



***“FOR WHOEVER DOES **THE WILL OF GOD** IS
MY BROTHER AND MY SISTER AND
MOTHER.” (MARK 3:35)***

To know the Will of God...

- Is the most important understanding
 - “And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (1 Jn. 2:17)
- Is NOT some mysterious thing
 - “...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:13)



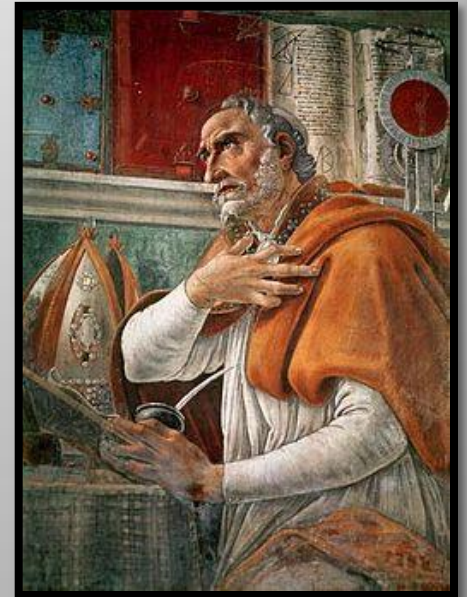
God's Will in the West

- Augustinian

- “Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, **Declaring the end from the beginning**, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘**My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,**’ Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. **Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.**” (Is. 46:9-11)

God's Will in the West

- Augustinian
 - He is in control
 - *“I have tried to uphold the notion of human freedom, but in the end the sovereignty of God always won out.”*
(St. Augustine)
 - All things have been predestined
 - God ultimately a God of perfect order
 - “Free will is a fictitious thing, or a name with a thing.” (Martin Luther)
 - Problem: The Big Mac



God's Will in the West

- God of Two Wills
 - Perfect and permissive wills
 - Accounts for human mistakes and their free will
 - But God is still in control because He permits things to happen
 - Ex: John and Jane



Problems with Western Understanding

1. Emphasizes God's supreme concern is His perfect order
2. It discards any consequences of our free will
 - *"...the penalties and punishments, and the good rewards are given according to each man's action. If this is not so, **but all things happened in accordance with fate, nothing would be left us.** For if it is destined that one man should be good and another wicked, then **neither is the one to be praised, nor the other blamed.**"* (Justin Martyr, First Apology 43)

Orthodox Understanding

- What is God's ultimate will?
 - “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; **that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You**; that they also may be **one in Us**, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And **the glory which You gave Me I have given them**, that **they may be one just as We are one**: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.” (Jn. 17:20-23)
 - “...having **made known to us the mystery of His will**, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times **He might gather together in one all things in Christ**, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—**in Him**.” (Eph. 1:9-10)
- Beware of classifying EVENTS

Scriptural Support

- “For I have come down from heaven, **not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me**. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that **everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.**” (Jn. 6:38-40)
- “And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2)
- “For this is the will of God, **your sanctification**: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of **you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor**, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God...” (1 Thes. 4:3-5)

Our Free Will

- God never tramples our free will
- *“All is in God’s power but not in such a way as to infringe on our free will. God does not anticipate our desires in order not to injure our will.”*
(St. John Chrysostom)
- If God allows us to make free choices, and responds to us in the present, how can he actually foreknow?
- Can He be sure it will all come out the way He wants it to?

How do we become doers of the Will of God?

- Recognize that the doing of God's will produces oneness
- Requires self-denial
- A way of life that fosters relations and community
- Living the sacramental life is the Will of God
- Dependence upon the spiritual father