

Your will be done

Dear brethren,

We suspended gathering together as a congregation on 25.3.20 because of COVID-19 pandemic. It also meant suspension of preaching of messages to the congregation.

I then shared with the congregation 16 recorded audio sharing COV001 to COV016 from 11.4.20 to 28.11.20.

We resumed worship service on 6.12.20 and I continued with preaching on the message series 'The fulfilment of God's purposes'.

We have suspended worship service again on 16.5.21.

I am looking to the Lord to continue sharing with the congregation recorded audio sharing – beginning with today's sharing 'Your will be done':COV017.

In my earlier recorded audio sharing, I considered with you the importance of seeing clearly and being deeply convicted it is **feasible for believers to learn and grow and have an abiding sense of true peace and well-being under all circumstances** – need not be worried, anxious

- whether it be the current pandemic or whatever we may have to go through in the future
- and **how this can be true for our personal lives and our working out together** – proper biblical basis.

I considered with you one vital area we need to pay attention to: **pure in heart.**

Nurturing a heart that is increasingly pure in meaning and quality is what the Lord Jesus seeks to bring about in our lives - at the core centre of His preaching and teaching

- including His teaching us how to pray.

I referred you to an important passage in the Scriptures in the preaching and teaching of the Lord Jesus on the subject of prayer.

I considered with you **the meaning and implications of Matt. 6:9–10**

**9 “Pray, then, in this way:
‘Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
10 ‘Your kingdom come...**

We need to pay close attention to what the Lord Jesus desires to teach us and transmit to us in these two verses on prayer.

The Lord Jesus is teaching us **what ought to be the primary longing of our hearts and what we ought to be committed to** - and what ought to be at the core centre of what motivates us in prayer – from which our prayer flows.

If what I have considered with you of what the Lord Jesus desires to transmit to us through the meaning and implications in these two verses are **properly understood and true in our lives**, it is **feasible for us to go through all situations meaningfully**, learning and growing in the process, honouring the Lord and participating meaningfully in the advancement of God's kingdom.

Today I want to consider with you the 2nd half of Matt. 6:10:
Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven: Mt 6:10

There are **two responses to difficult and unpleasant events and circumstances in life** – which are inappropriate - yet Christians can be influenced by these notions - and fail to see clearly we ought not respond in this way.

When there is a terrible accident, severe illness, oppressive work situation, persecution, very unreasonable people making life very difficult for us or trying to harm us, Christians may respond in two ways:

1. Very upset, discouraged because circumstances or men have obstructed his path, hindered his life, so that he cannot properly work out his life, grow or serve God.

Another response which may appear more 'spiritual':

2. 'It is the will of God' - accept it, give thanks.

Some may think if they do not view life in this way, then what takes place may not be God's will.

If what takes place may not be God's will, then life may seem so insecure.

Anything can happen to them - and this may then result in the first response.

The 2 responses are not consistent with the revelation in the Scriptures and what the Lord Jesus teaches us.

The Lord Jesus teaches us to pray:

Hallowed be Your name → Your kingdom come

→ **Your will be done** – on earth as it is in heaven

- deep longings of our hearts: for others and ourselves
- that there will be increasing submission to God's reign in the hearts of men and obedience to God - and all things that take place glorify God
- and we set our hearts to work together with God in that direction

- because many things can and do take place that do not honour the name of God, that grieve His heart, that go against His will.

There are those who hold the view that God's will is always done.

That is their understanding of the sovereignty of God

- for no being can succeed in defying the will of God.

If this is true, why is there so much sin and evil in this fallen world?

If this is true, there will be no rebellion against the reign of God.

There will not be anything done that displeases God.
If this is true, then Christ need not come to be the Saviour of mankind, to die for our sins – that we may be reconciled to God – because there would be no need for forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God.

God's sovereignty and the will of God

1. Yes. God's will, will be done - where it does not involve moral beings and their will

E.g. God's will in creation: let there be light, night and day

2. Nothing can take place outside of the will of God in the sense nothing can take place outside His permission

- but His will in the sense of what He desires is often violated by human beings i.e. disobedience to God.

The evil one and the forces of darkness are in rebellion against God.

Permitted by God and within the framework of God's sovereignty.

Our prayer 'Your will be done...' is the longing of our hearts that God's will be done – beginning with our own hearts.

What ought to be our approach to life

- in line with our prayer: 'Your will be done'.

Preliminary remarks

Why longing for God's will to be done?

Because God is perfect - and His will is perfect

- always the best - cannot be better.

Going against the will of God is sin, failure, disobedience to the perfect, great, almighty God – foolish.

