

Sermon Title: **“Whoever Does The Will Of God Is ...”**

Bible: **Mark 3:20-35**

Where & When: at Gilroy UMC on Sunday, June 6th, 2021

Audience: about 30 people (including 15 Youtube viewers)

### **Opening Prayer**

Gracious God, your grace and love is overflowing. Your healing and your protection leads us through this pandemic. At the end of this pandemic, and at the beginning of a new chapter, please guide us through your wisdom and love. Please be with my lips and mouth in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

### **1. Misunderstanding?**

Today's scripture reading of the Gospel Mark is from the lectionary. At that time, there was a big misunderstanding about Jesus' miracles. How could Jesus cast out demons? When Jesus cast out demons, many people thought that if Jesus could do so, it must be because he himself was another stronger demon. They could not understand the work of the Holy Spirit. Which is able to defeat darkness, light or another darkness? Perhaps another darkness would only make it darker and darker. But that is not the way to defeat darkness. Only light can defeat darkness. However, even the scribes, the theologians of that time, misunderstood Jesus' miracles. When you read today's scripture carefully, somehow, even Jesus' family, who knew Jesus closely, misunderstood Jesus' miracles. So, at the end of today's scripture reading, Jesus redefined his family. Jesus tells us that he regards those who do the will of God as his brother and sister and mother.

## **2. Two-Point Charge?**

Last Sunday, there was an important announcement from our District Superintendent, Samuel Hong. I will be serving Gilroy United Methodist Church another year. And I will also be serving Hollister United Methodist Church. In other words, I will be appointed to both churches, starting July 1st. Some people might call this a two-point charge. What does it mean? How do you understand this? How do you feel about this? There could be many misunderstandings, because some of you might be hearing of a two-point charge for the first time. For those who know our United Methodist Church, you might have heard many interpretations. To avoid unnecessary misunderstandings, I decided to share my understanding, or my church philosophy as your pastor, because I will be serving you another year.

In our Methodist history, there were circuit riders. At the beginning of our Methodist movements, there were not enough pastors. Pastors were needed who could serve more than one church in a geographic area, a so-called circuit. They traveled a lot from one church to another church. For example, our founder, John Wesley, traveled 250,000 miles on horseback, and preached 40,000 sermons, as he was a circuit rider, a kind of itinerant preacher. In other words, in Methodism, pastors have always gone anywhere that pastors are needed, and still continue to do so.

How do you understand my pastorship? There are many part-time pastors, but there is no part-time church. When I came to this church, I did not define my pastorship as a part-time job. I define my pastorship the way that I see the role of a senior pastor. That's why I attend every Sunday worship. Because I am a pastor rather than a preacher, I come to Sunday worship, even

when I do not share the message. Likewise, I define my new pastorship in this same way. Rather than being a half-time pastor to each church, I am a senior pastor of Gilroy United Methodist Church and a senior pastor of Hollister United Methodist Church. Well, I am a 'shared' full-time pastor, because both churches share my pastoral compensation package. But I would like to define my pastor position as a senior pastor for the two churches. Yes, I am sent to both churches, because each church needs a senior pastor.

Just in case anyone wonders, I need to mention this. I do not have any plans to combine the two churches. I believe that God calls Gilroy church members for Gilroy, and in the same way, God calls Hollister church members for Hollister. Worship style and ministries might be different, because Gilroy and Hollister are different. But I hope that both churches not only survive independently, but also grow together, while I serve both churches.

### **3. To Do the Will of God? To Listen?**

Then, how can I serve both churches effectively? I believe that weekday schedules, meetings, and visitation can be worked out fine to serve both churches. But in my passion, I want to attend both churches' worship services every Sunday. What I mean is that just like I come to our worship every Sunday, not as a half-time pastor, but as a senior pastor, I want to come to both churches' worship every Sunday. Gilroy's worship starts at 10am. Hollister's worship starts at 10:30am. It takes about 30 minutes to travel between the two churches. Is it possible for me to attend both worship services on Sundays? Am I being realistic? Am I greedy?

In my short time of research, I wish to have more time to think, study, and learn about two-point charges. I have learned that many pastors in the Cal-Nev Annual Conference who have

two-point charges take turns joining in the worship. For example, the pastors go to one church on the 1st and 3rd Sundays, and to the other church on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. In my honest opinion, if the church does not expect to grow, if the church is okay just to maintain themselves, then I think that the way the pastors come to worship 2 Sundays per month at each can be fine. But it is not what I want. Maintaining the church is not my goal. My goal is to share the overflowing of God's love and grace. However, unfortunately, in the Cal-Nev Annual Conference, I cannot find a pastor yet who has two or three churches and who attends every worship every Sunday. Then, I thought that my desire to attend both worship times every Sunday might be too passionate, or too greedy, probably, because of my Korean Christian DNA for enjoying worship. Many pastors do not try to change the present worship times. As you can imagine, changing the worship time itself takes a lot of energy, time, communication, and agreement. Sometimes it could be risky.

But I cannot stop my idea of changing the worship time, for example: one church at 9am or 9:30am, and the other church at 11am. I googled and found that some churches in other States, thankfully, in other annual conferences of the United Methodist Church, share pastors, but they have pastors every Sunday, because they adjust their worship times. It was an eye-opening moment. I also learned that in an annual conference, when pastors are appointed to two or three churches, the adjustment of worship times is expected, in order for the pastors to serve the churches effectively. Wow, I am not the only one who thinks of adjusting worship times between two churches. So, I decided to ask our lay leadership team to think of the possibility of

changing our worship time. I do not know how it will turn out, because first we need to come to a consensus, and then we also need to reach an agreement with Hollister UMC.

But at least, I want to ask about this worship time change. And I believe that it could be a way of doing the will of God for me. Jesus told those who sat surrounding him that they were his mother and brothers. Because they tried to listen to Jesus. The reason why I ask is to listen, to listen to God's wisdom and God's will through you and our lay leadership team. That's because I am not the only one who is called to this church. We are all called to this church. And we might be called to the United Methodist Church, if you believe or not. I hope that we can listen to God's will and do God's will together, not only for the Gilroy United Methodist Church, but also for the Hollister United Methodist Church. Because we are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are all called. I hope and pray that God's will be done through me and through both churches.

### **Closing Prayer**

Our Lord, we are sitting near you to listen to your voice. We are sitting close in your presence to do your will. O Lord, please give us your wisdom, your vision, and your guidance. You are the only one we are looking for. In Jesus' name. Amen.