

"Thy Will Be Done"

Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer, Part One

Hebrews 5:1-10

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- 1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:
- 2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.
- 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.
- 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.
- 5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.
- 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.
- 7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;
- 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
- 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.... --Hebrews 5:1-9

The Third petition in the Lord's Prayer is this: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." I expect to bring at least two messages on this subject. Today I want to examine this prayer in the light of the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not a frivolous matter that is before us. The fundamental question before us is this: why should we pray for the will of God at all, if God is unchanging and has decreed all that we do? Isn't it a great exercise in futility to pray for the will of God, if it is going to be done anyway?

The modern answer is often just to deny that God is unchanging or that He has decreed all things. This is to cut the knot rather than untying it. It will not establish man's freedom if we eliminate God. Without the God of the Bible who rules all things, man is left in a world of chance, whipped this way and that way by good luck and bad luck, by the actions of people to wish him well and the actions of evil people who wish themselves well. If all things are not

ordained of God to work together for my good, then how can I make any sense out of what happens to me? You cannot have it both ways. You cannot serve God and Mammon, and you cannot have God working all good things in your life, when all the things are the work of the devil. Sometimes the things that seem logical at first glance are not nearly so logical as they first seem. It would appear that if God told Adam not to eat of the Tree in the midst of the Garden, then God's will was not done when Adam ate of the tree. But this is to put the will of God into a box the size of our brains. It is not true that if we do not do the will of God, then God's will is not done. That would be to make man the master of the universe, and Satan's word would be true, "Ye shall be as gods." Man would have a knowledge of the will that would be like God's knowledge—a definitive knowledge that would result in man's being able to change the will of God and wrest control away from God. This would effectively eliminate God. Can it ever be possible that man could exert his will against God and prevail? I think you know the answer to that question.

This is not a matter simply for speculation and philosophical debate, but goes to the core of how you view yourself and how you view God. It will determine your view of prayer and your view of witness to others. Needless to say, these questions have been, and still are, the subject of probably the most lively debate in Christianity. It was central in the debate between the Reformers and Rome, and later became central in the debates between various groups within Protestantism. As with most questions, the subject is illuminated by an examination of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

- I. The passage before us in Hebrews will help illuminate this most important topic.
 - a. Worship concerns the things of God, and involves both gifts and sacrifices for sins. This might be a summary of worship: we offer gifts to God and we seek to deal with our sins. These are the substance of every religion: what shall I offer as a gift to God, and how do I deal with my sins against the laws of my God?
 - i. One of the chief doctrines of the Reformation is that of the priesthood of every believer, which taught that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man, and every man in Christ has direct access to God apart from ceremonies, saints, and relics.
 - ii. This brought into very sharp focus the nature of each man's worship: what is it that he will bring to God, and how will he deal with his sins?
 - b. Christ is our great high priest and we are to take instruction from Him. If we ever could argue successfully for the absolute freedom of the human will, it would be in the person of Jesus Christ, for He is both man and God. It is impossible to do so. Was Christ's will free?

Let us look at the passage.

II. Priests did not make themselves priests, but were chosen and ordained of God. It was a most serious thing for a person to thrust himself into the priesthood, and take this most honored position for himself. Every detail of the priest's life was ruled by the will of God, and nothing was left to the desire or the choice of the priest. He was bound by the decree of God concerning the priesthood in what he should offer, how he should dress, who he was to marry, and how the ceremonies of worship should be offered.

