

Your Will Be Done

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 March 2012

Preacher: Don Coleman

[0:00] Take your Bibles this morning and open them to Matthew chapter 6.

And as I look out here across the congregation, I can't see your Bibles, but I know you have them. And I know that you've turned to them, but most of you, maybe most of you, I'm not sure of that, have a translation other than the King James.

But I've decided this morning to read this very famous passage, famous prayer from the King James. And I'm not going to do that every Sunday until we're finished with this series, but I thought I would do that this morning because I got to thinking that most of us are familiar with it in that translation.

Even though you may use and have for years used a different version of the Bible, most of us are familiar with the King James translation of this passage, if no other passage in the Bible.

And for those of us in this room who maybe have it or have had it memorized, I say have had because sometimes we forget, then it's going to be familiar there as well.

[1:19] So here it is in the King James. After this manner, therefore pray ye. This is what Jesus said. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. In earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. I think you'd have to admit that the King James, even though we may have difficulty understanding a lot of the King James, it is so beautiful, isn't it?

So poetic. And so there it is. There's the prayer. There's the Lord's Prayer as it is generally called.

But now remember, and I want to keep reminding you of this, this is Jesus' lesson on prayer.

Okay? Let's keep that in our minds. This is a lesson on prayer. Jesus said, After this manner, pray. Or pray then in this way.

[2:36] In this way. And so this is a model. And that is what Jesus is saying to us essentially. This is a guideline. This is a model. This is, well, praying certain categories.

We could think of it in that sense, that each line of this prayer represents a kind of category of praying. Or we might even also go as far as to say that He is telling us, this is your thought processes in prayer.

This is your agreement in your heart in prayer. This is how you are to pray. And so, you know, I've often wondered about those people who simply quote this famous passage, and they've quoted, you know, ritualistically.

Those people who think that somehow they have done all that is required concerning the discipline of prayer. I've often wondered about people like that. And there are many within Christendom who think in this way.

I've wondered about that. I've wondered also about those people who, after quoting this prayer, come away feeling spiritually satisfied.

[3:47] And after quoting this prayer, they then are even encouraged emotionally. And I have wondered, do they really know what they have prayed?

See, this is a crucial matter, I think, in our study of this passage, of this prayer. And I would be so bold as to tell you that if you have never, ever considered, and in a sense, or to some degree, plumbed the depths of each line of this prayer to discover the scriptural background for this prayer and meaning.

If you've never plumbed the depths to attempt to discover the spiritual significance of this prayer, not only in time, but also in eternity, then I would say to you that simply praying or quoting this passage as your prayer, if that's all you do, then I'm sorry, but that's meaningless.

It's meaningless. It's empty. It is vain repetition. By the way, that's what Jesus called it. Did you know that the so-called Lord's Prayer here in Matthew 6 is not the beginning point of Jesus' teaching on prayer?

In fact, the beginning point for His instructions on prayer begins with verse 5, not with verse 9. And though we're not going to study that passage, I would have you look there real quickly at verse 6 and see what Jesus said just before He gave this model prayer.

[5 : 33] In verse 6, He said, and I've got it covered up with my little sticky note, but you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret.

Place in a secret place, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Therefore, do not be like them, for your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray.

Do you see? Vain repetition. And so, if you just simply quote this prayer, and that's all there is to your prayer life, then you are wasting your time.

Seriously. That it is, in Jesus' words, vain repetition. And so, if you're going to quote this prayer in some form of worship, whether it is personal, private, or whether it is in the corporate setting, in the public setting, like we are here today, if you're going to do that, then discover its meaning.

[6 : 52] This prayer. This great prayer. Discover its meaning. All that you can discover about it. And that is, by the way, what I'm hoping we will all do as I preach through this series of messages out of this prayer.

Now, what have we discovered so far? Just by way of review, first of all, considering the phrase, our Father in heaven, we learn that prayer is about resting.

Resting in God our Father, who is in His heaven, that is on His throne. Always loving and caring for His children.

You can rest assured in that. Second, we consider the phrase, hallowed be Your name, and we learn that prayer is about reverencing.

Reverencing. Reverencing God. And so we worship, we reverence, we praise, we honor the name of our Lord. That is, His glorious nature.

[7 : 54] His good character. Supremely good character. His gracious works in our behalf. That's what we're doing. Hallowed be Your name. Reverencing the name of the Lord. Last Sunday, we considered the phrase, Your kingdom come.

