

YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

Inspired by the Rolling Stones Song

Week #2 of a 6-Week "Songs of Life" Series

Rev. Richard Maraj

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SONG LYRICS TO 'YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT'

I saw her today at the reception
A glass of wine in her hand
I knew she would meet her connection
At her feet was her footloose man

No, you can't always get what you want
You can't always get what you want
You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometime you'll find
You get what you need

I went down to the demonstration
To get my fair share of abuse
Singing, "We're gonna vent our frustration
If we don't, we're gonna blow a fifty-amp fuse"
Sing it to me

You can't always get what you want
You can't always get what you want
You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes, well, you just might find
You get what you need
Ah yeah ...

I went down to the Chelsea drugstore
To get your prescription filled
I was standing in line with Mr. Jimmy
And, man, did he look pretty ill
We decided that we would have a soda
My favorite flavor, cherry red
I sung my song to Mr. Jimmy
Yeah, and he said one word to me, and that was "dead"
I said to him

You can't always get what you want, well no
You can't always get what you want. I tell you, baby
You can't always get what you want, no
But if you try sometimes you just might find, uh, mm
You get what you need, oh yeah, woo!
You get what you need, yeah, oh baby ... Ah yeah

I saw her today at the reception
In her glass was a bleeding man
She was practiced at the art of deception
Well, I could tell by her blood-stained hands, sing it

You can't always get what you want, yeah
You can't always get what you want, ooh yeah, child
You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes you just might find
You just might find
You get what you need, ah yeah!

WORSHIP MESSAGE:

So, how many people like to always get what you want and have it your own way all the time?
[Congregants laugh] Anybody like that? How many people have ever wanted to have someone or something in your life that you knew would make you happy? And you worked and you prayed for it, you got it ... and realized that they did not make you happy? And you prayed for them to be out of your life? [Congregants laugh] Anybody have one of those? We call those, "It seemed like a good idea at the time" experiences. Last one: How many people have ever had something you wanted and you didn't get it, but it turned out to be even better than you thought it would be? Anybody have that experience?

The Dalai Lama said, *"Remember that sometimes not getting what you want is a wonderful stroke of luck."*

**You can't always get what you want
But if you try sometimes, you might find
You get what you need**

We are in week three of our six-week "Songs of Life" series. And we celebrate music because it's so powerful. Music is so meaningful and valuable in our lives. Music can help get us through difficult times. It can help uplift us. It can help open our hearts. It can help us have a good cry and release. Music touches us at so many levels. It is a powerful and amazing thing.

So, we have a tradition -- I've been doing it for 26 years -- of taking famous songs and extracting a spiritual message or a life lesson in it to help us live more fully, to live more joyously, more lovingly, and more consciously.

Week #1 we did "Hallelujah" by KD Lang. Last week was "The Happening" by Diana Ross and The Supremes. If you've missed it, they're on the website; on YouTube. And you can just catch up with that.

Today, we are looking at the Rolling Stones 1968 hit, "You Can't Always Get What You Want," written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. It was the last song on the album. The album was entitled *Let It Bleed*. And it was also an end-of-the-decade song. And some of those songs brought comfort at a time where people were disillusioned and frustrated. "Bridge Over Troubled Water" was one of those songs. "Let It Be" by the Beatles is one of those songs. And "You Can't Always Get What You Want" was a song to help soothe people's hearts and minds because of the challenge and heartbreak of wanting something and not getting it.

Interestingly, it was similar to the theme of a previous Rolling Stones song called "I Can't Get No Satisfaction," which was three years earlier. But Mick Jagger said it was basically the same theme, just presented in a different way.

This song tells the story of different individuals not getting what they want, but somehow getting what they needed. It is a song that illustrates to us that not achieving our goals is not necessarily a loss. It is not necessarily a bad thing! That we can extract something good, something positive, and something

beneficial from the experience, even if it's just avoiding something worse that could have happened to us.

This song is about an awareness of a life reality, and that is: nobody gets things going their way and has their way they want all the time. This song give us – not only that reality – but a sense of hope that some good can come from this, even when things don't go the way we want them to

So today, we're going to look at three spiritual lessons – three life lessons – that we can extract from this song, "You Can't Always Get What You Want."

The first lesson I think it inspired in me is **THE IMPORTANCE OF PURSUING YOUR DESIRES**. You can't always get what you want, but it's important to have something that you want! You know, we are creators. We are here to create! We are here to build; to transform; to expand' and to manifest. And so, it's an important thing for us to have dreams; to have desires and to pursue those. That's an important part of why we are here.

And I would say desire is a fundamental aspect of our existence, because it ignites our passions; it fuels our dreams; It propels us forward into our spiritual life and our human life. And just having a desire recognizes that we have a potential within us to attract and create and fulfill greater possibilities for ourselves and in our lives. You know, desire is that impulse -- is that catalyst that harnesses our spiritual energy and our creative powers and abilities.

