

THY WILL BE DONE
Matthew 6:10
The Lord's Prayer – Week 5
By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A local Baptist church was adamantly opposed to bar that was being constructed in their town. Not knowing what else to do, they held an all-night prayer meeting to pray against the bar. Not long after the prayer meeting broke up, lightning struck the bar that was being constructed and consumed it in fire. The bar owner sued the church. The church hired a lawyer, claiming they had no responsibility whatsoever for the loss of the bar. The judge said, "I don't know how this this is going to turn out, but one thing is clear. The bar owner believes in the power of prayer and the church does not."
2. Prayer is powerful. That's why the Bible commands us and encourages us and reminds us to pray.
3. The Bible not only commands us to pray, but it teaches us how. Jesus taught His disciples The Lord's Prayer, which is a model prayer, a pattern for prayer. We're not just supposed to repeat it and move on. It is an outline for us to fill in; a skeleton that we have to clothe with our own words and personal requests.
4. In this sermon series we are studying each line of the Lord's Prayer to better understand it so that we can pray more effectively.
5. Let's recite the Lord's Prayer together (Mt 6:9-13, KJV): Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
6. The Lord's Prayer has three parts to it:
 - i. The preface: "Our Father which art in heaven."
 - ii. The petitions: Six in number. Some say there are seven because they separate "And lead us not into temptation," and "deliver us from evil."
 - iii. The conclusion: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."
7. So far we have looked at the preface and the first two petitions. Let's do a quick review.
8. Review:
 - i. Our Father which art in heaven. This is the preface. It reminds us that God is both our Father, and in heaven. He is both loving, and almighty. No request is too small, and no request is too big. As our Father, He wants us to talk to Him often about everything, and as our Father He is obligated to

both listen, and to care, and to help. The preface should cause us to pause and worship.

- ii. Hallowed be thy name. The first three petitions focus on God's concerns, which is a reminder that God is more important than us. Not only should we put God before others, but even before our ourselves. 'Hallowed by thy name' is a request for God to help us treat Him the way He deserves; with all the reverence, and worship, and love, and affection that He deserves. It is a prayer for God be glorified in all things.
- iii. Thy kingdom come. The second petition is a request for God to advance His rule and agenda in our lives, and all over the world. It is prayer for unbelievers to get saved, and for believers to become more devoted to the Kingship of Jesus Christ.

9. Today we will look at the third petition.

10. **Matthew 6:10b** "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

II. TWO PARTS TO THE THIRD PETITION¹

1. Active obedience.

- i. J.I. Packer says that God's will means two things in this context (*Praying the Lord's Prayer*, p. 59):
 - 1. His command to His people.
 - 2. His purpose for events.
- ii. When it comes to God's commands, we are praying for "God to teach us all that we should do and make us both willing and able for the task (*Praying the Lord's Prayer*, p. 59)." We are asking God to make us more obedient to His word. To give us a spirit of obedience, a heart of obedience, an attitude of obedience.
- iii. **The Westminster Shorter Catechism** (Q103) says, "What do we pray for in the third petition? In the third petition, which is, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven, we pray, that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven."
- iv. Why pray for more obedience?
 - 1. Obedience is the key to loving God.
 - a. **John 14:15** "If you love me, you will keep my commands."
 - b. What does it look like to love God? To obey Him. You can give all your money to the church, you can sing praise songs, you can go to church every Sunday, but if you don't obey God, you don't love Him.
 - 2. Obedience is the key to intimacy with God.

¹ For this sermon, I rely heavily upon the work of the Puritan Thomas Watson's (1620-1680) book on the Lord's Prayer.

- a. **John 14:21** “The one who has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I also will love him and will reveal myself to him.”
 - b. Some people want to be closer to God, to know Him more, to go deeper with God, and they say, “God, reveal Yourself to me, and then I’ll obey you.” God says the opposite. “The more you obey me, the more I will reveal myself to you.”
- 3. Obedience is the key to blessing.
 - a. **James 1:25** “But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.”
 - b. Some people say, “God, if you bless me, then I’ll obey you.” God says, “Obey me, and then I’ll bless you.”
- 4. Obedience is the key to usefulness.
 - a. **2 Timothy 2:21** “So if anyone purifies himself from anything dishonorable, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”
 - b. We wonder why God isn’t using us more? God only uses His obedient children.
- 5. Obedience is the key to answered prayer.
 - a. **John 9:31** “We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, he listens to him.”
 - b. People often say, “God, answer my prayer, and then I’ll obey you.” God says, “Obey me, and then I’ll listen to your prayer.”
- 6. Obedience is the key to happiness.
 - a. **Psalms 119:1** “How happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk according to the LORD’S instruction.”
- 7. Obedience is the key to Christlikeness.
 - a. **John 6:38** “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.”
- 8. Obedience is the key to heaven.
 - a. **Matthew 7:21** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”
 - b. “I thought we were saved by faith, not works.” Yes, but true faith works. True faith is obedient. True faith is evidenced by obedience.
 - c. Nobody is perfect, but there is an obedient attitude that proves your salvation:
 - i. You mourn for your lack of obedience.
 - ii. You strive for obedience.
 - iii. You pray for help for obedience.

