

Prayer 101: Resigning

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[0:00] Take your Bibles this morning. Our text this morning is kind of getting back to something! that I started some weeks ago because of our missions month had to diverge from that a couple! of weeks. And it is Luke chapter 11 and verses 1 through 4.

Luke 11 verses 1 through 4 is our text for this morning. We've been looking at this model prayer that Jesus offered to his disciples in answer to their question, Lord, teach us how to pray. Pretty fitting question. Pretty important question. One that I'm sure you have asked as well.

Good news is Jesus answered the question right here in the Bible. And so Jesus then gives this lesson on prayer. And that's what this text entails. Now, not his only lesson on prayer. We're going to see in a few weeks when we get past this, this, quote, Lord's Prayer. Jesus is going to go on and give some even deeper teaching on the subject of prayer here in Luke chapter 11.

But here is his answer. And so it's been a few weeks since I've preached out of this text. So let's go ahead and read the entire passage, which is not really very long, just four verses.

Starting with the first verse of chapter 11, Luke chapter 11. Now, it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place. So he was praying. The disciples observed his praying.

[1:45] When he ceased, that one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. So he said to them, when you pray, say, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins.

For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil, the evil one.

All right, so there it is. There is the prayer. Jesus' lesson on prayer. Again, not his only lesson on prayer. He's going to continue in chapter 11 to teach on prayer. There are other places in the Gospels where Jesus gives us instructions on prayer.

We can go to some of the epistles in the New Testament and get lessons on prayer. We can even go to the Old Testament and get instruction from the Lord on prayer.

[2:54] But this is, I think you would have to agree with me, this is the most famous of Jesus' lessons on prayer. He said to his disciples, and by extension he says to us, When you pray, say.

And then he gives those instructions. And essentially, Jesus is saying, Use this guideline. That's what he's saying. When you pray, use this guideline.

Or we could put it another way, follow this model. Or pray using these categories. That's what this is all about. You know, I've often wondered about those people who just quote, just simply quote this famous prayer and they just quote it kind of ritualistically and think that somehow this fulfills all of the requirements of scripture regarding the discipline of prayer.

All they simply do is just quote this model prayer or maybe other model prayers that have been offered by man. And I've wondered about those people and how after quoting this prayer as their prayer, and that's all they do, just simply quote this prayer, I wonder about how they can come away with any level of satisfaction.

Because you see, I wonder, do they really know? If all they do is quote this prayer, and that's it for their prayer life, how do they really know what they have prayed?

[4:25] Because believe me, this prayer that Jesus offers, this model prayer, has tremendous depth to it that we need to discover. We need to discover the scriptural background and meaning of this particular prayer that Jesus offered to his disciples.

We also need to discover the spiritual significance in time and eternity, because this prayer takes in both, not only time, but also eternity.

And so, if a person doesn't discover these things about this, quote, Lord's Prayer, then if they just simply quote it, and that's all they do, then it's meaningless.

Seriously. It's just meaningless. I'm not trying to be harsh. That's what Jesus called it. He called it meaningless. In fact, you can go to, and we're not going to turn to it, but you can go to Matthew chapter 6, and you'll find also Matthew's account of this same prayer, Jesus giving these same instructions, but before the Lord's Prayer is mentioned in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus gives this warning.

In Matthew chapter 6 and verse 7, he says, when you pray, do not use vain repetition. Remember that passage? Do not use, if I might use another word, meaningless repetitions, and then he goes on to say, as the heathen do.

[5:51] This is a very, very serious warning. He says, for they, that is the heathen, think that they will be heard for their many words. And so the heathen would just use repetitions of words and phrases.

Kind of sounds like some of the choruses people sing today. Just over and over and over and over again. Just repetition. That's what the heathen did. They think just simply speaking those words repetitiously is going to somehow get them heard from God.

