

God Will Win

This will seem like a strange thing to say. I'm quite sure the title I chose will have set you up to be surprised when I write the following: I no longer like or agree with the statement, "God will win in the end."

Before you accuse me of heresy, hear me out. What I take issue with is the future tense of the statement. I object to the idea that God *will* win.

There is not, nor has there ever been a time when God was not winning. You might say the evil of our world would contradict me. You might say that there are things that have happened and are happening and will happen that are not His will. I don't deny that those things are true. I also choose to hold stubbornly to my belief that God has never stopped and never will stop winning.

There has never been a moment when God's hand was not on the controls, when His will was not guiding the course of history. Has He willed all things that have happened? No. It is not His will that a child is orphaned, that a woman is abused by her husband, that people are destroyed by war or disaster. None of these things are His will. Nonetheless, such is His infinite power, that there is also nothing – *nothing* – that cannot be used by Him to bring about good for those who love Him and to cause His ultimate plan for creation to come to pass. It is literally impossible that there is anything that can happen that God, in the unreachable height of His wisdom, and the unstoppable nature of His power, cannot turn to His purposes, which are always good, lovely, and beyond our wildest dreams.

And so, I think that statement "God *will* win *in the end*" is inaccurate. It implies that God is not winning at every moment, that the scoreboard shows, albeit temporarily, that God's points are lower than those of the enemy of our soul's. And that cannot ever be.

And what about in the cases of those who choose eternity away from Him? Did He not lose in those cases?

I have to answer... no. He did not. Because God willed for that person to have their own way in the end. We make the assumption that if one wins, one cannot feel negative emotions. God's heart grieves that there are those who have decided that they would rather set themselves up in the place of worship within their hearts. God's pain is genuine, and greater than we can comprehend. He shields us from knowing how great His pain is, I believe. But, nonetheless, His will is not thwarted when someone chooses to turn away from Him forever. Because God's will was this: to pour into us His life in such a way that somehow – by some great mystery that we cannot see – we are free to choose. We are free to give ourselves to Him, and there find every longing satisfied, or we are free to hold onto the selves He has given us and wallow with them in the darkness of an eternity spent separated from the only Source of light, love, truth, peace, security, and every other truly good thing. These selves that He has given us are truly ours, the only thing we truly possess and can either give or withhold. We can, as I said, keep them. We can refuse to give them up. We can say to God, "*My* will be done," rather than "*Thy* will be done." Or we can lay them at His feet and invite Him to take them and do with them as He will.

The very, very beautiful truth is that when we choose the laying down of selves, we choose to win with Him, though it would seem we are losing by laying down our only possession, by giving ourselves away. But herein lies our victory and His: as we give up our selves, He picks them up, redeems them, infuses them with His unending life, and hands them back to us, made new. Forever and ever afterwards we are

free to truly *use* these selves He has given us. They become what they were always meant to be. They fulfill their purpose and from being a wizened, withered brown seed of existence, they blossom into life eternal. Those who choose to retain the seed of self will never see it be anything else. It will stay what it is: an ugly, withered-looking speck, full of potential that is tragically thwarted of what it should have become. And for all eternity, those who have made such a choice will cling to a useless seed that has lost its chance to bloom into something unspeakable.

I realize I have digressed. In short, my point is this: just because something causes God's heart grief, that does not mean that He has ceased to win or that the enemy's score on the board is temporarily higher. His score is not only always lower than God's, it is in the negative. He is so far behind God in the game that he couldn't catch up even if he played for a million eons and God stopped playing altogether. And so, I think the statement "God will win in the end" should be no longer part of our Christian dictionary of cliches. It could, however, very easily be replaced thus: "God has won, is winning, and will win."