- v. In order to be more obedient, we need to pray for two things:
 - 1. Knowledge.
 - a. This is a prayer for God to help you learn and understand His will. You cannot obey what you do not know.
 - b. And if you are going to pray for knowledge, you must realize that you are 90% of the answer to that prayer. You must take the initiative and put in the effort to study your Bible.
 - 2. Faith.
 - a. Why do we struggle to obey God? Because we struggle to believe. All sin comes from a lack of faith.
 - b. If we are going to be obedient, and make this request with sincerity, there are two attributes of God that we must know and believe:
 - i. The wisdom of God. God knows everything about everything (Jer 10:12). He knows you better than yourself. He knows what you need. He knows what will make you happy. He knows the future. He knows what is best.
 - ii. The love of God. God is love (1 Jn 4:8). He always does what is best for you. His commands are for your good, not for your harm.
 - c. **Kevin DeYoung** wrote, "It takes faith to die to ourselves. We will not reject our wills unless we believe that God's will is better... When we pray 'Your will be done,' we are confessing our confidence that God knows best, that His plans are good, that His way is always the right way." (*The Good News We Almost Forgot*, 227.)
 - d. To grow in obedience, you have to believe that "the sweetest place in the world to be s in the will of God" (R.T. Kendall, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 234).
- vi. Not only does this verse tell us to pray for obedience, but it tells us the kind (or manner) of obedience we are to pray for – "in earth, as it is in heaven." How is God's will done in heaven? Think of the angels and the saints in heaven; they obey God perfectly. Let's get more specific.
- vii. How does God want us to obey Him?
 - 1. Obey COMPLETELY. Obey every command; don't leave any out. **Jeremiah 20:23** "Follow every way I command you so that it may go well with you."
 - 2. Obey CONSTANTLY. Not just Sunday, but every day. Not just at church, but everywhere. Not just with others, but even when you are

alone. **Psalm 119:44** "I will always obey your instruction, forever and ever."

3. Obey CAREFULLY. Study the Scriptures diligently so that you obey all of God's word exactly as He has directed. Carefully consider how God would have you apply His commands to your life. **Deuteronomy 8:1** "Carefully follow every command I am giving you today"
4. Obey CURRENTLY. Delayed obedience is disobedience. **Psalm 119:6** "I hurried, not hesitating to keep your commands."
5. Obey COURAGEOUSLY. No matter the cost. Even if you are the only one. **Joshua 1:7** "Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go."
6. Obey CHEERFULLY. Not with a bad attitude, but with joy, trusting the God's commands are for your good and God's glory. **Philippians 2:14** "Do everything without grumbling and arguing."
7. Obey CHIEFLY. Obey Christ before any human authority. His will comes first. **Acts 5:29** "Peter and the apostles replied, 'We must obey God rather than people.'"
8. Obey CHRISTIANLY. Do not trust in your obedience for salvation, but only in Christ. Do not take pride in your obedience, but boast only in the cross. **Philippians 3:3** "For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in the flesh."

viii. So "Thy will be done" is first the prayer for active obedience.

2. Passive obedience.

- i. "Thy will be done" is also a prayer for passive obedience.
- ii. Remember, God's will in this context refers to two things:
 1. His command to His people.
 2. His purpose for events. In other words, sometimes it is God's will for His people to suffer. Sometimes God doesn't immediately answer our prayers for healing, for deliverance, for success. His will, His purpose, His plan at times is for you to remain under pressure.
- iii. Therefore, "Thy will be done" is a prayer for God to help you be passively obedient.
- iv. **J.I. Packer** wrote, "'Thy will be done' expresses the spirit of meekness, which accepts without complaining whatever God sends, or fails to send (*Praying the Lord's Prayer*, 59)."
- v. Thomas Watson calls this "patient submission." He says this is a prayer "that we may submit to God's will patiently, in whatever He inflicts."