Your kingdom come. And we learned that prayer is about reigning. That is, reigning in the kingdom of God. First of all, in our own hearts personally. It has to start there.

It's ridiculous to pray for God's kingdom to come if we're not willing for it to come in our own hearts. And then, though, we're to pray this prayer in regard to the hearts and lives of sinners for their conversion.

But ultimately, we're praying, when we pray, Your kingdom come, we're praying for it to come in our world. And in eternity, forever, through the coming, the second coming, of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Alright, so now we're ready for the next line of this model prayer. And so, considering the phrase, Your kingdom come, on earth, as it is in heaven, we will learn that prayer is about resigning.

[9 : 09] About resigning. That is, resigning to the will of God. A resignation to the will of God. And yet, I have to ask, what is the will of God?

I think that's a good beginning point in our understanding of this part or aspect of this prayer. What is the will of God? Now, I'm not talking about the will of God on any individual issue.

That's another matter. But I'm talking about the will of God in relation to His nature. Who God is.

What is the will of God? Well, I would admit to you that that is not an easy question to answer.

And yet, I think that must be answered before we can deal with a second question. And the second question would be this. How do we pray for the will of God? Or to put it another way, what is it that we're praying for when we pray, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

What are we praying for when we pray that? You know, for some people, they look at the will of God as the iron-fisted rule of a very, very stern deity.

[10 : 22] You know, some people look at it that way. And so, in a sense, they say, well, God is just too strong. Who can resist Him? God is too sovereign. Who could possibly question Him?

And so, they give in and obey what they believe is the will of God, but they do so reluctantly or resentfully or grudgingly because of their view of God.

And then, there are some people who see the will of God as always inevitable. That it's just going to be what it is. And theirs is a rather fatalistic view of God and so they pray, but they do not really believe that their prayers could make any kind of difference because what will be, will be.

You know, it's all been decided beforehand and so they have this kind of view of the sovereignty of God that is so overbearing and so fatalistic that there is no need to pray because what will be, will be.

Kind of like the woman who fell down her basement stairs and she fell all the way down to the bottom and she picked herself up and brushed herself off and said, boy, I'm glad I got that over with. There's some kind of fatalistic view on life that just what will be, will be.

[11:41] But then there are those who have the opposite view. And that is, there are those people who think that their duty in prayer is to somehow bend the will of God so that it satisfies their own needs and own desires.

And so that, you know, in prayer that we're somehow altering things, altering God to bend His will so that it lines up with our will and our desires.

And so, in this way of thinking, prayer is simply an attempt or an exercise in getting God to do what we want Him to do and what we need Him to do.

It's like the theology of Norman Vincent Peale years ago. You remember him? And it's one that has been propagated, been continually promoted by His ideological disciples over the years.

And how did He state it? It's a theology that says, believe in miracles, make miracles happen. Make them happen. And the underlying theology is that prayer is God giving us a degree of sovereignty so that we can bend His will to meet our needs and to meet our desires.

[13:09] All of those various views of the will of God are wrong, of course. And so, what is the answer? What is the will of God?

What does it really mean to pray, Your will be done? And I would ask a third question, what does praying for the will of God actually accomplish?

Supremely accomplish? Well, those are three good questions. And so, let's just take those questions in that order this morning as we consider this phrase, this aspect of this famous prayer.

First of all, what is the will of God? What is it? That is, what is the will of God for which we are to pray will be done on earth as it is without question every day in heaven?

What is that? Well, God's will can be defined under three categories. Alright? Three categories. There is, first of all, God's will of design.

[14:28] His will of design. That's one feature, one aspect, one really overarching aspect aspect of God's will.

His will of design. Some might even prefer to use the word decree. That word scares us. His will of design.

God's will of design includes His sovereign plans. His sovereign purposes. And they are absolute. absolute. There is no altering them. They are absolute. His will of design. This is His divine design that encompasses all of the universe and more.

Much more. It includes heaven. It includes hell. It includes this earth and all of His creation.

[15:33] It includes everything and it reaches out beyond time and out into eternity. Now that's a big statement, isn't it?

His will of design. Let me give you a couple of Scripture references. Though these references are given in relation to a specific thing, they identify, they define this will of design.

