

Place Lurgan Baptist 14:6:2009

Reading: Isaiah 14:12-15 Matthew 6:9-10

THE PATTERN PRAYER

5. THE WILL OF GOD, NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS, NOTHING ELSE

Florence Nightingale at thirty years of age, wrote in her diary, “ *I am thirty years of age, the age at which Christ began His mission. Now no more childish things, now no more vain things, now Lord let me think only of Thy will.* ” In a diary Jim Elliot murdered in South America by the Auca Indians wrote these words, “ ***God I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life. Consume my life, My God for it is Thine, I seek not a long life but a full one like you, Lord Jesus.*** ” Miriam Booth the daughter of the founder of the Salvation Army was brilliant and cultured lady. Her ministry had begun with promise of great success for she was being wonderfully used of the Lord. In a short while however, her health completely broke down and she was brought to the point of death. A sympathetic friend spoke to her one day about the tragedy of being laid aside, and the fact that she was being prevented from doing the Lord’s work. Without a look of contentment on her face Miriam Booth said, “ ***It is wonderful to do the Lord’s work, but it is greater still to do the Lord’s will.*** ”

At a meeting of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in the U.S.A. Bobby Richardson prayed a prayer which is a

classic, “ ***Dear God, your will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.*** ” We have noticed that this Pattern Prayer begins with God and His Glory. Look at the three fold occurrence of the word “ *Thy.* ” “ *Thy name, Thy kingdom, Thy will.* ” You see, this prayer begins by giving God His proper place. It begins with God’s interests not ours. God’s name, God’s kingdom and God’s will, Robert Law says, “ **Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man’s will done in heaven but for getting God’s will done on earth.** ” My prayer is not some sort of exercise where we bent God’s will to fit our will. Prayer is just simply finding the will of God and getting in on it. Do you recall what John says, “ *And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us.* ” (1 Jn 5:14) Isn’t that wonderful ? If we ask according to the will of God, not trying to superimpose our will upon Him, not asking Him, to rubberstamp what we wish, but “ *if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us.* ” But John does not stop there. He says, “ *And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we desired of Him.* ” (1 Jn 5:15)

So the key to answered prayer is to know and to do the will of God. But then it’s hard to pray “ *Thy will be done.* ” Why is that ? Because the major sin of the human heart is pride. Was it not pride that brought about the downfall of the devil ? I mean Lucifer pitted his will against God’s will. Five times he said, “ *I will, I will, I will, I will, I will.* ” Satan began to be Satan when he said to the Father “ ***Not thy will but mine be done.*** ” That’s why there is so much heartache on the earth, because

Satan deceived Eve, and Eve said to God, “ *Not Thy will but mine be done.* ” Adam said to God, “ *Not Thy will but mine be done.* ” They didn’t use those exact words, but that’s what their actions said, when they took their will and put their will against the will of God. And all sin is just simply saying “ *I will.* ” One of the most tragic songs I know is Frank Sinatra’s “ ***I did it my way.*** ” Can you imagine standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ and saying to the Lord, “ *I did it my way.* ” Only for Him to say to you, “ *Yes and here was My will for your life. Look how I would have used you and blessed you, if only you had allowed My will to conquer you.* ” Now I want to talk to you this about “ **The will of God, nothing more, nothing less, nothing less.** ”

(1) DEFINING THE WILL OF GOD

One Bible teacher says when you pray “ *Thy will be done,* ” you are praying for three things. The consummation of the world, *God’s Comprehensive Will.* The salvation of the lost, *God’s Compassionate Will,* the obedience of every believer to God’s commands, *God’s Commanding Will.* It’s this last aspect that we are mostly concerned with this ! God’s revealed will in the Scriptures. You see, when we pray “ *Thy will be done,* ” we are praying that we may,

(a) ACCOMPLISH GOD’S WILL ACTIVELY:

We are praying for Active Obedience: We are praying that we might submit to all of God’s commands and live holy

lives. Of course we must know His will before we can do it. This is what Paul prayed for the Colossian Christians. He says “ *We do not cease to pray for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will.* ” (Col 1:9) Knowledge is the eye that must direct the foot of obedience, but though knowledge is required yet knowing God’s will is not enough, we must do it. Knowing God’s will might make you admired, but doing God’s will makes you blessed. Are you doing God’s will ? It might well be said that the phrase “ *Thy will be done,* ” is not only one of the petitions the Saviour taught His disciples to pray but it was the ruling principle of Christ’s own life. In John’s gospel especially the Lord Jesus is presented as the One who came into the world to do the will of God.