And so if you're going to quote this prayer, and it's alright to quote it, and it's really, I would even say it's alright sometimes to quote it devotionally and pause and think about each phrase in this prayer. And so if you're going to do that as a form of devotion or as a part of some element of worship, whether personally or corporately, then I ask you discover its meaning.

The depth of meaning in this prayer. And that's what we're doing here in this series of messages from this famous prayer. Now, what have we discovered so far?

[7:04] Well, we have discovered by looking at the very first phrase, our Father in Heaven, we have learned that prayer is about resting. Resting.

Resting in God our Father. He is in His Heaven. He is seated on His throne, His divine, sovereign throne. He is always loving and caring for His children.

Prayer is about resting. Second, we've considered the phrase, hallowed be your name. And when we did that, we then learned also that prayer is about reverencing.

Reverencing God. And so we worship in prayer. We worship, we reverence, we honor, we glorify, we praise the name of our Lord.

Which means we are praising and glorifying His glorious nature and character and His gracious works toward us in our behalf for the sake of Christ.

[8:03] Christ. And then we considered the phrase, your kingdom come. And we learned that prayer also is about reigning. Reigning.

That is reigning in the kingdom of God. Reigning in His kingdom in our own hearts and lives personally, first of all. But also reigning in His kingdom, in a sense, in the hearts and lives of lost sinners through the proclamation of the gospel.

But it also goes even a step further. It is reigning in His kingdom in our world and forever for eternity. Alright, so that's what we've learned.

Now, we're ready to look at the next line, next phrase of really next sentence. We'll look at a whole sentence and not just a phrase this morning. One full sentence of this model prayer.

And so, considering the phrase or sentence, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Now, those words ring, they're familiar in our minds as is every phrase of this passage, but now let's think about this a moment.

[9:17] Your will be done on earth, that's here, as, in the same way, as it is done in heaven.

That sentence, that part of prayer, that category of prayer is tremendous. And so, considering that sentence, we can learn this, that prayer is about resigning.

Resigning, that is, resigning to the will of God. Let me ask you something. What is the will of God? That's a big question, isn't it? What is the will of God?

Now, I'm not talking about the will of God in regard to your individual issues and decisions and questions and so forth. That's very important that we discover God's will for our lives and individual things and circumstances and decisions and so forth and so forth.

Very important. And certainly, that's a part of our prayer life. But rather, what I'm talking about here is the will of God as a part of His nature.

[10:26] Part of who He is sovereignly, divinely. Now, that's what this part of the prayer is all about. And so, what is that? What is the divine will of God?

The overall will of God? The will of God that is a part of who He is, His nature and His character, His sovereignty, His eternality? Well, that's not really a very hard question to answer, actually.

And yet, I must tell you that we must answer that question before we can really deal with a second question that gets closer to home. And that is, how do we pray for the will of God?

We discover what the will of God is in the divine sense, and then we ask, how do we pray for that? How do we pray for the will of God?

Or to put it another way, what is it that we are praying for when we pray, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven? Now, for some people, sadly, some people look at the, quote, will of God as the iron-fisted rule of a harsh deity.

[11:43] Quite frankly, some people look at it that way. They may not put it in those words, and if you were to put it in those words, they would say, no, I don't mean that. And yet, actions speak louder than words. Prayer life, in their prayer life, they are really acting as though the will of God was something that's harsh, coming from a malevolent deity.

They say, God is too strong to resist, or God is too sovereign to even question, even to be personal with. And so, even though those two things actually are true, this kind of thinking leads to this.

They kind of give in and obey what they perceive to be the will of God, but they do so grudgingly. They do so resentfully, even.

And there are some people, on the other hand, who see the will of God as being always inevitable. It's just inevitable. And so, theirs is a sort of fatalistic view of the will of God, even life itself.

Now, they pray, yes, but this way of thinking kind of moves their prayer in a certain direction. They pray, but they do not really believe in their own hearts that their prayers are going to make any significant difference in life or in anything because they believe that the outcome of all things has already been decided.