Isaiah 14 verse 24 the Lord of hosts has sworn. This is what He's sworn. It's alright for the Lord to swear. Okay. He has sworn this.

He said, as I have planned, so shall it be. As I have purposed, so shall it stand.

That's pretty absolute, isn't it? This is God speaking. This is His will of design. His will of decree, if you prefer that word. It will stand.

[16:37] All my plans, all my purposes, they shall be done, they shall stand. Jeremiah 51 and verse 29. For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed.

There's no exception there. It's absolute. Now let me give you some kind of broad categories that will help flesh this out a little bit for us.

It is God's will of design that allows sin seemingly to run its full course for a time.

It is God's will of design that allows Satan seemingly to have his way for a season. It is God's will of design that allows the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, seemingly to delay his return.

This is God's will of design and a whole lot more. Those are some broad categories. But let me tell you something very quickly. At God's appointed time, by God's design, God's decree, if you will, sin's course Satan's way will end exactly according to God's plan and for ordination.

[18:01] It will. Though it may not seem that way to us now, because we're right in the middle of it. It will be done. And God's Savior, the Savior's return, listen dear people, it will take place at the precise, preordained time.

He's not delaying His coming. He's going to come exactly at the time that was determined. This is God's will of design. I mean design, excuse me, jumping ahead.

Gave you a clue on what's coming next. God's will of design, His decree. And when the Savior comes, according to God's design, He will make all things right.

And that day may be coming soon, I don't know. And we're to pray in that direction and in agreement with His design. And by the way, I would remind you that Jesus' second coming, His putting down all sin and rebellion, which He will do one day, His establishment of His millennial rule on this earth for a thousand years, that's redundant, that's what millennial means, His judgments, His ultimate and final judgments, His gathering ultimately of His children in glory.

All of these things do not mark the end of His design. Not at all. This is just all that we know so far.

[19:30] That's all that God has chosen to reveal in His Word, but His will of design reaches out into the as yet unrevealed eternity.

So don't get the idea that when all this is done and we go to heaven, we're just going to be given a cloud to sit on and we're going to pluck a harp for all eternity. God has a design for all eternity that we're going to be a part of in a big way.

And won't that be incredible? And it's absolute. God's will of design is absolute. Now there is a second category that defines God's will.

You already know it because I mentioned it a moment ago. There's God's will of desire. His will of desire. Now let me say first of all that God's will of desire is never at odds with His will of design.

It's never at odds with it. Never contradictory. And yet God's will of desire is not always fulfilled.

[20:41] fulfilled. Now you're hoping that I'll explain that, but I can't. And somehow they go together. Somehow, even though His will of desire is, I would even say, largely unfulfilled, it is never at odds with His will of design.

2 Peter 3, 9, defiar reveals this to us and yet it doesn't satisfy us. But Peter said, the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, and then this statement, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

That is His will of desire. Oh, yes, it is. That all would come to repentance and not any would perish. That is God's will of desire. And yet, not all will repent. Will they? In fact, I think we could make a pretty good case, a pretty good argument that most will not repent.

And many will perish. In fact, I think we could safely say that most will perish. And that is not God's desire.

[22:13] And so I have to say, though it seems contradictory, that man's will can deny God's will of desire.

And we see examples of it in Scripture. For example, to God's chosen people, Israel, God said through the prophet Jeremiah 616.

This is a good word for us today as well, but these were words given to God's people. This is what God said. He said, stand at the crossroads and look. Ask for the ancient paths, the old way.

Ask where the good way is. Meaning, the ancient paths are the good way. Ask where the good way is.

And this is what he said, walk in it. Walk in it and you will find rest for your souls. I wish that it ended right there, but the rest of the passage goes like this.

[23:20] God said, but you said you will not walk in it. You see, God's will of desire.

Israel, you're at the crossroads. Look now, it's a good opportunity to look back at the ancient paths, the good way, and walk in it. That is, walk in my way, and in fellowship with me, and in communion with me, and in agreement with my will.

Look at that old way and walk in it and you will find rest for your weary souls, but you said I will not do it. See, God's will of desire is unfulfilled.

in Luke 13.34, Jesus stood at the outskirts of Jerusalem and He cried. He wept, literally. He said, 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 see, Jesus desired that all Jerusalem would be saved. And Jesus preached to that end.

