



**Worship – Part 18**  
**Acts of Worship – Part 6**  
**Prayer: Thy Will Be Done**  
**GCSP – 09/08/2007**

Okay men, I have a question for you. How often have you asked your wife where she wants to go eat? And how often have you asked the question and you really didn't care where you went – you truly wanted to do what pleased her?

Sometimes we either ask the question, or ladies you respond to the question, with an "I don't care" when we really do have a preference. But we are keeping quiet because we know our specific preference at the moment is not something our spouse likes very much.

So we may want to do what pleases the other person but we are not doing it whole-heartedly are we?

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Matthew 6**.

We are working our way through a passage that is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer. I have mentioned several times that this is meant to be a model prayer, not necessarily a prayer to be repeated word-for-word. So I am taking the time to look at each phrase and giving considerable attention to what each of these phrases truly means to us, to help us gain a better understanding of how Jesus is really instructing us to pray.

**Matthew 6:9-13**

**"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen'" (NASB).**

Let's pray.

Over the last month we have spent some time in this passage in Matthew's gospel focusing on the act of worship we call prayer. Jesus is teaching His disciples how to pray. As a matter of fact, in **Luke 11**, His disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. It is a different time, setting and place, but Jesus primarily speaks the same words in teaching His disciples how to pray. And again, we are not looking at the choice of words Jesus uses so we can mimic Him, but the principles behind the words so we can understand the God-honoring components of any prayer we pray.

In the first 8 verses of **Matthew 6**, we discovered our attitude in prayer is to be one of humility. Prayer must first come from a humble heart. If our prayers are completely self-serving and prayed publicly so that others will be impressed with us, then we should not even bother to pray.

We then saw the fatherhood of God as Jesus instructs us to open our prayers with an understanding that God is our Father. He is our daddy or papa, as the term "Abba" means in **Romans 8**. We should come to God as a child would run to his daddy in a time of fear, or when they needed something, or just because you wanted to be with him. Using the term Father when you pray brings joy to God's heart.

Do you remember the first time your child called you daddy, or da-da? Can you still feel the pride and the love when you recall those words? That's our God as Father.

We then saw that the very first request in this model prayer was for God's name to be hallowed. Before we pull out our shopping list of requests that we usually come to God with, we first ask for Him to be honored and glorified and revered and adored and sanctified. Our primary focus in prayer must be on Him and not us. We are to pray that His name, His character, and His being is proclaimed through our lives and through the lives of others. Our primary desire in prayer is to see God glorified.

Then last week, we explored what it means to pray for His Kingdom to come.

I am afraid that far too many Christians have very little interest in God's Kingdom. They are so wrapped up in their own little kingdoms that God's Kingdom has been crowded out. They don't want God's Kingdom to come and have the preeminence in all things; they are much more concerned with their lives having preeminence in all things.

We must align the focus of our prayers toward God, toward God's will, toward God's plans, toward God's purposes, toward God's Word, and toward God's desires. Then and only then will our hearts be in the proper place to make requests on the behalf of others and on our own behalf.

We looked at how the Bible tells us that this world we live in is primarily Satan's kingdom at the present time. God has allowed Satan to somewhat dominate this world for a temporary period of time. Satan is the god of this world. It is his dominion at the present time and it is his system of politics, his system of chaos, his system of morals, his system of corruption, his system of degradation, and even his system of religion that permeates this world.

So praying for God's Kingdom to come means that there is absolutely nothing holding you to this world. If confronted with the choice of staying here with your current life, or even a life of luxury and pleasure, or having God's Kingdom come right now, interrupting all of your plans, which would you choose?

If you even had to ponder that choice, then I either did a bad job in explaining the choice, or you are too attached to this world.

So the first two requests made in this model prayer are focused on God and not us. So far, Jesus has taught us to pray and ask for things, but the things we are to ask for aren't for what we think we have need of on this earth.

