

**THY WILL BE DONE**  
**Matthew 18:12-14**

**Lord's Prayer Lenten Series**  
**March 14, 2012**  
**Pastor Nathan J. Thompson**

When we pray the petition, “Thy Will Be Done,” it usually causes us to ask the question “What is God’s Will?” Is it God’s will that tragedies and problems happen in this world? Is it God’s will that I be rich and famous? What does it mean to pray for God’s will to be done?

Over the years I have sometimes visited with people who, after a loved one has died from cancer or a heart attack, have said to me that this death is God’s will. And yet whenever I hear people say things like this I cringe. I cringe because I don’t know a God who does those kinds of things.

The God I know and believe in is a God who, as Matthew 18 states, whose will it is that no one would perish. And as 1 Timothy 2 states, *“This is good, and pleases our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.”* (1 Tim. 2:3-4)

And yet this Biblical view of God, unfortunately, does not seem to be the prevailing attitude among large numbers of people today. It seems to be a pretty dominant belief that deaths, and accidents, and sickness are all somehow God’s will.

Some insurance policies on property say they will cover everything except what they call an “act of God.” And by that they mean some calamitous event like a flood, an earthquake, a tornado. While God is surely the creator and ruler of the universe the implication is that through these acts of nature God is pouring down his destruction upon us.

However for us to say that sorrow, a tragic death, an incurable disease, an air disaster are “acts of God” is blasphemy. I mean what kind of a God would that be? Who would ever want to pray to a God like that? Who would ever want to pray, “Thy will be done?”

In my understanding and belief God is just the opposite. It is his will that no one should perish—but rather that every person should come to repentance and faith. I believe that God is grieved when a flood or tornado strikes a city and people are killed and made homeless.

I believe God is grieved when four college students are killed on a snowy freeway and when someone is killed by a drunk driver. He is also grieved, I believe, when we personally live lives of self-destruction through our overindulgence in work, pleasure, food, alcohol, or drugs.

God has a master plan for this world. He created the heavens and earth, and he created man and woman to enjoy all this. His plan was that people should live in peace and harmony with each other. Not one bit of envy, jealousy, evil or hatred was supposed to exist between anyone. God so loved the world that his desire was that we should love one another.

There would be no wars if this were followed. There would be no broken homes or marriages. There would be no political corruption or false and hate filled attacks; no adultery, no injustice, no prejudice against different races of people. It was God's plan from the beginning that human beings should be free from disease, from unhappiness, and even from death.

God created the heavens, and earth, and he saw that it was very good. He made the sun, the moon and stars, and he saw it was very good. Then he created the waters and fish of the sea, the birds of the air and God saw that it was very good.

Next it was the animals—both wild and domestic. And then the crown and glory of his creation was when he created man and woman. It says that he created them in his own image. And God looked on all he had made and it was very, very good.

This, my friends, was God's will and plan. It was his will that all of his creation should live in harmony with him—to love him; to enjoy and serve him forever. Ah but God's plan was spoiled. Man and woman chose to wreck these plans of God by going their own way. They decided to follow the tempter and choose their own will rather than God's will.

The Apostle Paul says in Romans 5:12 that *“just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.”* The truth is that if man and woman, if Adam & Eve, had not messed up God's plan. If sin had not come God would still be able to look at creation and see that it is very good.

Now, however, we can only dream of a warless world. We can only dream of a crime free and trouble free life. We can only hope that our sorrows and our illnesses will not be too severe. All of these are now part of this fallen world and we cannot escape them. They are no respecter of people. The sun shines and the rain falls on the just and the unjust alike.

That is why, my friends, I hitch my wagon to Jesus Christ. God looked at this mess which we had made and his love overflowed. Actually his love exploded. Jesus, God's son, came to rescue us from this mess. He came to rescue us from sin and worry, and to help us live not under the messy circumstances of life but on top of them.

In Jesus the restoration process toward God's original plan is underway in the lives of all those people who believe in him. We share his love, his forgiveness, his newness. And that gives us hope. I wouldn't miss it for anything—and I hope you won't either.

This is why it is so important for us to learn something about God's will. If we do we will discover that it is not a destructive, dictator type of will. God loves us and has a plan for your life and mine. He desires that we be his own, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him.

So God's basic will and plan for your life is easy to define. It is his will that none of us should perish, and that we should repent and come to know him. It is summed up in the words of Jesus where he said, *“I came that you might have life and have it more abundantly.”* In a nutshell it means that God's will is that each one of us claim Jesus as our Savior by faith.

And with Jesus as our Savior we are then open to God's will for the rest of our lives. Oh, it may not always be that obvious what exactly his will is. God doesn't normally send us a direct text or e-mail message concerning where we should live, or go to college, or what exact decision we should make in a crisis situation.

And yet as our hearts are open to him. As we look for guidance through studying his Word, through prayer, and through patient waiting often his will comes to us clear and strong. Sometimes God speaks through others, and sometimes God lets us rely on our own wisdom and intuition.

That is why we pray, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." I firmly believe that it is only as we live by faith and trust in Jesus that God leads us to do his will.

There is a story about a very wise man who always gave the right answers to every question. One day a boy sought to trap him. He held a live bird in his hand and said, "Mr. Wiseman is this bird in my hand alive or is it dead?" Now if the wise man said it was dead the boy would open his hand and let the little bird fly away.

If the wise man said it was alive he would give his hands a quick squeeze and open them to show a dead bird. Strangely the wise man did not look at the boy's hands at all. Instead he looked full into the boy's eyes and quietly said, "My son, it is whatever you wish it to be."

My friends the same thing is true of us. The life we live is one we choose to live. We can either follow God's will by believing in him or we can follow our own will. We can continue to live in the sinful mess of this world without a Savior to give us forgiveness and hope. The choice is yours and mine.

Sometimes I hear people say, "I can't believe in a God who causes children to die in accidents or people to get cancer." They do this to try and prove there is no God. My response however is, "I can't either believe in a God like that."

The God I know and love is a God who wants each one of us to have all the life and joy he came to give. And that's why we pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." The truth is that it is only as God's will is done that the full and abundant life in Jesus is ours.