

The Lord's Prayer

3. Thy will be done on earth as in heaven

For the past two weeks we have been reflecting on the Lord's Prayer and we have been unpacking it to better understand what this age old prayer really meant when Jesus offered it as a frame.

In the first week we looked at:

1. Our Father in Heaven – Hallowed be your name

2. Last week – Your Kingdom come

Today we will look at **Your will be done on earth as in heaven**

So what does it mean to pray, "Your Will Be Done On Earth As It is In Heaven"?

Perhaps an understanding of the "...As it is in heaven" part of the prayer gives us clearer insight in Jesus's meaning.

For many, heaven is often depicted as a paradisiacal realm of bliss and harmony as a reward for the virtuous and spiritually devoted. In various religious traditions, including Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, heaven is envisioned as a place of eternal happiness, where the righteous are reunited with loved ones and bask in the presence of the divine.

Christianity portrays heaven as the abode of God and the blessed, characterized by peace, joy, and the absence of suffering.

But contrary to what other Jewish leaders taught, Jesus preached that:

1. no one will inherit the glorious future kingdom by stringently observing all the Jewish laws in their most intimate details;
2. or by meticulously following the rules of worship involving sacrifice, prayer, and observance of holy days;
3. or by pursuing one's own purity through escaping the vile world and the tainting influence of sinful others.

In Jamaica – I want to go to heaven and rest I am tired of living down here...

But for Jesus, heaven will come to those who are fully dedicated to the most pervasive and dominant teachings of God's law. Put most simply, that involves loving God above all things despite personal hardship, and working diligently for the welfare of others, even when it is exceedingly difficult. People who have not been living lives of complete unselfish love need to repent and return to the two "greatest commandments" of Jewish Scripture: deep love of God (Deuteronomy 6:4-6) and committed love of neighbor (Leviticus 19:18).

This may be simple, but it is not easy. Since your neighbor is anyone you know, see, or hear about, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan. True

love means helping *everyone* in need, not just those in your preferred social circles. Jesus was concerned principally for the poor, the outcasts, the foreigners, the marginalized, and even the most hated enemies.

So to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven acknowledges two things:

1. it acknowledges that there is a better way for this world to run than the way that it does now,
2. and secondly, that God does care about this earth.

There are huge advantages in saying it Sunday by Sunday.

- a. It works its way into our inmost spiritual life.
- b. It gives us words to say as a reminder of Jesus' words.
- c. It provides a shape for our prayer life,
- d. and it's a spiritual resource to draw on when all else fails.

But its constant repetition can deafen us to its revolutionary force.

However, properly understood, the words "**your will be done, on earth as in heaven**", are supremely radical.

- a. They commit Christians to working with God to see that the world reflects the fullness of God's grace and glory.
- b. It's to be a place where justice is done,

- c. where people are healed and restored,
- d. where everyone lives to their full potential,
- e. and where sin and suffering are no more.

That's what heaven is like, where God's will is done perfectly.

In the Lord's Prayer, Christians pray that this world - with all its bitterness, hatred, pain, injustice will one day be the same as in heaven.

So we are not called upon to pray for something to happen without trying, as best we can, to help make it happen.

- So the Lord's Prayer isn't just a call for God to do something,
- it's a commitment for us to be partners with God.

So when we pray that prayer, let's try to have at least these three questions in mind.

1. Am I living this prayer out in my own life?

In our interactions with other people, we can make life a living heaven for them or a living hell. This can happen:

- a. The way we are in our family,
- b. how we treat our spouse or children,
- c. our colleagues or employees or employers, our neighbour

If heaven is a place where God's will is done perfectly and earth is meant to reflect that, we will have to go through life trying as hard as we can to empower and build people up to try and replicate heaven on earth.

2. Am I aware of how unlike heaven the world is?

It's very easy for Christians to become very insular, concerned only for "church" business. But conversion is about much more than going to heaven when we die – and Christian discipleship is about much more than just making new Christians.

Part of that discipleship is being willing to be painfully aware of the dark side of life here in this world.

- a. We should know about poverty and the effects that has on the less fortunate,
- b. Scourge of injustice, and care about doing something about it.

It should make us stress the word "your": "*Your* kingdom come, *your* will be done." At the moment, in too many places, it isn't: it's a flawed and sinful human will, all too often driven by a demonic energy to do harm.

Demonic forces of

- a. racism
- b, Poverty

- c. Classism
- d. Indifference towards injustice
- e. Xenophobia
- f. Sexism

So are we aware of how unlike heaven earth is? Because the first step to doing something is awareness.

3. Am I willing to do something?

There are many things happening in the world today. Happenings that seem far too big for us. There's not much we can do about war in Syria, Yemen, China/US/Canada tension or climate change or refugees. But we can do something, and it's not without significance:

- a. We can't solve the refugee crisis, but we can challenge prejudice against immigrants.
- b. We can't stop the war in Syria or Yemen, but we can give to charities working in the field.
- c. We can't stop climate change, but we can live more simply.

So "Your will be done on earth as in heaven" isn't just verbal wallpaper that sounds nice and forms the aural backdrop to just another service. Your will be done on earth as in heaven" is a dangerous, frightening, demanding and

inspiring description of another reality, that challenges apathetic collusion with the powers that be. It's a call to resist; it's a battle cry.

So the question is - **What does God want us to do?** It is God's will for us that we would love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength. It is God's will that we would love our neighbor as ourselves. This is God's will.

This was the prayer of Mary after the angel Gabriel had revealed to her the will of God in bearing his son Jesus. Her response was - "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:38).

This was also the prayer of Jesus - In his agony in Gethsemane Jesus prayed three times for a way around his suffering: Then he said - "Yet not as I will, but as you will.... may your will be done." (Matthew 26:39,42)

*"Thy Will Be Done" will be the most difficult prayer we will ever pray,
Because:*

- 1. God has a will and purpose concerning our life.**
- 2. There is a conflict between our will and God's will**
- 3. Those two wills are often on opposite sides**
- 4. When there is a conflict, either God's will or our will - will prevail.**

But I have come know something about the Will of God

The Will of God:

1. The will of God will never take you:

2. Where the Grace of God cannot keep you,
3. Where the Arms of God cannot support you,
4. Where the Riches of God cannot supply your needs,
5. Where the Power of God cannot endow you.

6. The will of God will never take you,

7. Where the Spirit of God cannot work through you,
8. Where the Wisdom of God cannot teach you,
9. Where the Army of God cannot protect you,
10. Where the Hands of God cannot mold you.

11. The will of God will never take you,

12. Where the Love of God cannot enfold you,
13. Where the Mercies of God cannot calm you,
14. Where the Peace of God cannot calm your fears,
15. Where the Authority of God cannot overrule you.

16. The will of God will never take you

17. Where the Comfort of God cannot dry your tears,
18. Where the Word of God cannot feed you,
19. Where the Miracles of God cannot be done for you,
20. Where the Omnipresence of God cannot find you.

21. Everything happens for a purpose.

22. We may not see the wisdom of it all

23. Now but trust and believe in

24. The Lord that everything is for the best.

(Author unknown)

May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, Amen!