And that pattern continues with tonight's phrase:

**v. 10b**

**"Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"**

Let me attempt to answer one question that may be going through your minds right now: If God is sovereign, isn't His will always accomplished anyway? And if so, why should we pray for His will to be done?

The easy answers are yes He is sovereign, and we should pray for His will because He tells us to do so, but there is infinitely more to it than that – and we are not heading down this path for it will simply have us going around in circles. Let me simply read to you from one of the commentaries I used in preparation for this sermon and then move on to what the Spirit wishes to speak to us tonight:

*"It is absolutely clear from Scripture that God is sovereign and yet not only allows but commands that man exercise his own volition in certain areas. If man were not able to make his own*

*choices, God's commands would be futile and meaningless and His punishments cruel and unjust. If God did not act in response to prayer, Jesus' teaching on prayer would also be futile and meaningless. Our responsibility is not to solve the dilemma but to believe and act on God's truths, whether some of them seem to conflict or not. To compromise one of God's truths in an effort to defend another is the stuff of which heresy is made. We are to accept every part of every truth in God's Word, leaving the resolution of any seeming conflicts to Him."* (Matthew 1-7, John MacArthur Jr.)

And as Forrest Gump says, "That's all I have to say about that."

Let's remove any paradoxes from our heads, accept what God's Word says as truth, and learn what the Spirit wants to teach us through this truth – fair enough?

When we pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are saying at least three critical things to God.

1. That we will work to please God in all we do.
2. That God can do with us as He pleases.
3. That we will not be displeased with what God does.

Let's spend a couple of moments with each of these so we will know what it means to genuinely pray for God's will to be done.

The first thing we are saying when we pray for God's will to be done is:

That we will work to please God in all we do

It goes without saying that when we do God's will, when we are obedient to His Word, it pleases Him. It then should go without saying that His true children will be about the business of accomplishing His will through obeying His Word. But we are not always about the Master's business are we? We don't always obey His Word do we? So why is obedience such a struggle in our lives?

### **Galatians 5:16-18**

**"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law"** (NASB).

Every moment of every day we are engaged in a battle. The Holy Spirit, who dwells within you if you have confessed Jesus as the Lord of your life and accepted God's gift of salvation, is in constant conflict with your sinful nature. Your flesh wants nothing more than to please and satisfy itself. Your flesh has absolutely no regard for other people – not even your spouse, your children, your parents, or your closest and dearest friends. Absolute and total selfishness reigns supreme if your flesh is not held in check. And the Holy Spirit is the agent that holds your flesh in check – but it is a battle.

But while the Holy Spirit is sovereign and all powerful, because He is God, He gives us a part in this battle. The Spirit does not impose His will on us to the point of forcing us to do anything. He compels us, He urges us, He leads us, and He helps us, but He will not force us. So the Holy Spirit has His part and we have ours. It is almost as if the Holy Spirit is on one side, the flesh is on the other, and we are in the middle with the final vote as to which side will win any given battle. Let me illustrate with an old Indian fable.

An old Indian chief was out on a hunt with one of his grandsons. After they had bedded down for the evening the old chief related to his grandson how there were two wolves at war within his soul. The one wolf was evil and vile and desired to do great harm to everyone he came in contact with. The other wolf was kind and loving and desired to do good to everyone he came in contact with. The chief vividly described how this battle raged in his soul all the time.

The grandson asked the chief, "Which wolf wins the battle grandpa?" The grandpa paused and said, "The one I feed the most."

The two wolves at war within us are the flesh and the Spirit. And again, while the Spirit could easily vanquish the flesh, He leaves that decision to each of us. He allows us to choose which entity we will feed.

If we "feed" the Spirit by studying God's Word, praying to the Father, praising and worshipping the Lord, and obeying the Bible, then the Spirit will have victory over the flesh. If we "feed" the flesh by falling to temptation, bowing down to our addictions, filling our minds with the world's entertainment, allowing the busyness of our schedules to crowd God out of the picture, then the Spirit will stand aside and allow the flesh to claim victory.

