

## Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

Matthew 6.5-15

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As our High Priest, Jesus stands before us, in front of the altar of God in heaven, and He prays for you. He takes your prayers to God, to ensure that they are received by God, and answered.

Jesus taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer. Let us pray this prayer together now.

If we pray the prayer that He taught us, and He prays it with us, are we not fully sure that God will answer?

Because God is Our Father in heaven, we are sure that He wants to answer the prayers of his children, and that He can answer them. He has the will and He has the power.

We have looked at the prayers for God's name to be hallowed, and for his Kingdom to come. Today we put our mind to the prayer that Jesus taught us, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

### 1. The will of God

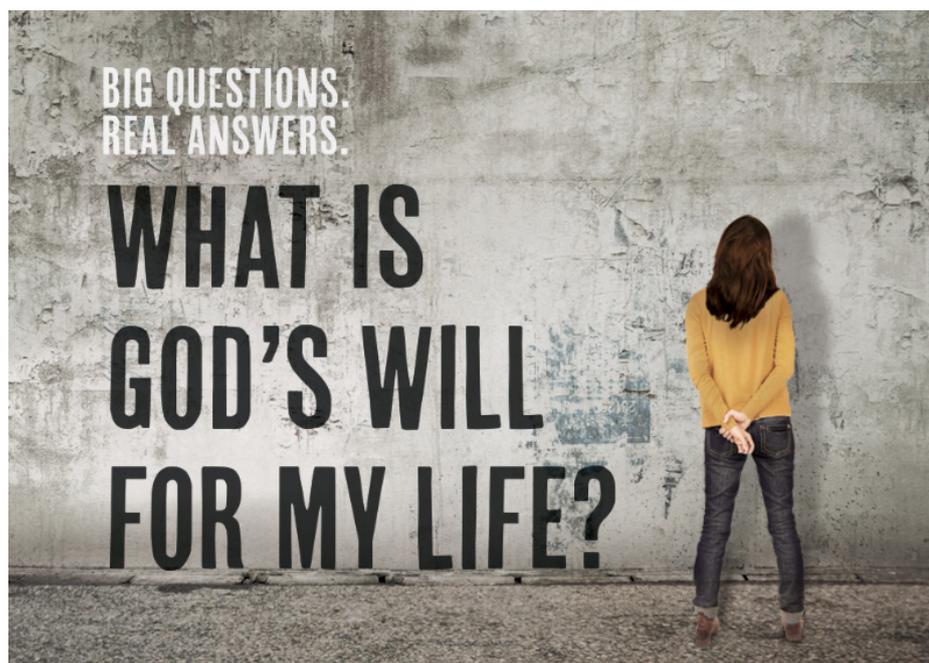
What is the will of God? What does He want? In general terms, I think we can all answer this question to a certain extent. What would you say?

If you know your Bible well, you can, I guess, quote a few verses.

For instance, 1 Timothy 2.4, that says, "God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

That is the general will of God. His desire is that all people on earth believe in Him, so that they are part of His Kingdom.

Another Bibleverse, more personal, is 1 Thes 4.3: "It is God's will that you be sanctified." God wants you, and me, to lead a holy life.



And we can add this verse, that verse, and it is an important theme in the Bible. The will of God. Hebrews 10.36 says:

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

To do the will of God is utterly important. To believe, to be saved, to be sanctified, to persevere in doing the will of God.

It becomes more complicated if people ask this question, “what is the will of God for my life’. What does he want from me specifically?



I do not know about you, but when I was a teenager, this was the most existential question I had. ‘What does God want me to do with my life. What to study, where to work, be a missionary maybe, or what!’

I will come back to this in a moment.

One of the characteristics of the Hebrew literary style is what is technically known as parallelism. The Jews tended to say everything twice, first in this way, then in a slightly different way to repeat or amplify or explain the first thing they said.

If we want to know what Jesus means with the prayer ‘Your will be done’, we have to realise the parallelism with the prayers before that. ‘Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done.’

There is great overlap in meaning in these three prayers.

And the prayer for God’s name to be hallowed, and for his Kingdom to come, is not in the first place about my behaviour. We spoke about this in the previous weeks. It is about God who acts to make his name and his kingdom great.

Therefore, we can also say, It is God who ensures that His will is being done. That is why we pray for it.

‘Your will be done’ looks forward, in the first place, to the coming Kingdom of God. His desire is to renew this world. That this whole world becomes a place that lives in accordance with the will of God.

And surely, that impacts us today. We desire to hallow the name of God, to obey Jesus our KING, we want to do his will, even today.

## 2. On earth as it is in heaven

When we pray that God's will be done, we also add that it be done on earth as it is in heaven. The sequence of the Greek words in that sentence is actually: 'As in the heavens, so also on earth'.

