

## "THY WILL BE DONE"

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10.

"Our Father which art in heaven" governs every relationship of our lives in every detail. "Hallowed be Thy name" weighs our every thought, word and deed. "Thy kingdom come" sets up in each of our lives the undisputed sway of the Holy Spirit. "Thy will be done" involves the submission of everything to the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

If we had been arranging the order of the petitions in this prayer, quite likely we would have started with our immediate needs, asking for daily bread, daily forgiveness and daily strength against temptation. Then we would have tried to lift ourselves into the larger world of aspiration and longing, and asked for the coming of God's Kingdom and the subjection of all men to His righteous will. Our Lord began where we would have finished-- not with the prayer for our own needs, but with the cry that the name of the Father may be known and revered everywhere, that His Kingdom may be established universally, and that the minds and hearts of all men may be attuned to the music of His sweet and perfect will. That was the order of Christ's own thoughts.

"Thy will be done." So often we pray that thoughtlessly, without recognizing the depth of truth that lies in it. God has a will. "Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). "That good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (I Corinthians 1:1). God's will determines His action. The universe everywhere presents the imprint of His will.

God has a will concerning man. What a glorious truth that insignificant man engages the mind and heart of God! God has a plan for every life, a pattern for every character and an ideal for every soul. To make His will known and get it accomplished has always been the biggest undertaking of God.

God's will came first in the life of Christ. Our Saviour saw to it that His life conformed to God's plan for it. He was obedient to the will of the Father in everything, regardless of what that will was. To do the will of God was His supreme ambition and delight. Satan wanted Him to do something for the will of God. Christ rejoiced in the privilege of doing the Father's will. He said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38).

Nature obeys God's will. The flower that blooms in the garden or meadow, the lark that wings its way up to heaven's gate in the spring sunshine, the rivers that roll toward the sea, the ocean with its regular ebb and flow, the sun and moon and stars traveling along their appointed orbits-- all of these are what they are and do what they do in obedience to God's will. The wind is God's messenger; the thunder is His voice, and the lightning is His sword. Nature obeys God.

Is there anyone who resists God's will? Yes, there is one, just one, and that is man. In all of God's universe man is the only creature who is disobedient. He is the only one invested with the power of obeying or resisting the will of God. Because he has a free and independent will of his own, man can either obey or disobey God. There are multitudes who are in rebellion against and refuse to do the will of God.

## I. The Matter Of Doing God's Will.

There are various phases of God's will:

1. His secret will.  
God's secret will cannot be known. This is the will of His decree. We do not pray that God's secret will may be done by us.
2. His determining will.  
He purposes and decrees what shall come to pass.
3. His prescribing will.  
He tells us what we should do. He sets forth the rule of duty. His determining will must always be accomplished. His prescribing will may be disobeyed. His will of purpose always comes to pass. His will of desire does not always come to pass. His will of command is often disobeyed.
4. His revealed will.  
God's will is revealed to His children through the Holy Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures declare His will with reference to our salvation, our sanctification and our service. According to the Bible, God recognizes in man, who was made in His likeness, a capacity of will corresponding with His own. God is not mere force, and man is not a mere machine. God has given man the marvelous faculty of observing, considering, judging, approving, resolving and performing. Man can concur with, conform to and carry out God's will, or he can resist it.

## II. The Manner Of Doing God's Will.

In connection with God's will for our lives two things are very important.

1. The discovery of His will.  
We must know God's will before we can do it. But, the bare knowledge of God's will does not improve the life.
2. The doing of His will.  
Knowing God's will may cause a person to be admired, but it is doing that will that makes him blessed. Knowing God's will without doing it will never make a person happy. It is the purpose of God to make us doers of His will. Remember, we are not asked to obey a despot or tyrant, but we are commanded to do the will of our Father, whose love is to be measured only by the cross of Christ.

Our text tells us the way in which we are to do the will of God. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," that is, as the angels do it. We are to make them our pattern. How do the angels in heaven do God's will?

### (1) Unhesitatingly.

Angels are compared to the winds and the lightning in their swiftness of service. No delay mars their obedience. They never wait for a more convenient season nor substitute a purpose to do for present doing.

- (2) Willingly.  
We can imitate the angels by doing God's will cheerfully. "And thou Solomon, my son, serve the Lord with a willing mind" (I Chronicles 28:9).
- (3) Lovingly.  
Love neither loiters nor spares any pains in service. The capacities of angels may vary as our own, but each, according to ability, does the will of God. We are taught to pray that our obedience may, like theirs, be that of love.
- (4) Sincerely.  
To do God's will sincerely is to do so out of a pure respect to His commands. Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac was contrary to flesh and blood; to sacrifice the son of his love, and that no other hand but the father's own should do this, here was hard service; but, because God commanded it, out of pure respect for the command, Abraham obeyed. Not comfort, but the command is the ground of duty. To do God's will sincerely is to do it with an eye single to God's glory.
- (5) Fervently.  
The angels burn in love and zeal in doing God's will. We, too, should be "fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11).
- (6) Thoroughly.  
The angels do nothing except what they are commanded, but they do not fail to do anything which God commands.
- (7) Continuously.  
The angels never weary of doing God's will. There are no intervals of idleness in their obedience. They serve God day and night. "Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times" (Psalm 106:3). Constancy crowns obedience.

### III. The Motives For Doing God's Will.

1. To avert self-injury.  
Misery has always attended the doing of man's own will. Our first parents left God's will in order to accomplish their own, by eating the forbidden fruit. The result was that they obtained a curse for themselves and all their posterity.
2. To secure happiness.  
Submission and conformity to the will of God are essential to personal and present happiness. Happiness has always attended the doing of God's will. There is real joy in the very act of doing the will of God.
3. To express our love for God.  
Obedience to the will of God is the only way that we can prove our love for Him.
4. To glorify God.  
Through cheerful and faithful obedience to God's will we bring glory to His matchless name. God's will for us is not only right, but it is always best.

Stonewall Jackson, the great Christian soldier, was accidentally wounded by one of his own men in the battle of Chancellorsville. As he lay dying, he said: "If I live, it will be for the best; if I die, it will be for the best. God knows and directs all things for the best for His children. God's will be done." That is the spirit and attitude all of us should have.

The will of God is not just something to be endured, but something to be done. We should not pray, "Help us to suffer Thy will," but we should say, "Help us to do Thy will." If you would glorify God, make this prayer a personal one, "Father, let Thy will be done in me and through me. Whatever it means, wherever it leads, whatever it costs, whether by life or by death, Thy will be done." "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (I John 2:17).