Romans 12:1–2

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

God's will is good, acceptable and perfect.

Consecration means commitment to submit to God and live out His perfect will.

If God's will is perfect, why is it many believers fail to submit to God, and fail to commit themselves to live out the perfect will of God, and often deviate from the perfect will of God?

Answer: because submission to the will of God can be very difficult and painful – the cost of true discipleship.

It is easier to live as we wish and to follow the inclinations and desires of the flesh → failure to submit to the will of God.

The evil one and the forces of darkness are actively at work, seeking to deceive us, tempt us through the attractions and distractions in the fallen world, to deviate from submission to the perfect will of God – and live according to the flesh.

Practical outworking of living by the principle and spirit of: Your will be done

Take note of 2 points

1. Not passive acceptance

- not the attitude: 'everything that happens is the will of God'

Two verses in the book of Job are often misquoted in support of this kind of mindset

- that everything that happens is the will of God
- including adversities.

Job 1:21

He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, And naked I shall return there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

Job 2:10

But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

These verses are often quoted as if wholesome, healthy approach to life is to accept whatever happens in life - as the will of God

- especially when confronted with painful and puzzling situations and we do not understand why they happen
- as they are from God.

God has ‘taken away’ - continue to praise Him, worship Him.

This approach is not consistent with biblical revelation

- can lead to deep frustration and terrible suffering
- especially in the context of terrible, evil deeds and schemes – of the evil one and evil people.

Irony: this mindset is contrary – opposite to what God wants to teach us through the book of Job

- a reminder to us – to be careful how we quote and apply verses in the Scriptures.

Job and his three friends thought all the adversities and afflictions on Job came from God

- so to Job’s friends, it must be because of Job’s sin.

The words of Eliphaz, one of the three friends:

Job 4:7–8

7 “Remember now, who ever perished being innocent?

Or where were the upright destroyed?

8 “According to what I have seen,

those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it.

Job was frustrated - and cursed day of his birth: **Job 3:1**

He was in anguish and complained in the bitterness of his soul: **Job 7:11**

Job thought he was God's target: **Job 7:20**

But we can see – because it is recorded in the Scriptures (besides other truths):

Satan was at work: spiritual warfare

Who took away?

Who caused the adversities that came upon Job?

It was Satan at work.

Apparently Job and his 3 friends did not know about the existence of Satan and satanic attacks.

Attributing everything to God does not honour God.

At the same time, the book of Job does help us appreciate the true meaning of **the sovereignty of God**

- Satan can only do what God permits.

The book of Job also helps us see we need to **learn to trust God at all times** - even when we are confronted with suffering and perplexing issues and things we do not understand

- **because we know the perfect God is our heavenly Father who loves us**
- and we know our knowledge and understanding is limited.

For a fuller discussion of these and other important issues in the book of Job, you can refer to my book **Understanding Job**.

2. 'Your will be done'

Practical implication means:

actively praying and striving in this direction

- that God's will be done
- for our own lives and the lives of others
- in kingdom building and the fulfilment of God's purposes
- looking to the Lord to guide and enable us

- not our own strength and ways
- including overcoming spiritual opposition from the evil one and the forces of darkness.

Kingdom building and the fulfilment of God's purposes is directly related to submission to the reign of God and the will of God being done.

Increasing submission the reign of God and God's will being done result in the advancement of God's kingdom

- and vice versa.

Example of the Lord **Jesus**

Luke 22:42

saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

The Lord Jesus prayed to God the Father:

'Not My will but Yours be done'.

The Lord Jesus was committed to the will of God the Father

- **even when He knew it meant the most painful, agonising suffering – the death of the Cross.**

Is this true of our lives?

Are we serious in our commitment to God's perfect will?

- recognising it is the best under the circumstances
- in everything, in every area, all the time?
- even when inconvenient, disinclined, difficult, painful?

Not passive acceptance of all that take place in our lives

- **but actively looking to the Lord to do His will, promoting the will of God being done, and prepared to follow the will of God and enter into difficult and painful situations we know the Lord desires of us.**

This is the meaning of commitment, consecration, true discipleship, true faith

- not unwillingly but affirming faith in the Lord and rejoicing in Him
- the way to a rich, fulfilling life
- in Christ, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

God is looking for believers with this kind of commitment and faith in Him – unwavering faith and commitment

- such believers are reliable, trustworthy
- God will be pleased and will have much freedom to work deeply in and through such believers.

The Lord willing, in my next sharing I will continue to reflect on these issues - **Practical outworking of living by the principle and spirit of: Your will be done**

In fellowship,
Kou