- vi. In other words, when we are going through a hard time, we can pray, “Lord, get me out of this.” But then we need to say, “But if You want me to stay here, Thy will be done. Help me to patiently submit to your purpose and plan.”
- vii. The best example of this in the Bible is Jesus. On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus knew what awaited Him. He knew the pain that He was going to experience. So He prayed for deliverance. Basically, He said, “If there’s a way to save humanity without me having to endure the cross, deliver me from this.” Let’s look at what happened.
- viii. **Matthew 26:39** Going a little farther, he fell facedown and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”
- ix. This is the prayer of passive obedience, or patient submission. “Lord, if this is what You want for me, then Your will be done.”
- x. **R.C. Sproul** writes that it is a good thing to add, "If it be Your will," to our prayers. "We are to come to the presence of God in boldness, but never in arrogance." We are not free to name and claim those things that God has not specifically promised in Scripture, such as getting a raise, purchasing a home, or finding healing from a disease. Sproul writes, "We are to come to God and tell Him what we want, but we must trust Him to give the answer that is best for us." (The Prayer of the Lord, 59.)
- xi. The Puritan **Thomas Watson** wrote a lot about this in his book on the Lord’s Prayer. He said, “A Christian, when under any disastrous providence, should lie quietly at God's feet and say, "May your will be done.""
- xii. First, Thomas Watson asks, “What accompanies patient submission to God’s will?” He mentions three things.
 1. You can be deeply sensible of affliction. It’s okay to admit, “This hurts. This is painful. This is unpleasant. This is not fun. This is hard.” Patient submission doesn’t say, “This doesn’t matter. I don’t care. Whatever. This doesn’t bother me.” It’s okay to feel and admit pain and sadness.
 2. You may weep under affliction. Jesus wept when His friend Lazarus died.
 3. You may complain. He cites **Psalm 142:1-2**. “I cry aloud to the Lord; I plead aloud to the Lord for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; I reveal my trouble to him.” However, Watson points out that this is a complaining to God, not about God. We’re not complaining that God is unjust, unfair, unloving, unfaithful, etc. This is like a child complaining to her father, “Daddy, I’m hungry; I’m thirsty; I’m tired; my feet hurt, etc.”

- xiii. Second, Watson asks, “What is inconsistent with patient submission to God’s will?” He gives four things.
 1. Discontentment with God’s dealings. By this He means a mixture of grief and anger. In other words, you are refusing to rejoice in the Lord; you are refusing to thank God; you are refusing to praise God. Instead, you are angry with God.
 2. Murmuring. Complaining against God. “God is wrong for letting this happen.”
 3. Disquietness. Watson is referring to almost freaking out, or getting so emotionally worked up that you cannot pray or praise God.
 4. Self-justification. This is telling God, “I didn’t deserve this. I deserved better. You owe me more than this.”
- xiv. Finally, Watson asks, “What is patient submission to God’s will?” He gives three things.
 1. Acknowledging God’s hand. This is acknowledging that nothing can happen to you unless God allows it. God could have prevented this; and if He wanted, He could instantly deliver you. But for some reason, He is choosing to let you suffer for a while. Job is a good example of this. **Job 1:20** “The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”
 2. Justifying God. It is believing that even though God is letting you suffer, He is still good, and loving, and righteous, and fair, and just. Against, Job is a good example. **Job 1:20** “The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” We also see an example of this in the book of Psalms. **Psalms 22:2-3** “My God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, by night, yet I have no rest. But you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.” Even though God isn’t answering his prayer, the Psalmist says, “But you are holy.”
 3. Accepting the punishment. This doesn’t mean that suffering is always a punishment, or that it is always the result of our own sin. But in a way, all suffering is a form of discipline in that God uses it to grow us. And so, accepting the punishment means saying, “This is good for me. If God wants me to experience this, then I must need it. This is good for me. This is what is best.”

III. CONCLUSION

1. So, the request ‘Thy will be done’ is a prayer for two things: Active obedience, and passive obedience. “Heavenly Father, I submit to Your commands. And I submit to Your to your plan. Help me. Give me strength.”
2. Now let me give you the good news. God demands and deserves perfect obedience, but we’ve all sinned and deserve punishment. But God is so good that He has provided a way for us to be forgiven, and a way for us to find the strength to grow in

obedience. What is this way? God sent His Son, Jesus, to be punished for us when He died on the cross and rose again. If we will believe in Jesus, God will forgive us and give us eternal life. At the same time, when we decide to believe in Jesus, God will begin to strengthen us and give us the ability to grow in obedience.

3. What does it mean to believe in Jesus and become a Christian?
 - i. Admit you are a sinner in need of a Savior.
 - ii. Believe in Jesus Christ, that He died and rose again for you.
 - iii. Call on Jesus to be your Savior and Boss.