And even if we don't get it, it is the act of pursuing and seeking and moving towards our dreams and desires that makes a huge difference and benefit in our lives. You know, God has given us all kinds of ways for us to create, to manifest and pursue: with the power of our words; the power of our thoughts; by asking; by seeking; by knocking; by choosing; by deciding; by having a vision. And it is in the pursuing of our goals -- the pursuing of our dreams and desires -- that I think we tap into deeper dimensions of who we are.

In the Gospel of Thomas, it says, *"If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."* And I truly believe the way we bring forth the glory of God -- the way we bring forth our gifts and talents and our spiritual attributes -- is by pursuing our desires. It is moving and channeling our spiritual energy and our creative energy to some greater good and to some greater possibility. And it is in that process that amazing things happen. So, whether we achieve it or not, blessings and benefits and good are created from that very act of pursuing and seeking our desires.

And for us to pursue it, we need to know what it is. We need to get clear about what it is that we want. What is it that you are seeking? What is it that you want to create and manifest for your life? The Bible mentions several times that we need to seek: *"Seek and you will find."* To seek means to have an active pursuit; to use intentional action. To use dedicated effort towards some great or good with an open mind to be expanded and to be guided in better ways.

Ask ... *"Seek and you shall find."* And it says, *"Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you."* *"If you seek me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart."* So, the way we pursue our desires is by seeking. It is with intentional, focused actions towards some greater good possibilities for our lives. And it is in the process that we are rewarded, not just when we reach that end goal.

You know, I've seen several interviews with Jerry Seinfeld and different comedians. And whenever they get together, you know what they all talk about? The process of creating a joke. They talk about all their tough times, and when they got booed, and when they got heckled. They talk about the process. They

don't talk about, "*Hey, look; we've made it now.*" They talk about the process of giving of themselves, and learning, and putting it out there. And how they kept showing up and showing up and improved.

And the truth is, to bring forth the glory of God -- and bring forth the best in ourselves-- it is that we need to keep seeking what we want and pursuing our highest dreams and our highest desires.

So my question for you is: What are you seeking? What is it that you want? You know, what is the desire that you are pursuing in your life? And whether it is love or joy or a sense of meaning or purpose or fulfillment; whether it is a time of healing and a time of withdrawing ... what is it that you are pursuing? What is it that you are seeking?

And the important thing is to know what you want; know what you're being called towards; know what your inner desire is. And then seek it; and then pursue it.

And so that's the first thing I think this song inspires in us: is to pursue your desires.

The second thing I think it teaches us is the **THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING ACCEPTANCE AND TRUST.** You know, we already mentioned it; the inevitable part of life is things will not always go the way you want. You will not always achieve all your goals; we will not always have things work in our relationships or other aspects of our lives. That is a truism in life. And even with our best laid plans, things don't always go the way we want.

So, our best ally, when life doesn't go the way we want, is acceptance. Because acceptance is making a choice to not fight against what has already happened. You know, it is not to hate it or judge it or to get angry at what has already happened, and not waste our energy in that way. Acceptance is actually choosing to make peace with how life is; to make peace with what has happened; to make peace with what is going on.

Acceptance is to understand that life sometimes goes at a different rhythm and a different pace. There are ebbs and flows; there are highs and lows; there are twists and turns; there are changes. And acceptance is about saying, "*I'm going to roll with the flow of life instead of trying to swim against the current.*" Acceptance is an understanding that things unfold in a certain way, and they're not always necessarily the way we think that they should. Acceptance really invites us to embrace what is, and it invites us to let go of our attachments and our judgments and our rigid expectations of how we think life should be, and how we think life should be for ourselves as well as for our family and the world.

Acceptance is about letting go of all of our stuff, and then trusting the intelligence of the universe that all things are working together for our highest good. Trusting that there's a higher power and a wisdom and knowledge within ourselves that are leading us through this and other experiences to something greater and better for ourselves.

One of the greatest aspects of acceptance and trust is to say these four words: "*Thy will be done.*" That is such a powerful ... no matter what situation you're in, to get to that place to literally seek acceptance; to seek trust and to be able to say, "*Thy will be done.*" It shows that acceptance is a relaxing into God; it is a relaxing into our faith; and a relaxing into knowing that things will work out for our highest good. Relaxing into the awareness that, "*I'm okay! That this will work out, even if I can't see it right now, and things will get better, and life will show me greater things.*"

The mystic Joseph Campbell said, "*We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned to have the life that is waiting for us.*"

And so, are you willing to let go of the life that you've planned? The life that you think is the best possible? To let it go to see what the universe might show you that might even be greater? And, in fact, more likely will be greater and better ... But are we willing to accept and are we willing to trust?

