee]*

Even during the Christmas season, you can feel this “out-of-control-ness” when the perfect gift idea for someone doesn’t work out, or your Christmas get-together plans get all messed up. *[pauseee]*

Life can feel like it’s not going according to any plan.

But the news of Christ’s birth reorients our hearts and minds back to truth: the world is *not* out of control. *[pause]*

Christ’s birth is evidence that there’s a God, He works His plan, and this plan began to come true in Christ’s arrival.

So anytime that you feel like the world is out of control, remember Christ’s birth and how it all happened according to plan. *[pause]*

He was sent by God the Father, and so He came to do His will. *[pauseeee]*

Remember also that as we celebrate Christ’s birth, we can think of the *content* of His will. *[pause]*

It is a great and gracious will, for it’s God’s will to give us life through Christ. *[pauseeee]*

So Christ's birth signals hope of eternal life—the life-giver came! *[pause]*

In His hand, I won't be lost.

And I don't need to fear death, for by faith in Him, I have received eternal life and will be raised up again someday. *[pause]*

So every glance backwards to Bethlehem can be a joy-giving, hope-instilling, and peace-producing moment for we can remember: in Him is life.