[13:14] You know, what will be, will be. And so, their favorite way in praying is if you will, if the Lord's will. Now, there's nothing wrong with praying that way, but it may be coming from a certain way of thinking that everything is just kind of going to be the way it is.

And there isn't anything about my prayer life that can change that. You understand what I'm talking about? That's how some people think in prayer. By the same token, or really on the opposite end of that spectrum, there are those people who think that our duty, our responsibility really in prayer is to somehow bend the will of God so that, you know, it satisfies our own needs and wants.

Or that it lines up with our own will and so forth. Some people have that idea. And in this way of thinking, prayer is simply an attempt to get God to do what we want Him to do.

Again, those who have kind of gravitated to this way of thinking wouldn't necessarily word it in that way because you word it that way, it really unveils the fallacy of it.

Well, this is the way a lot of people think. It's like the theology of Norman Vincent Peale. Some of you remember him from years ago. Or, you know, one, you know, one of his protégés, those who have continued to kind of promote this ideology or, quote, theology over the years.

[14:53] And it could be summed up with this phrase. Believe in miracles. Remember this? Believe in miracles. And what's the next line? Anybody remember from Norman Vincent Peale?

Make miracles happen. Now, we want to rally to that and say how wonderful that is to have that kind of theology and prayer. Believe in miracles.

Make miracles happen. But do you see the problem with that? It's totally unscriptural. Now, that's the way some people think. What's the right way to think about the will of God?

What's the right way of understanding in this idea of praying your will be done on earth as it is in heaven? Well, to get at that, to discover that, we need to deal with three questions.

Two of them I've already asked. Number one, what is the will of God? Again, in the bigger picture. Secondly, what does it really mean to pray your will be done?

[15:56] And then thirdly, what does praying for the will of God accomplish? What does that accomplish? What does it really accomplish in my own life?

All right, so let's take all three of those questions in that order. And so here's the first one. What is the will of God? What is the will of God? What is the will of God for which we are to pray would be done on earth as it is in heaven?

What is that? Well, God's will, I think, can be defined under three categories. Again, we're not talking about God's will for your issue or your question or your direction in life.

Those are very important and we need to discover those and trust God with those. Again, this portion of the prayer is not talking about that. It's talking about God's sovereign will, His divine will. And I think we can define that under three categories. First, there is God's will of design. We could use the word design. His divine design.

[17:04] God's will of design. God's will of design includes His sovereign plans. His eternal purposes.

The Bible tells us what those are. Many of them. And they are really what the whole Bible is about. About redemption. About the sending of His Messiah. We're going to be celebrating His resurrection here in a few weeks. About His death and resurrection.

Those are all part of His sovereign purposes. This is His divine will of design. And though I've mentioned a few there that are very obvious as a part of His overall purpose and plan for His creation.

Really, His will of design encompasses everything. Every single thing. And more. Everything in this universe. Heaven, hell, earth, everything.

[18:07] and it reaches out into eternity without end. God's will of design. Let me give you a couple of Scripture references to this. These references don't explain it but they identify it.

And it's a marvelous passage. In Isaiah 14 verse 24 the Bible says the Lord of hosts has sworn as I have planned so shall it be.

As I have purposed so shall it stand. Now that's not a Scripture to validate any kind of notion of fatalism in life.

You know, just what will be will be. We're talking about God's sovereign divine design. It will be. Jeremiah chapter 51 and verse 29 for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed.

That it shall be done. Alright, now listen. Let me bring into play a couple of things here. A couple of issues that are part of God's will of design. That are confusing to us.

[19:14] Even frustrating to us. It is God's will of design that, for now, allows sin to run its course in our world.

Isn't it doing that right now? Sin is running its course, wreaking its havoc, ruining lives, destroying nations, families.

It is God's will of design that sin, seemingly, runs its full course. will of design. It is God's will of design that allows Satan to live, to exist.

