

SERMON: MATTHEW 6:9-13 and LUKE 11:2-4**YOUR FATHER'S WILL**

*Our Father Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. **Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.* (COMMON WORDING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.)

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us to address God as "Father." He made us, But even more importantly He mercifully adopts us, who are sinful run-aways, back into His family—because Christ suffered the penalty for us.

Jesus teaches us to ask our Father that His "name" be "hallowed," be kept holy, held in highest honor—meaning that we do not misuse His "names" or "labels" by cursing or swearing; and that we do not falsify His "good name" and reputation by teaching what the Bible does not say or by condoning false doctrine; and finally that we do not dishonor His "good name" by sinful lives and actions, in the same way a child can ruin his parents' reputation.

Jesus teaches us to ask the Father that His "kingdom" come to us. Certainly, that heaven come to us in the future, but also that in this life through His Word and the Holy Spirit working in that Word, we are made and kept as members of the Holy Christian Church, the Invisible Church, the Kingdom of all believers of all time. We ask that others be brought to faith in Christ and into His Kingdom as well.

Today we study the 3rd Petition, the 3rd Request. Jesus teaches us to pray: "Thy will be done" or "Your will be done." The word "will" in this phrase is not part of the sentence's verb, as in "It will rain soon." The word "will" in this petition is a noun—a certain thing of the Father. We ask that His "will" be done. What is any person's "will"? A person's "will" is what a person "wants." Example: "It is Mark's *will* to go to Bismarck tomorrow." In fact, what do we call the document that someone draws up to distribute possessions after death? It's called a "WILL." Grandma's Will said that her cat Puff goes to Missy. In the Lord's Prayer we are asking that our Father do His will, carry out His wishes. And why should we ask that? ? Because our Father knows best!

What is our Father's "will"? Sometimes we talk of God's "will" with a reluctant tone. "I can't see what good is going to come out of that car accident yesterday (sigh), but it was God's will." "I can't see why this season had to be so dry (sigh), but it's God's will." Do you sense the reluctance and resignation in such speaking? But do you realize that God's "will" is actually refreshing! What does God want? That you suffer? that you break your leg, get hailed out, get cancer, or covid--just to make you suffer? No! God is love. He deals with you in love, as a father with his children. When His will seems—seems—unpleasant, it is to your benefit. "*My son, do not despise the chastening [discipline] of the LORD. . . . No chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it*" (Hebrews 12:5, 11). God's will is carried out for your benefit. Let's look at it in the biggest picture.

Ultimately God's will is that you and people everywhere come to faith in Jesus for forgiveness of sins—sins which otherwise would lead only to eternal punishment—and that through faith in Jesus you have righteousness, forgiveness, and joy in heaven!! That is the big picture of God's will! "God our Savior, will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth!" (I Timothy 2:3-4). "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). God wants you in heaven! God loves you more than anyone else loves you, God's love never falters, God sees all things perfectly in your life. He sends or allows things which may seem harmful, but in reality serve to keep us close to Christ, or closer to Christ, or to bring someone else close to Jesus. "In all things God works for good of them that love Him" (Romans 8:28). The hard things of life all fit into the joyful picture of your abiding with the Lord now and forever!

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed, "Father, if it is possible, take this cup from me, Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39)." Do you think the Son of God said that in reluctance and resignation? "Father, I don't really want to do this, but because You say I must, . . ." He saw and knew how badly you needed rescuing and salvation. He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep" John 10:10-11). The "will" of God is joyous for you and me. He always has your best interest in mind. He never acts so as to drive you away from Him, His Son, His Spirit, or heaven. You may not understand it. But trust Him—as a child trusts his parents, as a blind man trusts his dog. "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all—how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things!" Trust your loving, rescuing Father with joy! He will never harm you. Thus We pray, "Father, during our lives on this earth, Your will be done. Do whatever it takes —whether we understand it or not, whether it causes pain or not—do whatever it takes to get and keep us and others on the road to heaven!"