And then the final thing that this song shows us that **WE MUST FIND THE SILVER LINING**. *“But if we try sometimes, you might find you get what you need.”* You know that, when life doesn't work out, I will guarantee in every situation there is always a silver lining. But we have to try! We have to look for the positive. We have to see the good in this situation. We have to look for the blessing and the benefit and the wisdom and the gifts that come from that situation.

In 1 Thessalonians it says, "In all things give thanks, for this is God's will for you." Because it means: in whatever situation your life is in, there is something to be grateful for. Because God is there! And if God is there, that means good is there. And it is our work to see that good; to see those blessings; to see those benefits and the gifts that come from it.

You know, in this song, the guy talks about meeting a woman at a reception. And so he likes her; he wants to date her. And then he ends up not getting what he wants. But then he finds out that she was deceitful. And then he thinks to himself, *“Well, it was a good thing I didn't date her,”* because I found out ...” He got the lesson that appearances can be deceiving, and that he also had his heart saved. And so things not working out dating; turned out he didn't get that, but he got a good and important lesson.

Anybody ever do that “Ask Reddit” thing? I plugged in the question that not getting what we want can be a wonderful stroke of luck ... And here are a couple of the answers that people wrote. The first one said:

“I spent a few years working at Walmart after high school, and I was a bit embarrassed and felt like a failure, because I didn't have money to go to college. But when I finally got to go to university, I saw that the time I had working made a huge difference. I had so much focus and appreciation -- more than any other freshmen -- which gave me the momentum to secure good internships and, ultimately, my dream job.”

So he couldn't get what he wanted to go to university, but the not going for those three years not only gave him the money, but actually gave him some maturity and some awareness and insight that actually propelled him further with his success and career and his happiness. There's always a silver lining if we're willing to look for it. Another person wrote:

“I had a major life reset in 2014 that involved, among other things, losing my job. A year later, in 2015, I interviewed for what I thought was my dream job. But I did horribly at the interview and I got no job offer. Only after a second year passed, and I did a stint driving Uber, did I get a new job. It turned out to be the perfect restart job for my career. While a year of extra of underemployment drained a bit of my savings, it was VITAL ...

He writes [VITAL] in capital letters!

“... It was VITAL to complete my reboot for my life that was much needed. If I'd gotten that job in 2015, I would have gone right back to the old pattern, and I would have been miserable.”

You know, sometimes not getting what we want turns out to be better. There is a silver lining. There's a gift and a blessing that helps us even greater than had we just continued going on with the status quo.

Someone said that endings carry seeds of new beginnings. So, every loss; every failure; every heartbreak; every mistake or difficulty we go through ... there is new possibilities. There are new opportunities. There are new experiences; new growth. We can't always get what we want, but sometimes we get what we need if we are willing to look for it.

Somerset Maugham, the English writer, once wrote a story about a janitor at St. Peter's Church in London. One day, the young vicar discovered that the janitor was illiterate and fired him. Jobless, the man started selling apples, buying them for 5 cents; selling them for 10 cents. And then, over time, he

invested the little money he had into fruit stands. And he had one fruit stand; and he then had two or three and four; and then he had over 10. And they were worth a lot of money, and somebody wanted to buy them. And he went to see his banker, and his banker said, *"You've done amazingly for being illiterate! Your business is now worth a few hundred thousand dollars. Could you imagine where you'd be if you could read or write?"*

And the guy said, *"Yeah; I'd be the janitor at St. Peter's Church."* [Congregants laugh]

And so, he's showing here that -- even being illiterate; not being able to read or write -- still had a silver lining. Every one of us, no matter what we're going through: there is a silver lining.

Think of something in your life that isn't going as well as you like. And can you see the silver lining? What is the gift? What is the blessing? You know, what is the benefit? What are the new opportunities? What are the new possibilities? Life is always trying to show us more if we're willing to look.

We sometimes spend so much time thinking, *"It didn't go the way that I want!"* that we don't see the new opportunities that are right there before us. If we try sometimes, we just might find that we get what we need! That there is a silver lining to every difficulty and challenge that we face and experience in life.

You know, sometimes we think we know what's best. And sometimes we think the best is that we get everything we want and that life always goes our way. But sometimes, when we don't get that, it might be the best thing for us, or one of the best blessings and gifts for us.

And so the three things we need to do to ensure that is to pursue our dreams. Know what we want; know that it is in the pursuing of our dreams and our goals that it brings out the very best of who we are and who we came to be. The second is seek acceptance and seek trust. It is only when we find acceptance and trust that we can open our lives to allow greater things to come forth. And finally, find the silver lining. No matter what happens to us, there's always some good; some benefit; some blessing, if we are willing to look for it.

You know, not reaching our goals or having a failure or not having what we want happen is not a bad thing. Sometimes it's the best thing! Sometimes it's a good thing. And sometimes it is exactly what we need. And that is the message of the song, *"You Can't Always Get What You Want."* God bless you all!
[Congregants applaud]