

1. Introduction
 - a. Trying to figure out the specifics of God's will for your life can be a daunting thing
 - i. Where should I move, when, what job should I do, etc
 - ii. Oh how many times I have asked myself those questions
 - b. Sometimes we think we know but we are waiting (Spain)
 - i. As soon as X happens, then my life will begin...
 - c. Maybe you can relate to that:
 - i. I don't know God's plan for me...
 - d. What is God's will for your life? How do you figure it out? How do you crack the code?
 - e. If you've asked yourself that ?, You're in luck because today I'm going to tell you
2. *And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and **they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria**, except the apostles. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.*
 - a. You wonder what they were thinking. What would you be thinking?
 - i. This is ruining all that we had going on...
 - ii. I'm supposed to be in Jerusalem, not in...
 - b. God, in his sovereignty, allowed & used persecution (sanctification, scattering)
 - c. Supposed to go to Judea and Samaria, but they hadn't. Why not?
 - i. "It's getting exciting, why would anyone want to leave?"
 - ii. There will be times at Revolve when we need to send people out
 1. We do those things b/c they are God's will, to push out
 - d. God uses this persecution to scatter them and to get them out into new areas
 - i. After all, on a basic level, God's will is that we make him famous
 1. what evangelism really is - "I want you to know how awesome..."
3. *4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.*
 - a. So Philip figures, I'm not in Kansas anymore, I might as well do something
 - i. God's plan/will is to go out and make disciples, make Jesus famous
 1. note he's a waiter...not an apostle...no thing as the spiritual elite
 - b. But...Samaria? Oh boy.
 - i. The Jews hated the Samaritans (Gentile half-breeds)
 - ii. "Those Samaritans are scum, there's no way that they will listen to God!"
 - c. Less than ideal situation - how do you respond? Grumbling or faithfulness?
 - i. That religion, that lifestyle, that co-worker, etc
 - d. Sometimes in our grumpiness, we end up not being faithful today because we don't like the specifics of our situation.
 - i. I had to repent this week & often in life of this
 - e. Thankfully, this wasn't Philip - living for today in a good way
4. *6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a*

loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was much joy in that city.

- a. They all listened and paid attention (compare that with the Jews!)
 - b. When you step out in bold faith & live out God's will today, you will be surprised at the results (even in unexpected locations/people you assumed would be closed)
 - i. Spirit moves this way and that. Sometimes the close are far & vice versa
 - c. With human logic, it seems that the Samaritan's would be closed, but they listen.
 - d. "Much joy" b/c learning about Jesus is good news...
 - e. It's not our job to determine when and where we live out God's will, but to strive to make Jesus famous, to love God/people all the time - preach the good news
5. *9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 **They all paid attention to him**, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.*
- a. You are not the only one out there trying to convince people of something
 - i. Others, who have personal or evil goals, aren't waiting to go and do what they think they are supposed to do or desire in their 'flesh' to do
 - ii. There are denominations that will twist the Bible, cults which will pretend to be Christ-honoring, philosophies that seduce, & false religions
 1. Jesus is the only way to be forgiven and find life.
 2. Other religions cannot remove, cover, or conquer your sin
 - iii. Power and miracles ≠ truth!
 - iv. Don't be deceived/tossed by every cool thing you see or story you hear. There are OTHER powers at work in this world besides the Holy Spirit
 - b. Seize every opportunity today b/c you're not the only one at work
6. *12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 **Even Simon himself believed**, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.*
- a. Be faithful today because, the Holy Spirit is big and can transform anyone
7. *14 **Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John**, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.*
- a. "Let's go and check this out. Never send a deacon to do an apostle's job!"
 - i. skeptical: just b/c the Samaritan's accept Jesus doesn't mean he accepted them, right?
 - ii. Should Philip really be in Samaria preaching about Jesus?
 - b. God waits for the apostles so that they, the pillars of the church, can see that God accepts them too! (why HS is transitory in Acts)
 - c. The irony is that in this case Philip, although he wasn't an apostle (key leader), he