Do you recall at Sychar’s well He said, “ *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work.* ” (Jn 4:34) Do you remember what He said to the Jews ? “ *I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me.* ” (5:30 6:38) Then in dark Gethsemane as He anticipates that awful cup He cries, “ *Father if Thou be willing remove this cup from Me, nevertheless not my will but thine be done.* ” (Lk 22:42) Christ accomplished God’s will actively. You know, when we turn to the pages of the New Testament we discover that there is “ *my will.* ” (Lk 22:42) which again and again must give way to His will. Then again there is the “ *will of society,* ” in which we live. Paul talks about it like this “ *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world.* ” (Eph 2:2) Doing what others

do. Then again there is the will of the Devil. Do we not read of those who are “*taken captive by him at his will*?” (2 Tim 2:26) “*My will,*” “*The will of others,*” “*The Devil’s will,*” “*The will of God.*” My whose will are you doing ? You see, as I read the Word I get to know God’s will Generally: I mean I know its God’s will to get baptized, to remember the Lord, to submit to the authority of a local church, to read the Word, to seek God’s face, to love my fellow believer. My is your life according to God’s will ? I mean does the totality of your life square with the will of God ? (Eph 4:30-32) Do you always speak graciously ? (Col 4:6) Ladies, are you dressing modestly ? (1 Tim 2:9) Or does your dress emphasize your shape, and thus places temptation in someone’s way. My is our personal life, home life, business life in keeping with God’s will ? You see, when we pray “*Thy will be done,*” (a) But we are praying that we may,

(b) ACCEPT GOD’S WILL PATIENTLY:

We are praying for Passive Obedience: For this phrase is not only to be understood in doing God’s will in what He commands but in yielding to God’s will in what He inflicts. Try to visualize the following scenes in your mind. A young Christian girl sits in a lonely room thinking of the circumstances that have recently come to pass. Plans had been formulated for a wedding with the boy of her dreams but seemingly out of nowhere conflicts arose and there will be no wedding. For years a Christian man has worked hard and performed his job well. Climbing the ladder of success has not been easy. Finally the opportunity has come for which he has been waiting.

The position he has always wanted has become available. Although he is in line for the promotion a kid right out of university nudges him aside and shatters his dreams. *Have we all not known circumstances just like these ? How are we to react ? What are we to do ?* We are still to pray “*Thy will be done, and seek God’s all sufficient grace.*” For Scripture teaches that God is too wise to make mistakes, too loving to be unkind, and too powerful to be hindered in His purposes. ***Those who see the hand of God in everything can leave everything in the hand of God.*** Is this not what Eli did ? When he heard about the judgment that was coming on his household he said “*It is the Lord let Him do what seemeth Him good.*” (1 Sam 3:18) Is this not what Job did ? Did Job did not see God in all that befell him ? My he looks beyond second causes and he sees God in the thing. What a man. He says, “*the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away blessed be the name of the Lord.*” (Job 1:21) Is this not what Paul’s friends did ? Paul was at Caesarea, but determined to go to Jerusalem. His friends were concerned for his very life, but when they could not dissuade him, they said, “*the will of the Lord be done.*” (Acts 21:14)

Sometimes God puts us in the crucible of poverty (2 Kings 4:2) reproach (Ps 69:20) sickness (2 Cor 12:9) bereavement (Ezek 24:16 Ps 28:2) Is it not then that we need to learn to patiently submit to His will ? In the days of the Covenanters terrible things happened in Scotland, as the government by the most savage measures tried to crush the Covenanters out of existence. Richard Cameron was one of the most famous and one of the greatest of them. They captured Richard Cameron’s son.

