

Day 26 – Mar. 6

It's a truth we see again and again throughout scripture, history, and our own lives. God's greatest punishment of His people is just to give us our own way.

He gives Adam and Eve the knowledge of good and evil they ask for, and all it brings them is shame.

He gives the Israelites the quail they desire in the desert, until it comes out their noses.

And He gives the Israelites the king they request, and His warning turns out to be precisely true. From the conscription of their sons to the taxes on their crops, everything God warns comes true, and the people's punishment is complete.

When we pray, do we pray for what we want, or for God's will to be done? But Pastor Steve, we argue, doesn't Jesus say to ask whatever we want in His name and it will be given to us? And I respond, do you dare? Is it worth the risk for us to ask what WE want instead of what HE wants, when we have seen the consequence again and again?

This takes such faith. To trust God that His will is even better than what we could ask for takes such faith, and when the going gets tough, few of us can do it. To pray God's will be done for our sick children, or parents, or spouses... to pray God's will be done in this world that seems to be tearing itself apart at the seams... to pray God's will be done in our churches that just can't seem to see things our way... this takes such faith.

And it takes even more faith to trust that God's will IS being done, and WILL be done. As hard as it is to pray, "Thy will be done", it is harder yet to trust that His will is both being done and is better than what we might want. A wise friend taught me to pray at the sickbed of parishioners, "God, give them what they need in this moment." This prayer trusts that God knows better than me, and that He wants to give them all they need.

Can we pray for what we want? Sure. If we dare...