

Cheltenham
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THE LORD'S PRAYER (4)

YOUR WILL BE DONE

Message Notes

In response to His teaching on short prayers Jesus gave us a 20-second, written prayer...

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen

1. Your will be done

Q. What is God's will?

Putting it simply, God's will is the expression of His nature towards all people in general and his people specifically

Jesus elaborates on this as he continues The Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 7:9-11, "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Q. Why isn't God's will automatically done?

If God's will is for the manifestation of his goodness then why do we so often see such a lack of goodness? If God is who he says he is why isn't his will always done?

Isn't God's will that which happens? What's the answer?

Three things...

- God is sovereign but he's also given free WILL to people

"God is in charge not in control!"

- God is sovereign and he's moving history in the right direction. His plan will ultimately be fulfilled (His will)
- God is sovereign and he's delegated the responsibility of demonstrating his will to the church, the Body of Christ

2. On earth as it is in heaven

Gk. Heaven (singular) rather than plural as earlier in the prayer; it refers to the spiritual realm and the dwelling place of God.

"In heaven, the will of God flows like a great river that has no barriers to halt its progress. On earth, however, sin interrupts the flow of God's desire for good for all people. Such a desire is his perfect will. We pray, asking that here on earth we might enjoy the perfect will of God as it is enjoyed in heaven" (Kenneth E. Bailey, Jesus through Middle Eastern eyes, P. 118)

The focus of the entire Lord's Prayer is what happens on earth. Jesus taught us to pray for God's kingdom to come to earth and his will to be done on earth. God cares for his creation and how he wants his people to care for it too...

Praying "*your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*" means that Christian people will pray and work for peace and justice amongst people and nations, economic justice and equality between rich and poor, male and female; Racial equality for people of marginalised races; protection for refugees and asylum seekers...

These are not merely political issues that don't affect my faith and me. They are deeply important matters that should concern all of us who pray for God's kingdom to come and his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, which is perfectly!

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss this statement: "God's will is the expression of His nature towards all people in general and his people specifically."
2. Why do you think God took the risk of giving free will to people?
3. Discuss this statement: *"God is in charge not in control!"*
4. It's easy to blame God for all the problems in the world but how does it change your thinking to realise He has delegated that responsibility for the care for the world and its people to the people, especially His people?
5. In practical terms, what are the key issues that concern you and what do you think you can do to make a difference? What are you already doing?
6. What tends to happen when we make important issues political? How does this hinder us from making a change?
7. How do you *"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."?*