The son had notably beautiful hands. They cut off the hands and sent them to his father. Richard Cameron recognized them immediately. “ *They are my son’s,* ” he said “ *my own dear son’s. It is the Lord’s will and good is the will of the Lord. He has never wronged me or mine.* ” My in many cases, passively submitting to the will of God can be harder than actually doing it. Yet how wonderful to know that,

**My times are in Thy hand
Why should I doubt or fear ?
My Father’s hand will never cause
His child a needless tear**

(2) DISCERNING THE WILL OF GOD

You see, its one thing to be committed to doing God’s will, but how do we discern it in the first place ? George Mueller said, “ *I never remember a period that I ever sincerely and patiently sought to know the will of God by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, through the instrumentality of the Word of God, but I have been always directed aright. But if honesty of heart and uprightness before God were lacking, or if I did not patiently wait upon God for instruction, or if I preferred the counsel of my fellow men to the declarations of the Word of the living God, I made great mistakes.* ” So how are we going to discern the will of God ? Through,

(a) SACRIFICIAL CONSECRATION:

Look at (Rom 12:1-2) The word “ *prove,* ” means to find out for yourself in actual experience. In other words, when you lay your life on the altar as a living sacrifice, when your will is dead, then God’s will can be known. You say, “ *what exactly is a living sacrifice ?* ” Do you recall the command that came to Abraham ? “ *Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee off.* ” (Gen 22:2) At God’s command he took his son, give him some wood to carry on his back, and went to Mount Moriah to offer him as a sacrifice. During the trip, Abraham was probably thinking “ *This is strange Lord. You want me to slay my son on an altar, yet He is supposed to be the fulfillment of Your covenant, promising me many descendants. Lord, that does not make sense.* ”

Do you see what Abraham was sacrificing ? He was sacrificing his future. For all his aspirations, hopes, and dreams were centered in Isaac. But Abraham went up Mount Moriah, strapped Isaac to the altar, and almost plunged a knife into his heart before the Lord stopped him. (Gen 22:9-12) My if Abraham had killed his son, Isaac would have been a dead sacrifice, but Abraham would have been a living one. Why ? Because he would have crucified all his dreams, goals, and desires. You see, it was not Isaac God wanted, it was Abraham. My God does not want your Isaac’s, He wants you. Its really unthinkable that we believers should hold back our lives, yet so many do. Do you know there are so many of us who are afraid to say,

“ There it is, Lord, I just take hands off. I take hands off the ownership of my property, I take hands off the right to guide my children. I take hands off my right to live. I take hands off the right to marry or stay single, whatever it is Lord, I give it to you it is Thine.” Have you done that ? Perhaps you’re saying, “ *Lord show me your will, so I can know whether I want to do it or not.* ” My you’ll never know His will that way. The Lord Himself says, “ *If any man will do His will he shall know* ” (Jn 7:17) If you are willing God will reveal, if you are unwilling, God will withhold. (a) Do you know anything about it ? Have you come from the place where you are praying “ *Thy will be changed,* ” to the place where you can say “ *Thy will be done ?* ” How can we discern the will of God ? (a)

(b) SCRIPTURAL MEDITATION:

The Lord Jesus said, “ *If ye abide in me and my words abide in you ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.* ” (Jn 15:7) What are His words ? The Bible. These are His words. You cannot separate the Lord of the Word from the Word of the Lord. So you are to have Him in you and His words in you. Now in God’s Word is wisdom, knowledge, and guidance to know God’s will. So you must saturate yourself with the Word of God. My The way to be powerful in prayer, the way to know God’s will for your life is to know the Word of God. A desire to know and to do the will of God can only be matched by an equal desire to carefully, prayerfully, and systematically study the pages of Holy Scripture. You see, you cannot know the will of God without knowing the Word of God.

Do you know why so many Christians are floundering around today ? It’s because they don’t God’s Word. Yet the psalmist said, “ *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.* ” (119:105) My God’s Word will illumine you and guide you. Tell me, are you like the blessed man in the opening psalm ? Is your delight in the law of the Lord ? In His law do you meditate day and night ? (a) (b)

(c) SPIRITUAL DOMINATION:

For Paul says “ *as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.* ” (Rom 8:14) You see, the Spirit of God is there to lead us. The Lord Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the “ *Comforter,* ” the “ *paracletos,* ” what it really means is “ *a guide who walks by your side.* ” Thank God for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. You know sometimes the *Holy Spirit Restrains:* (Acts 16:7) We get that inward impression “ *Don’t do that.* ” Other times the *Holy Spirit Constrains:* (Acts 16:10) “ *Do that.* ” Have you not known His ministry in your life ? If you haven’t is it because you are not filled with the Spirit ? Paul says, “ *Wherefore be ye not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is.* ” (Eph 5:17) Paul says, “ *Don’t be unwise. You are to know the will of the Lord.* ” But how are we to know the will of the Lord ? Well, he continues, “ *And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.* ” (Eph 5:18) My to know the will of God and to do the will of God we must be dominated and filled with the Spirit of God.