- a. Christ did not make Himself priest. This was done in the counsel of The Triune God before the world was. Two references are given:
- i. "Thou art my son." This is a reference to Psalm 2, in which God shows the utter futility and folly of the nations of the world striving against Jesus Christ. The meaning of this phrase is found in Heb. 1:2-8, where this shows him to be so much better than the angels, and He was the "first-begotten" that was sent into the world. He is the Son of God by eternal generation
 - ii. "After the order of Melchizedek." Not after the order of Aaron, but without beginning and ending. Chapter 7 of Hebrews. A king and a priest.
 - iii. As the Son of God, there could never be any divergence in the Will of the Son from the Will of the Father. God is one. There are not three powers, three wills, three glories, three substances. Three in One, in perfect holy simplicity. Heb. 10:
 - 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.
 - 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;
 - 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

- b. But what are these strange verses 7,8. Groanings, "not my will, but thine be done."
- i. Jesus Christ was truly human, in every respect that we are human. Although He is the eternal Son of God, in the mystery of the incarnation, he took a true human nature, so that He lacked nothing of true humanity. This included a human will. This will is separate from the divine will. This passage does not mean that Jesus is not God, it simply sets forth the truth that Jesus was a true man who must confront the will of God, just as we do. He was in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.
 - ii. This is a reference to His terrible sufferings in the Garden of Gethsemane. It was a true and real struggle that took place there: the issue. Was Jesus Christ, the last Adam, going to prevail were the first Adam failed. Was Jesus, the Son of Man, going to do the will of God willing and gladly. Would he take the cross and the sins of the world? Would the will of the man be subject to the will of God?
 - iii. There is no question as to how the issue would be resolved. It could not be that Jesus Christ would not go the way that was ordained of Him. The will of God would prevail over the will of the flesh and Christ would endure the cross and despise the shame. His choice was a real one, but God's choice was prior and ruling.

III. He was made perfect. His obedience was a tested and tried one. It was not a neophyte offering that was offered up to God on the cross, but a mature and decided sacrifice. The offering was obedience and willing.

- a. I want to compare the First Adam to the last Adam:
- i. The first Adam was sinless and blameless before God, created good by God.
 - 1. Did he have a free will. Of course he did. He could choose or not choose to eat the fruit. But he knew what the will of God was. How could he exercise any absolute freedom without rebellion? He could do one of two things: eat or not eat. If he refused to eat, then he would be

acknowledging that he was bound to the will of God, and not his own master. If he exercised his freedom, he would be in rebellion and under death. His true freedom and life would be to submit and do the will of God, exercising his freedom in gladly choosing the will of God, not some abstract philosophical idea of autonomous liberty. Adam chose the latter, and died.

2. But did Adam not do the will of God. Yes, Adam did the will of God, for it was God's will, not revealed to Adam, that out of the ruin of man's sin would come the Redeemer who would reveal God's mercy and grace to those who do not deserve it.

3. The question was not whether or not Adam would do the will of God, but whether he would do it gladly and joyfully. He chose not to, and sin and misery and ruin were the result. But Adam did the will of God, but not in a way that he thought.

4. Because God did not sustain Adam, but left him to his fleshly will, there was no doubt as to the outcome—Adam would fall if God did not sustain him, showing that no man can stand in his own strength.

ii. The exact same issue was before Jesus Christ.

1. It was a bitter struggle. But Jesus is not a mere man. He had no sin, even as Adam had no sin, but there was a great difference: Jesus is the Son of God, and though the struggle was real, there is no question as to the outcome. It cannot be that the Son of God would rebel against the will of His Father. Sustained by the Divine power, he overcame the temptation to place his will in opposition to the will of God, and so became the author of eternal salvation to all who call upon Him.

2. As to His human nature, He was matured by this struggle, and became the captain of our salvation.

b. So it is with us, Beloved.

i. Your will will always be in rebellion to the will of God, because you are sons of Adam, and his nature reigns in your flesh.

ii. The only way that you will ever do the will of God is if the image of Christ is formed in you by the Holy Spirit, so that the image of Christ subdues and directs your will to the will of God.

iii. This will be a difficult process for you, just as it was for Christ. If His sinless humanity needed to be matured through sufferings, how much more will struggles and suffering be important to your sanctification and maturing.

iv. There is no doubt, however, as to the end result, for God has predestined you to be conformed to the image of Christ. "Greater is He that is in you, than He that is in the world." "All things work together for God." Etc.

May God bless you indeed.