

Your Will Be Done

Matthew 6:10

February 26, 2017
Steve DeWitt

Today we conclude our Week of Prayer and our look at what is commonly known as The Lord's Prayer. As we said last week, that's an unfortunate name as it is more accurately a model for prayer provided by Jesus to teach us how to pray.

Did anyone pray this week in a new way, "*Your kingdom come?*" We studied that phrase last week and saw that every word in that phrase is important. "*Your*" indicates an acknowledgment of and celebration of the fact that the agenda that matters is God's not mine. It's not *my* kingdom come. It's "*Your kingdom come.*"

"*Kingdom*" refers to the rule and reign of God in the world, his plan and purposes and his work through the gospel.

"*Come.*" This represents a heart level desire for the future consummation and the present empowerment of God's redemptive work in this world. It is a prayer for God's saving work to be done. It is a missions prayer, a church prayer, and a personal prayer. I'm inviting the outworking of God's kingdom to increasingly invade my life and pledging to labor today for the kingdom. I'm going to seek it first and I'm going to advance it as I'm able.

"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

*Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,*

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6:7-13 ESV)

"*Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*" Our outline this week is similar to last week's outline. This one simply follows the text. Point 1: *Your will*. Point 2: *Be done*. Point 3: *On earth as it is in heaven*.

Your Will

"*Your will be done*" creates a challenging question. Isn't God's will done whether I pray for it or not? If so, isn't praying this a waste of time? Or you hear people say before an important decision, *we are seeking God's will or we are praying for God's will in this matter*. We often wonder, *what is God's will for my life?*

It's really important to understand that the Bible talks about God's will in two different ways or you will be constantly confused by this. They are the decreed will of God and the revealed will of God.

The decreed will of God

God's decreed will is God's predetermined will which he alone as sovereign God knows, purposes, and accomplishes. This is God's plan for everything. This includes all of human and redemptive history from the Fall of Satan to the Fall of Adam to Abraham and Israel and Exodus and the Incarnation of Jesus and his death and resurrection and the church and future heaven and earth. It includes all the dramas of human history on the macro and micro scale. Kings and empires. Kids and tiddlywinks. All of it.

- *"Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth."* (Psalm 135:6)
- *"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What have you done?'"* (Daniel 4:35)
- *"In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will."* (Ephesians 1:11)

God's will shall be done and there is nothing Satan or anyone else can do to thwart the will of God. While creating certain theological and philosophical challenges for us with our sense of our own freedom to choose, this should be a great comfort to us. God's will is eternal and unchanging and unassailable even by the fallen archangel whose rebellion only serves to fulfill God's plan as well. God will fulfill his plan, build his church, *"and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* (Matthew 16:18)

Of course, for his people, God's determined will provides us comfort when it seems that the enemy is winning or evil or trouble has come upon us. It is this eternal and unchanging will that lies behind the precious promise, *"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."* (Romans 8:28)

Here is the thing about this aspect of God's will; only God knows it. We don't know tomorrow. We don't know what even the rest of the day holds. Only God's knows. When we pray, *"Your will be done,"* we are not praying this aspect of God's will. We are praying over the second.

The revealed will of God

How has God revealed his will? God's Word is God's will. Do you see why inspiring human authors and writing down his divine will was so important? We have his will right here in our own hands. Rather than giving each of us a detailed roadmap for our lives, God has given us truth for life in words and sentences that express his will for how we should live. The Bible points us to Christ and provides wisdom for the practical matters of life.

Some are very straightforward like The Ten Commandments. Others are more precept-like; Proverbs as an example of that. But the Bible is a fascinating and diverse description of God's will. God provides propositional truth like Romans, and real life examples like Saul and Moses and Jezebel. God's word is God's will.

God's decreed will is always accomplished as history and our lives outwork according to his eternal purpose. God's revealed will in a fallen world is not accomplished every day billions

of times as sinners fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We fall short of God's purpose for us. We fall short of God's will whenever we fail to fulfill perfectly his revealed will.

Last week when we had one of these gloriously warm days, I went golfing with a man in our church. We were on a putting green and there was a tee box nearby. A group was teeing off. One fellow hit his shot and it was followed by "Blankety-blank-blank-blank!" The next guy hit his shot, "Blankety-blank-blank-blank!" If you golf, you will notice that many golfers take personal credit for their good shots and verbally blame God for the bad ones. That's fallen human nature and it's all around us.

God's will that we love him first is ignored as we pursue other things in life as our ultimate meaning. God's will for us to love others is blatantly defied as we are hateful or violent or slanderous or rude to one another. On and on we could go but I don't have to because you live in this world too. It is a world that doesn't desire for God's will to be done. Its prevailing desire is *my will be done* and nobody had better interfere.

Yet God's will is so different. God's will is morally beautiful. God's will is described in Romans 12:2 (NIV) as your "*good, pleasing, and perfect will.*" God's revealed will leads us toward lives that are pleasing to God.

Your will. May your will as expressed in your holy word...

Be Done

It does not say, *your will be inspirational. Your will be helpful. Your will be convenient.* It is a decisive word, "*your will be done.*" This aspect of the prayer takes the will as revealed and prays for its accomplishment in my life. It is a prayer of submission. It is in the future tense, *be done.* Be done today. Be done tomorrow. Be done forever.