[24 : 38] But very few of them were saved. In fact, most of them, by far most of them, rejected Jesus. And when the time came, many of them were there in that crowd and cried, crucify Him.

You see, now listen, and listen very carefully, it is God's will of design that allows, for now, His will of desire to go largely unfulfilled.

That's His design. And yet somehow, somehow in the end, it all, even unbelief, will work in complete agreement with God's will of design, His ultimate design, and for His glory.

will. And then there's a third and final category of God's will. Third, there is God's will of demand.

His will of demand, and this is primarily directed toward His children, because they're the only ones who can do what He demands.

[25 : 54] His will of demand. God's will of demand is that we who are His chosen and redeemed children, would obey Him in all that He has commanded us to do.

That's His will of demand. And that we would obey Him completely. And that we would obey Him immediately. And that we would obey Him willingly.

Willingly. That is with the right heart, a willing heart. Paul wrote in Romans chapter 6 and verse 16, listen to this, Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey?

Whether to sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness, but God bethank that though you were slaves to sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. That's God's will of demand for every one of His children.

[27 : 06] Now, we're talking about the will of God. What it is. And that needs to be understood before we can even begin, I think, to understand what Jesus means when He says to us, pray this way, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And so, we're praying that God's designs will be accomplished. Now, I said that His designs are absolute, that what God designs to do, He will do, and there isn't anything that will stop that.

That's right. And yet, to pray that His designs would be accomplished, is a prayer in effect that says, God, I'm in agreement with Your decrees, Your designs.

I'm not only in agreement, but I lay myself before You as a willing servant of these things. That whatever You desire of me toward accomplishing your designs, I'm willing to be a part of it.

And so, we're praying that His designs be accomplished. And we're praying also that His desires be realized. And even though His desires go largely unfulfilled, we're praying, God, my desire is the same as Your desire.

[28 : 35] That Your desires would be realized. And then to pray that His demands be obeyed. how ridiculous for us to even pray this prayer to any degree if we're not willing to obey His demands.

Alright, that tells us or answers the question, what is God's will? And it makes a connection with the next question.

And the next question is, what does it mean to pray for the will of God? What does it mean to do that? Jesus said, pray this way. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does it mean to pray that His will would be done? On earth as it is in heaven. The Bible says in Psalm 103 verse 20, listen to this, bless the Lord, you His angels, He's speaking to the angels, bless the Lord, you His angels, who are mighty in strength, who do His commandments, His word, obeying the voice of His word.

Now, folks, that is the way things get done in heaven, without question. And so God's will gets done in heaven. It does, without question.

[30 : 05] God's will And that is what we are to pray for here. That what happens every moment in heaven would also happen here.

That's a big prayer. It's bigger than you think. It basically means that we are to pray that every person on earth would be saved and be brought into perfect conformity with God's perfect will.

That's what Jesus is telling us to pray. Let me say that again because I think you missed it. We are to pray that every single person on earth would be saved. that's the only way that God's will will be done on earth as it is every day in heaven. That every person on earth would be saved and therefore be brought into perfect conformity with God's perfect will.

This is a huge prayer. Wouldn't you agree? It is huge. It is beyond our comprehension comprehension that it could ever be actually answered.

[31 : 36] In fact, I know what some of you are thinking. You're thinking, Pastor Don, far be it for me to tell you, you know, to try to set you straight, but Pastor, that would be praying for something that could never ever really happen.

That's what you're thinking. If you weren't before, you are now. I mean, you're thinking, you know, Pastor, you know, the Bible even tells us that.

That what you just said a moment ago is never going to happen. Never going to happen. The Bible, as a matter of fact, says, Pastor, that sin will continue to increase.

It does, doesn't it? That it will continue to increase until Jesus comes. It tells us that man will continue to rebel in ever increasing ways and that society will continue to decay morally.

Even if the Bible didn't tell us these things, we can certainly see it for ourselves, can't we? And it also tells us that even the creation itself is going to groan and long for the end of this age.

[32 : 59] And so, you're saying that Jesus is telling us to pray that every single person would be saved and be brought into perfect conformity with His perfect will?

When you know the Bible says that will never happen. Well, you know what my answer to that is? The answer is that we pray for this because Jesus in His instructions on how to pray said, pray in this manner.

pray in this manner. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. There's no mistaking that. And so, you're thinking, well, He probably means something else.

