

The Lord's Prayer

Thy Will be Done

Part 6 - November 9, 2008

We've been discussing the fact that prayer is not about focusing *God's* attention on *my* agenda, but *my* attention onto *His*.

Seek ye first the **kingdom of God**, and **his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you. - Matthew 6:33 NIV

And those are the first two *requests* of the Lord's Prayer! Last week we examined: "Thy kingdom come". This is chiefly a prayer of *intercession*, asking for His gospel to advance and spread to those who are not yet in His kingdom.

Today we're looking at: "Thy will be done".



This makes the purpose of prayer quite clear. It's all about submitting to His righteousness. Prayer isn't about trying to get God to do *my* will, but, prayer should realign *my* will with *His*.

Do you get the photo? Prayer should help get our ducks in a row!

We read the Bible, come to church, and gather together to increase our knowledge, but for "Thy will" to have an eternal impact on my life, it must "be done".

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but **only he who does the will of my Father** who is in heaven. - Matthew 7:21 NIV



The ultimate expression of our love for another is to willingly, readily, gladly place their needs above and ahead of our own. On Veteran's Day we honor our service men and women for *obeying* the call to put their country first.

Devotion is the best demonstration of love. And when offered in a free and healthy manner, the joy it brings to others is rich compensation for the inconvenience it costs.

That's why the Psalmist could say:

I **delight** to do Thy will, O my God ... - Psalm 40:8 KJV

Not only does it demonstrate my love for my Creator, but it's quite simply the wisest way to live. Jesus said:

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
- Matthew 11:29-30 NIV



His “yoke is easy”, His “burden is light”, not because devotion and obedience is effortless, but because whenever our wills disagree: *My* will leads to the weight of enslavement. *Thy* will leads to the lightness of liberty. It’s only when *my* will begins to conform to *Thy* will that I can find genuine rest for my soul.



- [Because] His will *always* involves His peace.

That’s a pretty good benchmark for when you’re trying to determine exactly what His will is for a given situation in your life.



- Beware of options that don’t offer His peace.

We really only have *two* options: We can be swept up in the self-destruction of our own self-will, or willingly place *His* desires above our own. And this brings up a really good question:

Be very careful, then, how you live ... do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. - Ephesians 5:15-17 NIV

Q: How do we figure out what God’s will *is*?!

I understand that when I pray, “Thy will be done” I’m *yielding my will to His* ... but, how can I be sure what His *is*?! How can I know if He wants me to live in Skagit valley or move out of state, be a missionary or a mechanic, get married or stay single, buy a house or rent or lease-to-own or whatever?! You hear believers say, “God *called* me to this or that.” And you think: “How?! I’m still waiting for the phone to ring!” And Jesus said: “Only he who does the will of my Father gets in!”

First, understand we’re talking about God’s “Will of Preference”. That’s the part of His will that *allows* man to obey or disobey.

This is *unlike* His “Decretive will” which would be all that He *decrees* (like the inevitability that Jesus would die on the cross and rise again no matter what man did). It includes creation and miraculous intervention.

It’s also unlike His “Permissive will” that allows calamities and tragedies of this fallen, broken world (and even evil itself), to run its course, though it’s not as He intended.

When we pray, “Thy will be done”, we’re applauding His *decretive* will, and accepting His *permissive* will.

But I digress! We're talking about will of preference (*technically* His undetermined, providential, preceptive will). But, we'll think of it as: "What He wants, but doesn't demand". God's will of preference comes in two varieties:



1. [His] Specific Desires.

This is black and white. You either obey or you rebel.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. - *John 14:6 NIV*

Husbands, love your wives ... - *Ephesians 5:25 NIV*

Children, obey your parents ... - *Ephesians 6:1 NIV*

His specific desires are straight-forward, scriptural commands.



2. [His] General Desires

This isn't black and white. You have lots of choices. And this is where God gets to really enjoy His children!



Let's say your kids are playing outside on a summer day, and you bring out a handful of Pixy Stix. Your joy will come from three things: You get to offer a gift! You get to experience their excitement. You get to watch them *choose*. Now don't underestimate this last one. It's not just a matter of which flavor they'll select, but how they'll consume it.

Some kids neatly remove the end, elevate the tube, and carefully pour it into their mouths ... these are the *anal-retentives*! Some kids pour the sugar into their hand and make a big, licky, sticky mess ... these are the *artists*! Some kids will touch the paper tube onto their tongue and immediately gum it up ... these are the *not-so-brights*! And some cram the whole thing into their mouth, chew the flavor out, and bean you with the spit wad ... these are the *Beanes*!

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord ... -
Colossians 3:23 NIV

- The "Whatever you do" is *general desire*.
- The "with all your heart" as unto the lord is *specific desire*.

How would *your* child eat those Pixy Stix? What color would they choose? How hard would it be for them to decide? Would they want to mix the colors? Would they share with their friends? Would they save one for later? Would they try to make Kool-Aid with it? As parents, we want to give our children choices so that we can watch them grow and develop and explore and discover.

This is how it was with God and Adam:

And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ..."
- Genesis 2:16-17a NIV



We see God's general desire: You are "free to eat"
And His specific desire: But, you "must not eat"

Clearly, part of God's original design was to give us freedom of choice within revealed limits. The "Specific Desires" provide the *boundaries* that keep us safe and sound within His guidelines. But the "General Desires" allow for creativity, imagination, inspiration, vision, risk, and exhilaration!

Imagine if your child got all anxious and worried and said: "Which one am I supposed to take?" "Whichever one you want." "Which is the best one?" "They are all good, just different." "But which one do you want me to want?" "I want to see which one appeals to you." "But I don't want to choose the wrong one." "JUST TAKE A PIXY STICK!"



Now, it should become clear how to pray: "Thy will be done"

- We must obey His specific desires. So, as I study His Word, I pray for strength and courage and perseverance to carry out His revealed will.
- We must honor Him with His general desires. As I examine the options and consider my situation I ask for wisdom and perception and judgment to choose wisely.



He wants *us* to decide whether we'll be missionaries or mechanics, but He demands that we glorify Him in whichever we select. And, glorify Him *how*? It's right there in the prayer: "On earth as it is in heaven"



We've been called to model the reality of heaven by the way our lives move in harmony with God's will on earth. So, how *is* "Thy will" done "in heaven"? Immediately, it's not put off until later. Enthusiastically, it's not halfheartedly. Completely, it's not partially or *somewhat*.

We all want to go to Heaven, but we're not always quite as enthused about having Heaven come to us!

The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. - 1 John 2:17 NIV

Eternal life doesn't begin *after* you die; it begins the moment we submit our will to His and make Him our Savior and Lord.