It's God's will of design that allows Satan, seemingly, to have his way. And it does seem that way, doesn't it, right now? It's part of God's will of design.

See, we don't have any problem understanding that it's God's will of design that would send the Lord Jesus, first prophesy his coming, and work down through the ages to bring the godly line, the messianic line, and to have the Christ born of a virgin to live on this earth and to die on a cross and three days later to be resurrected from the dead.

[20:35] And we understand that. We can see that as God's will of design. But as a part of that, somehow, God's will of design allows sin to persist, allows Satan to seemingly have his way.

And also, it's God's will of design that allows the Savior, the Messiah, seemingly, to delay in his coming. Do you think of that in those terms?

You know, we hear the phrase, if the Lord tarries, you know, I'll do such and such. Well, he's not tarrying. It's part of God's will of design.

You see, at God's appointed time, we're not privy to it, but at God's appointed time, by God's design, sin's course, Satan's way, will end according to God's plan and for ordination.

It will. And the Savior's return will take place at the precise, preordained time. And according to God's design, he will then make all things right.

[21:47] And we're looking forward to that day. And it's going to come because it's God's will of design. And by the way, Jesus' second coming, his gathering of his children to himself, his church, his putting down all rebellion on this earth, his millennial rule and reign, his judgments and so forth, these are not the end of his will of design.

That's not the end of it. His will of design reaches out into the as yet unrevealed eternity. I'm kind of looking forward to seeing that unfold.

We don't have anything in Scripture about that. I mean, obviously we know that when the believer dies, the believer will one day be resurrected and will be going to heaven after this earth is all over and this creation is done with and done away with and Satan is destroyed and condemned to hell and so forth that will be in eternity.

And I guess we have this kind of idea that we're just going to kind of just have one long worship service and, you know, maybe we'll all be a part of the choir.

Yeah, you'll be able to sing when you get to heaven. You'll sing a new song. We have this idea maybe that we're just going to sit around on a fluffy cloud and pluck a harp the rest of eternity or all of eternity.

[23 : 15] And we're going to have something to do. God has His will of design and His purpose and His plan that's going to go beyond this world, this age, out into eternity.

What's that going to be? I have no idea. I'm looking forward to discovering it, aren't you? I'm looking forward to being a part of it. God's will of design. There's a second category that defines God's will and that is His will of desire.

God's will of desire. And when I start laying this out here, explaining this as best I understand it, we're going to think there's a major contradiction here.

Maybe two things that are incompatible. God's will of desire, though, is never at odds with His will of design. And yet, admittedly, from our perspective, God's will of desire is not always realized.

A perfect example would be 2 Peter 3, verse 9. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

[24 : 40] Now, that's His will of desire. Not willing that any should perish, any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This is not His will of design, because if so, everyone would repent and all would be saved.

And yet, we know that not all will repent. There have been countless millions that have gone to the grave, unrepentant, unbelieving, to enter into the judgment and condemnation of God.

Today, the world is populated by the vast majority of people who have not repented and are not saved. Not all will repent.

many will perish. I would say most even. So how does this work? For example, to God's chosen people, Israel, God said in Jeremiah 6 and verse 16, stand at the crossroads.

He's speaking to His beloved people, Israel. Stand at the crossroads and look. You're at one of those crossroads. Look. Ask for the ancient paths, the old paths. Ask where the good way is and walk in it and you will find rest for your souls.

[26 : 02] That's His desire for Israel. And yet it ends with these words, but you said, we will not walk in it.

And they didn't. In Luke chapter 13 and verse 34, Jesus stood at the kind of the outskirts of Jerusalem and He cried out, I think even with tears and He said, Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who killed the prophets and stoned those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

You were not willing. Jesus desired, clearly, desired that all Jerusalem would repent, receive their Messiah, believe and be saved.

He clearly desired that. He preached to that end. Everywhere He went, He wasn't selective in who He preached to, preached the gospel to. Preached to all and He genuinely desired that all would repent.

