

DEVOTIONAL AID FOR 16 AUGUST 2021 – 22 AUGUST 2021



**UPPER
HUNTER**
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Dear church family,

The third request in the Lord's Prayer is this: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What does that mean? Here, I'm going to quote Kevin DeYoung extensively.

Few phrases are more confusing to the Christians than "the will of God." The confusion is partly owing to the variety of uses in the Bible. On the one hand, God works all things according to the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). God's will, in this sense, cannot be overturned, negated, or thwarted. What God wills will come to pass. But on the other hand, we must pray for God's will to be done. The fact that we must pray for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven implies that the will of God, in this sense, can be disobeyed and ignored.

We can think of these two sides of God's will as His will of decree and His will of desire. In the mystery of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, God superintends His creation down to the fine details of hairs and sparrows, and yet His commands can be disregarded by His rebellious creatures.

The Lord's Prayer is concerned with God's will of desire. In heaven the angels always do God's bidding and the saints ever live to sing His praises. There is perfect holiness, perfect obedience, and perfect worship. Jesus commands us, therefore, to pray that God's will be done on earth just as it is in heaven.¹

Knowing the distinction DeYoung makes about God's will of decree and desire (sometimes called decretive will and prescriptive will of God) is helpful in not only praying this request in the Lord's Prayer, but also in reading the Bible in general. (For more information, see <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/examining-preceptive-will-god/>)

The problem is that we who are on earth resist and disobey God's will of desire. This includes us Christians. So we must pray that God's will be done on earth instead of our will that is not aligned with God's will. We must pray trusting that God's will is better than our clever ideas. We must also pray and obey God's will ourselves.

May God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Yours in Christ,

Timothy Lee

<https://www.upperhunterpc.com>

¹ Kevin DeYoung, *The Good News We Almost Forgot*, p227.

THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM²

Lord's Day 49

Q124) What does the third request mean?

A) "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" means, help us and all people to reject our own wills and to obey Your will without any back talk. Your will alone is good. Help us all to carry out the work we are called to, as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven.

LUKE 22:42

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."

Jesus's prayer at Gethsemane is an amazing encouragement for us as we try to submit to God's will. Jesus, as a perfect and sinless human, did not want to rebel against God's will. Still, Jesus was not going to enjoy the pain and shame of the cross. He was not looking forward to drinking the cup of wrath even when it was from God His Father and for the salvation of multitudes. So Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me". But how wonderful that Jesus did not stop there, but continued, "yet not my will, but yours be done." Jesus came to do God's will and He perfectly fulfilled it. This prayer of Jesus shows us that we have a Saviour who understands our weaknesses and struggles in submitting to God's will. It also means that we are never being asked to do more than what our Lord Jesus has done already. We can submit to God's will knowing His will for Jesus was accomplished so I am now free from the wrath of God.

Prayer

Father in heaven, thank you for Jesus who submitted to your will perfectly, even going to the cross for me. Please help me to see that you are perfectly good, wise, and powerful so I may be able to trust you and submit to your will. Help me when I struggle and wander away from the path you have set before me. May your will be done in my life. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.

MATTHEW 7:21-23

Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Arguably the most terrifying words of Jesus are here in Matthew 7:21-23. Jesus speaks of those who claimed to be Jesus's followers yet were never truly His. These people called Jesus "Lord" and they even did many mighty works in His name. Yet, in the final analysis they did not do the will of God. How do we treat the will of God? Do we obey God's commands? Do we align our wills to our heavenly Father's?

Prayer

Gracious Father, I confess that I often struggle to obey your will. I struggle to trust your goodness and I am tempted to think I know what is better. I fail to delight in your perfect will. Please forgive me and change me. Increase my faith and understanding, and even when I do not fully understand, enable me to obey your will. In Jesus's name I pray, amen.

² The text of the Catechism is usually from <https://threeforms.org/heidelberg-catechism/>, but time to time, for the sake of clarity, I have also adopted the translation used in *The Good News We Almost Forgot* by Kevin DeYoung.