So which one do you feed on a more consistent basis? We must do our part if we truly desire to have victory over the flesh and we genuinely desire for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Thy will be done.

The second thing we are saying when we pray for God's will to be done is:

That God can do with us as He pleases

No matter what He chooses for us, we put ourselves at His disposal, for His use – even if it requires the sacrifice of all we are and have. Let me read that again: No matter what He chooses for us, we put ourselves at His disposal, for His use – even if it requires the sacrifice of all we are and have.

Do you want to think this through to the farthest extent of what it really means before you mindlessly repeat the words again, "Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven"?

What if God's will was for you to sell your house, sell your possessions, pack what will fit into a suitcase and go to a strange land to evangelize those who have never heard about God or even know what a Bible is?

What if it was God's will for you to experience the death of a loved one so that He could take that experience and mold you and shape you and soften your heart to the point of being of use to Him with helping others who are grieving?

What if it was God's will for you to suffer a debilitating or fatal disease so that He could show others His grace through you?

What if it was God's will for you to live meagerly without much of any material wealth or possessions to display His daily provision to those around you?

What if it was God's will for you to talk to your neighbor about Jesus?

What if?

Can God do with you as He pleases?

**Isaiah 6:8**

**"Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I, send me!'"**

Isaiah didn't know what the Lord wanted him to do, he only knew the Lord had need of someone to do his bidding. The Lord didn't have to beg and plead for help. The Lord didn't have to lay out all of the parameters of the tasks and responsibilities He had lined up. The Lord didn't have to twist Isaiah's arm or entice him with a reward or honor. The Lord didn't even have to post the need in the church bulletin week after week desperately hoping someone would respond.

The Lord just asked the question and Isaiah jumped at the opportunity to serve His Lord! He didn't care if it wasn't going to be a glamorous duty. He didn't ask if he would be able to pick and choose the dates and times he would serve. He didn't rationalize that he was too old or too young, too weak or too strong, too fat or too skinny, too new in his faith or too mature, or too anything! He didn't care and he didn't ask – all he knew was His Lord saw fit to give him the privilege and the opportunity to serve!

Why do Christians pass up the opportunity to serve when a need arises? Why do we pick over opportunities to serve the Lord like we pick over produce at the local Safeway – tossing aside the ones that don't meet with our approval? How arrogant of us to think we have the right to decide which ministry opportunities to take and which to pass over!

Pastors and elders of the Lord's churches should have waiting lists of people who want to volunteer for anything that is available. The minute an opportunity is posted or announced there should be a wave of God's servants shouting to the top of their lungs, "Here am I, send me!"

Oh God, forgive us!

Thy will be done.

The last thing we are saying when we pray for God's will to be done is:

That we will not be displeased with what God does

We may not understand; it may not make sense; there may be question after question; but we know God's will is best and we will not be displeased with what God does.

This is so hard to do. We can many times willingly make the sacrifice when we have an ample reason. We can surrender to His will when we can see the end result. We can even be pleased with the troubles and trials we face when we understand why. But oh God how do I fight back the displeasure and the disappointment when I cannot see through to the other side? How do I continue to say with my lips and believe in my heart, Thy will be done, when the pain and sorrow multiplies?

Thy will be done.

Many call God King, but they do not honor Him as King. When we truly pray for God's will to be done we are confessing that no other wills matter. My will doesn't matter, other people's will doesn't matter, and for sure Satan's will doesn't matter. Only God's will matters – there is no other will but the Lord's will.

When Jesus was in the garden, praying to the Father and asking Him to provide some other way to accomplish the redemption of mankind; pleading with the Father that He would not have to

suffer the brutality and the agony of the beating He was about to receive; begging the Father to provide another death besides the cross; He submitted and boldly said, "Not My will, but Thine be done."

When we pray the words, "Thy will be done" we are following the lead of the One who is teaching us to pray.

Thy will be done.

Let's pray.