But very few of them believed. By far, most of them rejected Jesus as their Messiah and when the time came, many of them cried out, Crucify Him.

[27 : 27] Crucify. Now listen, it is God's will of design that somehow, great is the mystery of godliness, that somehow allows His will of desire to go largely unfulfilled, unrealized.

Now I'm not trying to say I understand that, but you have both in Scripture. And so, somehow, in the end, it all, all of it, even unbelief, rebellion, sin, all of it will be in complete agreement with His ultimate will of design.

And we're to pray in agreement to that. Then there is God's will of demand. Demand. His will of design, will of desire, and His will of demand.

And this is where it gets very personal. And this is where it really speaks to us very definitely about our prayer life.

And that prayer life being in sync with, in agreement with our life, the way we're living it. His will of demand.

[28:57] God's will of demand is that we who are His chosen and redeemed children, that we would obey Him in all that He has commanded us.

That's His will. will. We obey Him completely, immediately, without question, willingly, that is, with a willing heart.

Our prayer life is to be in agreement with His will, His overall will, His will of design, desire, and demand.

See, that's what we're talking about. What is His will? What is it? And so when we pray, Lord, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are praying that His designs be accomplished.

We're in agreement with those, as best we understand them, as we search the scriptures, and understand His will of design. We're to pray in complete agreement with that.

[30:03] We are also to pray that His desires be realized. we are to pray in perfect agreement with His demands, that His demands be obeyed by us, first of all, by me, by you, as we pray.

What a ridiculous notion. What an exercise in futility to pray and yet not be committed to obey Him in all things.

That's His will. Then we need to understand a second question. What does it mean to pray for the will of God? We talk about what it is, and we, believe me, have not plumbed the depths of that.

We know the overall categories of what His will is, redemption, glorification. salvation. We know other things that fit in with that.

But how do we pray for that? How do we pray for His will to be done? The Bible says in Psalm 103, verse 20, Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding, that is, obeying the voice of His word.

[31:23] Isn't that a marvelous passage? It's talking about the angels. Bless the angels. They excel in strength, they are mighty in strength. The angels obey His commandments to the letter.

The angels obey, heed, obey the voice of the Lord. Now listen to me, that is the way things are done in heaven, without question. God's will gets done in heaven, and that is what we're to pray for here, that His will be done here.

And that basically means, now listen to this, that basically means that we are to pray that every person on earth would hear the gospel, repent of sin, and trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and be brought into perfect conformity with God's perfect will.

That's what we're to pray for. Now I know what some of you are thinking. You're thinking, Pastor, that would be praying for something we all know will never happen.

that everyone would repent and believe and be saved. That would be praying for something that we know won't happen. In fact, Pastor, and far be it for me to tell you, you're thinking, the Bible even tells us that.

[32:43] I mean, the Bible says that sin will continue to increase, that rebellion will continue to increase on this earth. The Bible says that man and society will continue to decay morally and spiritually.

That the creation will even begin to groan and long for the end of this age. That's what the Bible tells us. So, Pastor, how can we pray for something and really mean it in our hearts, pray for something knowing all the while that according to Scripture it will never happen?

Never, ever happen. Well, my answer to that is really very simple. we pray for this because Jesus in his instructions on how to pray he said when you pray say your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That's why. How does that work? I don't know. There's no mistaking it. This is how we are to pray. We are to pray that the same way God's will is carried out in heaven without question. That in that same way his will would be carried out here on this earth.

[34:03] Now, someone has described this as being a righteous rebel. A righteous rebel. I don't know how the two words go together.

Well, they kind of go together here. Kind of like the issue of anger. God says be angry and not sin. Those seem to be contradictory but there is an anger that's righteous.

A righteous indignation. There is a rebellion, so to speak, that is righteous. That in our prayer to rebel, it's right in prayer to rebel against the notion that sin is normal and inevitable.