Are you consciously filled with the Spirit ? Have you yielded all to Him ? Christ says, “ *After this manner*,” We have looked at (1) (2) but what about

(3) DOING THE WILL OF GOD

What did Christ teach us to pray ? “ *Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*” (6:9-10)

Thy will be what ? Done. The will of God is something that you do. In this petition we recognize that the will of God is not a matter for discussion but for action. When Field Marshal Montgomery assumed command of the British Army in North Africa, he set about laying the foundation for the great victories in the desert which marked the turning point in the Second World War. He described one of the lessons he had to get across to his officers and men: “ *Orders not longer formed the basis for discussion but for action previously had been queried by subordinates right down the line. I was determined to stop that state of affairs at once.*” You see, Monte was teaching his army a lesson long acknowledged in the navy. To the serving man there are only two possibilities: duty or mutiny. My is it not the same in the service of God ? We are called to unquestioning obedience. “ *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*”

“ *As,*” means “ *in like manner.*” The question is, how do they do the will of God in heaven ? Think of the angels. How do they do God’s will ?

(a) COMPLETELY:

They do all that God commands, they leave nothing of His will undone. David wrote, “ *Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.*” (Ps 103:20) How is God’s will done in heaven ? Half-heartedly ? Incomplete. No. Completely. Do you recall the first king in Israel who lost his crown because of incomplete obedience ? I mean God’s Word to Saul was “ *Go, smite, utterly destroy but Saul spared.*” (1 Sam 15:18) He was so unlike David of whom God said, “ *I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart which shall fulfill all my will.*” (Acts 13:22) My are you like Saul or David ? Don’t give the Lord half. Give Him all. Don’t obey in some area and not in another. You say, “ *Well I am doing all right in my church life, but not in business life.*” Then God’s will is not being done in your life. You say, “ *I am doing all right in my business life, but not in my home life.*” My give it all to Him. Is there any area in your life where you cannot say, “ *Lord Thy will be done ?*” (a)

(b) UNQUESTIONINGLY:

The angels don’t discuss with God what they plan to do. They don’t debate with Him. On earth the Lord often needs to prod us before we get moving, but in heaven there is an unwavering, unquestioning commitment to do God’s will. My do you ever question God’s will ? Do you ever seek to usurp His will ? To change it ? Amy Carmichael the 20th century missionary to India wrote,

**And shall I pray to change Thy will my Father
Until it be according to mine
But no, Lord, no, that shall never be
Rather I pray Thee blend my human will with Thine**

(c) **WILLINGLY:**

Do you know something ? Many of us don't want to pray " *Thy will be done,*" because we are afraid that the will of God means ministry in some difficult church, or missionary in some distant country. We're afraid that as soon we say " *Lord, You can do with me whatever You want with me,*" that He's going to send us to the most difficult place in the world. Wait a minute. Is He that kind of Father ? Remember how we are to pray. Not " *Our Tyrant which art in heaven,*" but " *Our Father which art in heaven.*" My He loves you more than any earthly Father ever loved a child. Do you think that God is up in heaven waiting for you to say " **yes,**" to Him so He can do the worst thing in the world to you ? I don't think so. That's one of the enemy's lies. He wants us to believe that if we ask for God's will in our lives we're signing up for something awful. But Paul says that God's will is " *good, acceptable and perfect.*" My God's will is:

Good: What God plans for us will be the very best that omniscient wisdom and divine love can conceive.

Acceptable: Indeed He will not ask you to take a step for which you are not ready. (1 Jn 5:3)

Perfect: No plan of ours can improve on the plan of God. I see only bits and pieces, the Lord sees the whole. I measure things by present vision. He sees past, present, and future in its total context as related to eternity. He sees when, where, and why we touch the lives of others.

(1) (2) (3) I wonder can you now utter these words, " *Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,*"? Richard Baxter was a great Puritan thinker and writer. He used to write these words whenever he was asked to sign one of his books.

Lord, what Thou wilt, where Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt.

In the old Puritan manner of speaking he was saying, " **Lord whatever you want, wherever you want it, and whenever you want it, that's what I want.**"

Is this what you want ? The will of God nothing more, nothing less, nothing else. Are you willing to pray,

**Have Thine own way Lord
Have Thine own way
Thou art the Potter
I am the clay
Mould me and make me
After Thy will
While I am waiting
Yielded and still**