- understood it more than they did
- i. He knew that God wanted disciples. Period. Didn't care whether they were Jews, Gentiles, or Samaritans. God wants Jesus to be famous
 - d. God teaches Peter and John this lesson by accepting the Samaritans and using them as an object lesson to teach about God's heart for the whole world
 - i. It is God's will that the world hears about Jesus. Even undesirables.
8. *18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."*
- a. There will always be followers/ppl who look at first glance as though they care about the kingdom of God, but really are worried more about the 'kingdom of self'
 - b. The glory of success, the seduction of power, finding identity in these things
 - c. OT says that God is a jealous God. Do you know what that means?
 - i. Doesn't share his glory. Wants to be worshipped.
 - d. When we do ministry to build our own kingdom (reputation, identity), we plunder God's glory.
 - i. He deserves it. He paid for it with his blood. It belongs to him.
 - ii. Don't you dare try and steal it away or you do so at your own peril.
 - e. God's will is that HE would be glorified, not us. This is why he uses weak people
 - f. Even with Simon, it's not too late to repent.
 - i. We need to constantly repent of this idea of stealing God's glory
 - ii. He must become greater, we must become less.
 - iii. Man do I have to repent of this often
 - g. It is God's will that we make a big deal about God and pursue Him, not his gifts and not our own glory
9. *25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.*
- a. What they see and witness (God being glorified and accepting the Samaritans) excites them and they get pumped up to continue to be obedient
 - b. When you choose obedience, you will want to be more obedient
 - i. Often we are begrudging at first, but God moves we get excited
 - c. The flipside of that is that when we disobey repeatedly as a pattern of life, living according to God's will is more and more difficult to discern & to follow through on
10. So, what does it mean to be in God's will or to live according to God's will
- a. We often search and seek like it's a great big mystery to figure God out
 - i. Don't fret about the unstated things
 - ii. Love God, Love people - the rest will happen. Make Jesus famous

- b. So what's God's will and how do we figure it all out?
- c. **Fall in love with Jesus. Today.**
 - i. The Bible has what we need to learn about God & his redemptive story
 - ii. It doesn't tell us everything we would like to know about everything, but it tells us what we need to know
 - iii. If it's the instruction manual - makes sense that you should read it
 - iv. More than telling you what you should do, it tells you about God
 - v. It's about God. It's about Jesus. Everything else is secondary.
 - vi. Underground: Session to learn how to read the Bible w/ excellence
 - vii. Read the Bible, pray that God will reveal truth to you as you read
- d. **Obey Jesus as a response to your love for him. Today.**
 - i. Hearing the Bible, understanding the Bible isn't the goal. The goal is a God-glorifying obedient life
 - ii. Obedience is a fruit of a heart surrendered to God. It is not the way you get right with God, it is an overflow of being right with Him.
 - iii. We show our love for Jesus by obeying Jesus and those things aren't burdensome. 1 John 5:3
 - iv. When they are burdensome, it shows we aren't doing it from love
 - 1. When he says go, we go. When he says stay, we stay
 - 2. When he says be holy like I am holy, we pursue holiness
 - 3. When he says make disciples, we make disciples
 - v. We fail, and he shows us grace
 - vi. Don't just read the Word. Obey the Word. Obey Jesus in love
- e. **Live your life to make Jesus famous. Today**
 - i. It's not about people saying how great you are, how sacrificial you are, how wise you are
 - ii. It's not about how many people you have or haven't slept with.
 - iii. It's not about your reputation and fame, but God's
 - iv. As you live your life, make your choices, realize that God's Will for your life is HIS GLORY, HIS FAME, HIS REPUTATION, HIS KINGDOM
 - v. So, whose kingdom are you building? Whose fame are you living for? Whose "will" are you pursuing? What about me?
- f. If you do the above things, you are in the will of God.
- g. You can wait your whole life to be in the right place at the right time or you can be faithful today
- h. **Don't live for tomorrow at the expense of today. Be faithful today.**