There are opponents to God's good and gracious will. God wants us to go to heaven. The devil wants us to go to hell. His will is opposed to our Father's will. "Be sober (alert), be vigilant (be watchful), because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). "He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning . . . He is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44). The devil wants you out of God's camp, into his suffering camp. He offers earthly success to you--at the cost of your own soul. He offers a Christian congregation earthly success, at the cost of forsaking the Truth of God's Word. Satan pointed Jesus to the kingdoms of this world, "All this I will give you, if you bow down and worship me." "Get thee hence, Satan," Jesus replied. When we are praying "Thy will be done," we are praying, "Father, stomp Satan and his will. Destroy his plans."

God's will is also opposed by the sinful, unbelieving world camped in the camp of Satan. The sinful world lures you to go along with the crowd and not to be different. The world's open and easy lifestyle is appealing. The Psalm writer says, "*I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. . . . Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. . . . These are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. . . . Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then I understood their end.*" (Psalm 73:3, 7, 12, 17). The sinful world tugs at your heartstrings and soul, in opposition to God's saving will in Christ. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15-16). "Do not be deceived. Evil company corrupts good character" (I Corinthians 15:33). Do not play with fire; you will get burned. Do not run with the crowd and the sinful world. You will get hurt. Stick with Scripture and the Savior. Find good friends. Pray, "Father, while we live in this world, stop us when we start becoming part of this sinful world!" Thy will be done, even if it hurts for a while.

There is yet one more partner with Satan, also opposed to your salvation in Christ and opposed to God's will—thus forming an unholy three. It is your own sinful nature, with which you were born. By virtue of Adam's sin—we call it original sin or inherited sin—we are born opposed to God. Your flesh and blood came from Adam. "*The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another. . . . Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God* (Galatians 5:16-21). A sad list of severe transgressions that the sinful flesh loves to do. Each person is different, but how many of those sins are your weaknesses—items where you please yourself and drift away from God? "*I know that in me, that is in my flesh, nothing good dwells*" (Romans 7:18). "*The carnal [fleshly] mind is enmity against [at odds with] God and is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be*" (Romans 8:7). Our sinful flesh is our enemy. In the 3rd Petition we ask, "Father, please crush my own sinful flesh, with its pride, with its self-concern, with its desire to rebel and be on top. Father, when my flesh gets in the way of my bond to Jesus, break and hinder my own sinful flesh—for my own good."

God's "will" is well expressed in the 1st and 2nd Petitions. It is His will is that you hallow and honor His name by the way you talk, live, and defend Bible Truth. Thus, it is His will that you keep the 10 Commandments as a child of God in Christ. Which is different from keeping the commandments to get yourself to heaven. A child of God does not just obey the commandments to get a reward, to earn favor before God, or to stay out of trouble. That's how the Old Adam, the sinful nature, operates. The New Man of faith in Christ leads the Christian to obey the commandments because you have already been given heaven through God's mercy in Jesus. Do not see how close to the sin-line you can tread, do not see how much you can "get away with." You belong to your Father at the great price of the suffering and death of His Son who rose again in victory—entirely free to you! Hallow/honor His name in your conduct. ----- God's will is also that you are coming into His kingdom now and forever through the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit working in the Scriptures. Included is God's will that you take the Word of salvation in Jesus to others. "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). And in terms of God's kingdom coming, it is God's will that you be ready to leave this earth for heaven at any time. No matter how strong your ties to this life are, when the Father calls you home, answer with Paul, "I have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23). With joy and confidence pray, "Father, Thy will be done!"

In the Small Catechism Martin Luther says, "Thy will be done. *What does this mean?* God's good and gracious will certainly is done without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done with us also. *How is this done?* When God breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh, which would not let us hallow God's name, nor let His Kingdom come. And God's will is done, when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and in the faith as long as we live. This is God's gracious good will."

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---