This is not his eternal decreed will; that will be done perfectly and eternally. It is the desires of God for me as his child. *God, I want what you want to be done in my life. I want what you want to be done in my family. I want what you want to be done in my vocation. I want what you want to be done in my community. I pray your good, pleasing, and perfect will to be the ultimate aim of my life.*

It is a submission and a surrendering of my personal will to God's will. My personal will is affected by my sin nature. My personal will is circumstantial and emotional and flimsy. My personal will trends toward selfishness and self-love. My personal will subtly seeks personal glory and the magnification of me.

One of the quirky things in our culture is how quickly little phrases work their way into the vernacular of how we talk. Have you noticed this? The current one I hear all the time is people beginning their sentences with, "I feel." "I feel that blah, blah, blah." Why? Because our feelings are safe and they keep our statements from sounding too domineering. But what is true about our personal thoughts and feelings and internal desires? All of them are tainted by sin. On Judgment Day we will discover how irrelevant our feelings are; how insignificant our will and plans and desires are.

A Christian is someone who has seen the glory of God in the life of Jesus. We have pledged allegiance to Jesus as Savior, Lord, and King. He is now enthroned in our hearts which means that while I have personal desires that go in many directions, I am a subject of King Jesus and his kingdom.

"Your will be done" is the heart of a Christian who wants more than anything for Jesus to be exalted. Jesus is magnified when Jesus is obeyed. Jesus is magnified when Jesus' will is treasured more than anything or anyone else.

"Your will be done" realigns my will under God's will. It pledges on this day, I'm going to strive to please you. How do we do that? Obedience is what it looks like. Obedience is the answer to this prayer. Commentator William Hendriksen notes that "your will be done" is obedience done completely, heartily, and immediately.¹

We have a similar teaching method with our daughters. Our little phrase of reminder for them is that obedience is *all the way, right away, with a right attitude*. When my daughter obeys all the way, right away, with a right attitude she is showing me that in her heart Daddy's will comes before hers. Daddy's will be done.

The Extent – On Earth as it is in Heaven

This little phrase could be applied to all three previous clauses, "*hallowed be your name,*" "*Your kingdom come,*" and "*your will be done.*" But it most specifically applies to "*your will be done.*"

Jesus provides a measurement. Heaven! Heaven is where God's decreed will and revealed will are perfectly fulfilled. By whom? The angels to start with. God's every will is their every delight. Many of us like Chick-fil-A where they are trained to respond to every question with, "*My pleasure.*" If Chick-fil-A feels like heaven to you, it is in that respect. It is the angels' highest and greatest pleasure to do God's will. They do his bidding immediately. They fulfill his desire fully without any internal sinful tension.

Who else is perfectly fulfilling the will of God in heaven? The saints of God. Gossipy Mrs. A. in heaven speaks kindly. Angry Mr. B in heaven is loving. Miss C. who used to struggle with addiction is free to love God more than anything. Mr. D. who had a little bit of a potty mouth now hallows God's name. In heaven, nobody prays, "*your will be done*" because they don't have to.

Only on earth is God's will defied and denied. That's where we live and in our own hearts we feel the tension every day between my will and God's will.

Only one person has ever brought heaven's commitment to God's will to earth. Here is how Jesus wrestled with God's will over his natural human desire to live and to avoid suffering.

"Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me." And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, "So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." (Matthew 26:38-42)

¹ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew*, p. 331.

Hear it? *"Your will be done."* Jesus' bottom line was not his personal safety or even his life. These are represented by *"let this cup pass."* Here we see his humanity. Who of us would choose to die on a cross? But we also see his bottom line. *"Your will be done."*

Christian, can you honestly echo the heart of Jesus in this? *"Your will be done."* Maybe this means looking at a painful thing in your past that's got you stuck. You can't get past it. You can't believe it happened to you. Somebody failed you or hurt you. It was a terrible time in your life. *"Your will be done."*

Can we honestly pray this over our tomorrows? *God, more than anything, I want what you want in my life. I submit to your will. Yes, I have a cup I'd like to not drink but if this is your will then I treasure it over my own. God, this cancer that I'm facing. God, this divorce I don't want. God, this season of suffering I wish wasn't coming. God, this constant struggle, I can't get past. God, your will be done!*

Remember, this is prayer. God delights to answer our prayers. As we ask for his help in aligning our will with his, God can and will help us. He might change our circumstances but most often he changes our perspective.

The prayer itself moves our hearts to where God wants them to be. Pray this in the morning over your day. Pray this over the difficulty. Pray this over the trial. Let the prayer and God's answer to it move us to a place of joyful submission anticipating the future day when we won't have to pray it ever again—in heaven—where his will is always done.

Scripture quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Permanent Text Edition® (2016).* Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Additional Scripture quotations taken from *Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*

© 2017 by Steve DeWitt. You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that: (1) you credit the author, (2) any modifications are clearly marked, (3) you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, (4) you include Bethel's website address (www.bethelweb.org) on the copied resource.