We pray, as it were, that the will of God that is already done in heaven, will also be done on earth.

And do not forget the parallelism I mentioned. 'Lord, as your name is hallowed in heaven, as you rule in your kingdom in heaven, as your will is done in heaven, may that also happen here, in our world. On earth.'

This is very good medicine against a gospel that is too spiritualized. What do I mean with that?

There are Christians who really believe that heaven, up in the clouds, is our final destination, and that our only job as Christians is to get our afterlife destination taken care of, and that we only have to live our lives today as good as we can until we all get raptured up, taken into heaven, and God comes back and destroys the earth.

But Jesus never told anybody—neither his disciples nor us—to pray, 'Get me out of here so I can go up there.' His prayer was, 'Make up there come down here.' Make things down here run the way they do up there."

Jesus tells us to pray that "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven", because God wants to come down and make this place a better place. The Christian life is never a trip of escapism from this life.

A Christian is someone who prays every day to God, our Father in heaven, that what is in heaven, will also come to us.

In the book of Revelation, the visionary John gets a glimpse of God's plans with our world, and what does he see?

He sees God being served in his heavenly temple, in the heavenly Jerusalem, and one day, this heavenly place will descend to our world, and change it all.

The cities of this world will be renewed; the land will be renewed; deserts will turn into orchards, people will live together in joy in the communities of the cities. Paradise will be restored.

God loves this world and he wants his will to be done on earth. One day, 100% perfect, in the future, when he will wipe all tears from our eyes.

But our prayer that his will shall be done fully in the future on earth, includes that today we also want to do the will of God on earth. God is our Father; Jesus is our King; The Holy Spirit lives in us. How can we not want to live in line with the dreams that God has for our world!

### 3. So what must we do?

Jesus did not give us a political party program. “Change the world, build My Kingdom!” As a church, we have never been able to do that. The church is simply too unable, too unholy, too lame.”

Why do you think Jesus told us to pray for God’s name to be hallowed? For His Kingdom to come? For his will to be done?

That is because we cannot do it. God has to do it. We look up to God for renewing us and for renewing this world.

But He is at work in us; His Holy Spirit is in you. Paul wrote to the church in Phillipi that “God works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

If you pray, ‘Your will be done’, you align yourself with Jesus Christ who prays this prayer with us. And to pray this prayer, ‘God do your will’, together with Jesus, assures us that God will make us will what He wants, and work what He wants.

God will make all things new; He will recreate this world. And you are already part of that new creation. So it is no wonder that your life already reflects some of the light that shines to us from that glorious future.

We are broken vessels. Weak, sinful, imperfect, sure. But God is at work in you. He knows very well how imperfect we are and in spite of that, He loves us, He dwells in us, He uses us. You are his representative, and you are his best testimony to the great future that is coming.

So to come back to that question I asked, what is the will of God for my life today? The answer to that question is not in the first place where we work, where we live, how we dress. The will of God for your life is that you live in accordance with the Kingdom-Principles of Jesus.

What is the will of God? That I live by the teachings of Jesus. That I live by the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. That I love God and my neighbor. That is what God wants from us.

And it is an excellent question to wonder, where can I serve my Lord, how can I be most useful to Him. But it is a secondary matter. The really crucial question is: Will I love, will I serve, will I lead a holy life.



If you do that, then do what you want! God is your Father and he loves to see his children love Him, live for Him, love his other children, and He loves to see his children mature and lead their life with joy and freedom.

If you love, and serve, and live for God, then you do exactly what He wants. And then questions of where you will love, where you will serve, are so secondary really.

If we ask God, 'Your will be done', we ask him to make sure that we and this whole world do his will. If we ask God to make sure that his will be done, then we can be assured that He will make sure that his will shall be done.

We do not need to wrestle with questions like: does God want me to go left or right. Pray the Lord's Prayer together with Jesus, live for Him, and make up your mind,

God will answer this prayer that Jesus prays with you. He will guide you, because his Holy Spirit, who always does the will of God, lives in you. In your heart, in your mind.

## **Conclusion**

Jesus teaches us to pray the Lord's Prayer. 'Our Father in heaven, Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.'

If you pray that with your heart and your mind, this shows you are a child of God. Because it is the Spirit in you, who makes you say 'our Father' to your Father.

And if you pray this prayer, you ask God to make you do his will.

Our mission is to do his will, and also to call others to do his will. We have a wonderful mission in this world.

But this would be a useless mission if it were not for the prayers that we pray with Jesus. 'Lord, you have to do it. You make sure that your will be done, In me, in our church, in our nation, in our world.'

The will of God is that we love. That we serve. That we defend the oppressed, that we feed the hungry, that we sacrifice our time, our money for others.

Pray this prayer of Jesus, pray the prayer with Jesus, and you will be his servant, to do his will.

**+ Amen**