

Matthew 6:9a & 10b
“Pray like this: ... *Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*”

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

God created human beings with a will of their own. Unlike animals that operate primarily by instinct, we have the ability to make plans, and decide what we are going to do each day. We have desires and ambitions. That is all part of the human will.

When God created Adam and Eve, their will was in perfect harmony with God’s will. Therefore everything was perfect. They had a beautiful life of peace and happiness in the perfect garden that God created for them. And best of all they had a perfect relationship with God and could walk and talk with God in the garden. What a wonderful life that was. That all changed when Adam and Eve chose to use their own will to go against God’s will. Ever since believers needed to pray:

“Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.”

We need to pray this petition in two different ways:

**That God’s Will may be known and done by Mankind, and
That God’s Will may be Accepted by Mankind.**

-I- Pray that God’s will may be done in this Wicked World.

When Adam and Eve chose to follow their own will rather than God’s, the results were disastrous. Ever since then the will of man has been opposed to the will of God. The heart of mankind always resists the will of God. So, instead of peace and harmony, love and joy, there is hatred, anger, envy, and strife in the world. The very first person born in the world murdered his own brother Abel. Human beings have been inventing every way possible to go against God’s will and to try to hinder the will of God from being done on earth. The result is a world full of pain and misery, suffering and sorrow. When you see and hear of crime and corruption, and bemoan the moral decline of our society and your heart aches because of it, cry out to to your heavenly Father, **“Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”**

Not only does mankind insist on doing their own will, but under the power of Satan, the world is trying to prevent God’s will and desire for everyone to be saved. That is why true Christianity is being despised by the world as judgmental, hateful and ignorant. The world is vehemently trying to subvert Christianity and the spread of the gospel. That is why there is active persecution of Christians in many parts of the world, and a despising and ridiculing of Christians in North America. As we see Christianity fading and the idolatry of the world growing stronger, we cry out, **“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”**

As Martin Luther explains, we need to pray that God will *“break and stop every evil will and plan of those who do not want us to hallow His name or let His Kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and of our own flesh.”* It is such a great comfort, to see how God is able to prevent evil people from carrying out their evil plans, as He did when He stopped Sennacherib, king of Assyria in his tracks before He could destroy Jerusalem. He is able to protect His own from the evil of the world as He did with Daniel and with Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego. Most of all, God curbs the evil in the world when His word is spread and the Holy Spirit brings people into His kingdom by faith.

But of course, it is not just the evil world that doesn’t submit to God’s will. Our own heart is evil and corrupt. God says through Jeremiah, **“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”** Jer. 17:9 Our heart too rebels against God’s will like a stubborn, strong

willed child that is determined to do what he or she wants. As a result our life too has been a continual succession of sins against God's will. We can all relate to the struggle the Apostle Paul describes in Romans 7. "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ... For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing." 7:14-15 & 18-19 That struggle against our God causes us untold guilt and sorrow and makes us cry out with the Apostle, "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?" Then we plead, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner." Luke 18:13. "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 7:25 We can rejoice that God's will included sending His own Son, Jesus Christ, to live and die for us to save sinners like us. God the Son, has rescued us from our corrupt will that fights against God's will. He has forgiven us and receives us as His own.

And now we pray, Father, "Your will be done." May your will become my will. May you take over my heart and life, fill me with your Holy Spirit and guide me with your word so that my will is truly in harmony with yours. We know that God's will is always good and right. Following His will brings blessings into our lives. We need to pray, "Your will be done," because we don't have the will power to do His will, but "It is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. 2:13

So yes, we pray that God's will may be done by us and in this wicked world. But we also need to pray this petition so

-II- That God's Will may be Accepted by Us.

One commentator had a very interesting and insightful statement. He said, *"Often we pray for solutions to God's answers."* We do that when God's answers do not match our expectations. We might see God's answers as the problem that needs to be fixed.

Remember, God's overarching will or desire is for all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. Because our human nature and sinful will is always resisting that will of God, there is evil and misery in the world. Very often God needs to use more drastic measures to break our evil will and strengthen our faith and trust in His will. He may allow the evil and troubles of the world to happen and then use that to carry out His good will for us, to humble us and strengthen us. So that sickness or tragedy may very well be a part of God's answer for you as He carries out His good and gracious will for your life. So rather than always simply praying for God to heal you or take away some trouble, pray like Daniel, and Ezra, Nehemiah and other great men of faith. Pray that God will forgive you and cleanse you from all your sins, and then ask Him to bless you according to His will.

Jesus teaches us to pray, "Your Will be done" when we pray for any temporal need or desire. As Jesus Himself prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane when He asked the Father to take away the cup of suffering from Him, He added, "Nevertheless, not My will but yours be done." That is an expression of faith and trust in Him that His will is always best. If God's will is different from what we are praying for, we don't want God to grant our requests. We want His will to be done even if that should involve some pain or suffering. If it is not God's will it is not good. Especially when tragedy and sorrow strike, learn to accept it as God's will. Joseph Scriven, the author of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," was engaged to be married, but the day before his wedding his fiancée drowned in a boating accident. Devastated, he fell on his face and prayed and he didn't get up until

he could say, “Your will be done.” Accepting God’s will in difficult times gives great comfort and strength to be able to move on and trust God. That strengthens our faith.

Finally when we pray **“Your will be done,”** we are acknowledging that we are not in control of our lives. Jesus’ brother, James said, “Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.” James 4:13-16

It is the greatest high of arrogance to think that we have control over our future and can make plans and carry them out. The world boasts in that arrogance suggesting, “We can stop global warming. We can cure diseases. We can do anything we want to if we just put your mind to it.” How foolish to think that we have such control over the future of our lives. We don’t even know what will happen tomorrow. May we rather make our plans with the recognition of faith that God is in control. “If the Lord wills, we shall do this or that.”

“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” God’s will is always best. As we have seen all three persons of the Triune God are working constantly for your good. May God strengthen our faith to joyfully accept His will in our life and to do His will in our life. Under God’s will you will be blessed forever.

Amen.