I mean, think about your own prayer life. and your own prayer life in the atmosphere of our day. The sin that is growing and wickedness and don't you have the temptation to kind of say, well, God, I just know these things are going to happen, so why pray against it?

We're to be righteous rebels. We're to rebel against the notion or against the temptation to accept sin, accept that sin will never ever go away.

[35 : 19] Not in this life. And even, and listen to this, to rebel against the reality, the scriptural reality, that only God's elect will be saved. It's right there in the Bible.

And yet, in a sense, we're praying contrary to that. A righteous rebellion. You see, he's teaching us to pray in opposition to what the Bible clearly predicts will happen in this earth.

Do you see? Righteous rebellion. We must rebel in our prayers against the growing system of unrighteousness in our world.

And not just give in to that as if, as inevitable. And so why pray against it? We might see, you know, individuals repent and be saved.

We might see, communities be transformed. But beyond that, I mean, we, that's our tendency, our temptation. We're to rebel against.

[36 : 22] We must rebel against the norm, against the predictable, against the inevitable. We must rebel against the cultural changes in our society that dishonor Christ and that stand in opposition and direct violation of His Word.

We're to rebel against that in our prayer line. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. That's how Jesus said we're to pray. And we continue to pray that, hopeful, trusting God.

Listen, Jesus prayed that way. Yes, He did. And Jesus knew all things. Now, we know what the Bible says, and we can take what the Bible says, and we can observe our culture and our world and see that it's just kind of going the very course the Bible said it would.

good. But Jesus knew all things, and Jesus knew the future, and Jesus knew the advance of sin in the world, and Jesus was not ignorant of any of these things, and yet Jesus preached against sin, generally.

Preached against an adulterous generation, generally. He acted, Jesus even acted against sin and drove the money changers out of the temple. Jesus preached repentance to everyone He saw.

[37 : 40] Every group that assembled, He preached repentance and faith. He wasn't selective in that. Even though He knew that many would not, He preached to all, and we must do the same.

We let God sort out all the rest of it. We're to pray God's will be done. on earth. Never to stop praying for the lost to be saved. We've heard testimonies of godly men and women who've prayed for a friend or a family member for 30, 40, 50 years.

And we're just overjoyed to discover the end of some of those stories is that that person is finally saved. Sometimes they're saved after the one praying is already dead and gone.

We leave the salvation in God's hands. It's by His grace. But we pray, we pray as though they will be saved. And we urge them to repent and to be saved.

That's God's will to be done on this earth. And we're to pray against the notion that sin is just going to persist.

[38 : 56] Listen, here's the idea. to pray for God's will to be done is to pray for Satan's will to be undone in this world.

Whether it's in the life of an individual close and dear to us or if it's in the lives of a particular group of people God has burdened us to pray for. You know, an entire country that needs the gospel and needs salvation.

Whatever it is. One final question. What does praying for the will of God accomplish? And this is where it gets very personal.

Praying for His will to be done accomplishes His will. Praying like Jesus instructed Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Praying for the will to be done, the Lord's will to be done. That accomplishes His will in our own hearts personally. This is where this way of praying becomes very personal.

[40 : 19] When you sincerely pray, Lord, Your will be done on earth, you know what you're asking? You're asking first and foremost that the Lord conform your own life to His word and His will.

Otherwise, what's the point of it? What height of hypocrisy to pray that God's will be done on this earth if we're not first and foremost praying that His will be done in my own heart and life?

When you pray that way, you're praying actually yielding in prayer. This is one of the major facets of prayer, major purposes of prayer.

You're praying, you're actually yielding your life, all of it, to His divine will, divine control. You are actually following the example of Jesus who prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, those famous words, not Thy will, but Thine be done.

That's what we're praying. See, Your will be done, Lord. Your will be done in my life as it is always done in heaven.

[41 : 56] That's God's will. God's will.