No. That's exactly what He means. That's how we're to pray. That's how we're to do it. That the same way God's will is carried out in heaven without question, that in the same way His will would be carried out here on this earth.

Someone has called this, described this as being a righteous rebel. I like that. A righteous rebel.

[34 : 16] rebel. It is to rebel against the notion that sin is normal and inevitable. Have you ever thought of that?

I would dare say that most of us in our day, especially in this culture, have long ago come to the conclusion that sin is inevitable and that it is unavoidable.

And yet I think that Jesus is saying we're to be righteous rebels. To rebel against the temptation to accept that sin will never go away and that sin will continue to dominate our world and our culture in ever increasing ways and that we should just simply tolerate it.

Isn't that where we've come? I'll be honest. Now we may have come, likely have come to a place where we don't tolerate certain sin but only because it has not become the norm yet.

And as soon as it becomes the norm then we tolerate that and then we look forward and we look in disgust at further sin and greater degrees of sin.

[35 : 33] But we come to a place where we tolerate the way things are in our culture. you know it's true.

And I think this prayer is telling us to be rebels against that. Jesus is teaching us to pray in rebellion to that notion that sin is inevitable and that we ought to just accept it.

In fact, don't throw a rock at me. It seems to me in a sense he is teaching us to pray in opposition to what the Bible clearly predicts will happen on this earth.

right. He said, come on. I think that's what he said. Righteous rebellion.

To rebel, that is, we must rebel against the growing system of unrighteousness in our world. to rebel against the norm, against the predictable, against the what we think is the inevitable.

[36 : 50] To rebel against cultural changes in our society that dishonor God's Word and dishonor and reject the Lord Jesus Christ.

we must rebel against a growing presence of disobedience even in the church among those who are professing believers. See, our tolerance is not just simply in regard to the world and its sin, but our tolerance is also toward the church and the sin, the ever increasing sin that we see in it.

We're to rebel against it. Listen, dear people, Jesus prayed that way. Jesus prayed that way and acted that way.

Jesus knew all things. Jesus knew the future even better than we. In fact, perfectly. He knew the future. Knows the future. And Jesus, when He was on this earth, knew the advance of sin in this world.

And Jesus was not in the dark or ignorant about these things, and yet Jesus preached against sin and Jesus acted against sin. Remember, when His Father's house was being dishonored, and Jesus took a whip and He drove out the money changers out of the temple?

[38:08] You see, we are not to give in and accept things the way they are. We're not to give up in our prayerful and dutiful fight against the moral evils of our culture.

We're not to give out in weariness and well-doing. So we're not to give in or give up or give out. Jesus is teaching us to pray for righteousness in the world, and to pray for righteousness in the world is the same as praying against unrighteousness.

Wickedness. In fact, let me put it in these terms. This is all of it in a nutshell. Listen, to pray for God's will to be done on earth is to pray for Satan's will to be undone in this world.

And we're to constantly be praying that. Do you understand? This is a big, big prayer. Big, huge prayer. Let me close with one other question.

What does praying for the will of God accomplish? Well, and this is not circular reasoning.

[39:29] It accomplishes His will. Praying that His will would be done on earth as it is in heaven every day is to accomplish His will.

That's His will. Do we always understand the purposes of His will? No. Have we ever come to the place where we have entertained the thought that, well, I know this is God's will, but I just don't see the point?

I don't see how it can happen. It is enough for us to resign ourselves.

That praying for the will of God to be done on this earth as it is in heaven is God's will. It's His will.

But let me take this a step further in closing and make it very personal.

Praying for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven accomplishes His will in our own hearts.

Don't fail to personalize this prayer.

[40:45] it accomplishes His will in our own hearts. When we sincerely pray your will be done on earth, guess what?

You're actually asking the Lord to conform your own life to His word and His will. Otherwise, this prayer is sheer hypocrisy.

prayer for God's will to be done on earth and then not be willing to allow His will to be done in your life is the ultimate of hypocrisy.

This is God's desire. That you and I would yield our lives, all of it, to His divine control in every area.

Otherwise, praying this way is not only pointless, it is an affront to the Holy God.

[41:53] God. And I would add, when you pray this way, you're following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ who, if you will remember, prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane moments before He would be crucified.

He prayed what? Not my will, but thine being done. That's what it means to pray.

Your will be done on earth.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[43:52] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[46:22] Thank you.

Thank you.