



Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Matthew 6.10b

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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our summer series Pray Like Jesus, turning our attention to the petition, "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

II. Connecting with One Another

Think back to the last time you made a decision, large or small. What was it? How did that decision turn out? How could it have turned out differently?

III. Study the Text

- a. Before we begin this week's study, the fifth in our summer series Pray Like Jesus, spend a few moments quietly rereading Matthew 6.5-10a (stop reading at the phrase "your kingdom come").

What have you learned as you've engaged these verses?

What questions have come up that remain unanswered?

How have Jesus' instructions on prayer altered the way you pray - or think about prayer?

- b. Reread Matthew 6.9-10.

Some have argued that this third petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven", builds upon the previous two petitions ("Hallowed be Your name" and "Thy Kingdom come"). Essentially, the argument goes, you can't pray for God's will without praying for His kingdom, and you can't pray for His kingdom unless you hallow His name (and maybe you can't even hallow His name without Him becoming your father!).

Do you agree? Why or why not?

- c. Praying this third petition is, in a way, an expansion of the second petition "Your kingdom come." It's been written,

Where God's rule is acknowledged, God's will is done. Implicit is the confession that God's will is *not* done on earth, and that there will always be a tension between the divine will and the actuality of human structures and relationships until the kingdom comes. (italics mine)

What "tensions between the divine will and... human structures and relationships" have you experienced personally this week? (In other words, what has happened in your life this week that you do not think was the will of God)

What tensions have you read or heard about that have not impacted you personally?

Why do you think there is a tension between God's will human structures? What words would you use to describe that tension?

d. R.C. Sproul notes three ways to understand the will of God:

1. Sovereign Will: When the Bible speaks of the will of God in this sense, it is describing the will that causes whatever He decrees to come to pass
2. Preceptive Will: This has to do with God's law and commandments, the precepts He issues to regulate the behavior of His creation
3. Disposition or Inclination: In this sense, God's will has to do with what is pleasing or displeasing to Him.

Try to think of examples for each of these three aspects of God's will (if you're meeting in a group, spend some time discussing such examples).

Which of the three do you think Jesus is referencing in his prayer?

e. Praying "Your Kingdom come" is a petition full of hope. Praying "Your will be done" is about patience. What aspects of God's sovereign will are you most impatient about coming to pass?

f. Notice that even in this third petition - halfway through the prayer - we're still praying to God about God. It's not until next week (Give us this day our daily bread) that we will engage human needs.

What does this say about priorities in prayer? How could this alter your prayer life?

g. It's been written, "Too often, we are conditioned to think of prayer as asking God for what we want: 'Dear God, give me this, give me that.' But now, in praying that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven, we are attempting to school ourselves to want what God wants."

Sometimes, however, it might be difficult to ask God to lead us into what He wants. "What if God wants to send me to be a missionary in a far away country?! What if God wants me to teach Sunday School!? What if God wants me to give more of my money away!?"

Have you ever had such fears? How does this third petition challenge the things we want? How is God's will different than your will?

h. Implicit in the fear of praying "Your will be done" is how we perceive the character of God. In other words, who we believe God to be reveals how we pray to Him. How does God being our Heavenly Father reshape that potential fear we experience in prayer?

i. Read Genesis 37.

It's a terribly troubling passage, isn't it? Discuss it in light of God's will: Was it God's will that this happen to Joseph? Why or why not?

Now, read Genesis 50.15-21.

Joseph declares, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

How does this story engage our discussion on God's will?

j. Read Romans 8.28-30. How does verse 28 further develop our understanding of God's will in our lives?

k. A old college professor of mine engaged this petition this way:

God's will and ours do not meet in a simple hierarchy where divine will simply determines or overpowers human will - not are they a simple partnership of mutual dependence, let alone mutual independence... [This petition] hints at a deeper mystery: "Your will be *realized*." God wills people to will, and vice versa.

What do you think of that idea? Do you agree or disagree? (Don't worry, if you disagree, I won't tell him)

l. Keener writes,

The hallowing of God's name, the consummation of his reign and the doing of his will are all versions of the same end-time promise: everything will be set right someday. No more crime, no more discrimination and hatred, no more sickness or grief. Of course that day will bring an end to those not doing God's will, so his mercy has delayed it for their sake (2nd Peter 3.9, 15) But we who long for God's will *on earth* in the future ought to live consistently with our longing in the present, working for God's righteousness and seeking his will here."

What one thing can you begin to do this week to reveal God's will here?

IV. Pray

a. Thank God for the 290 children that were on campus through VBS week, asking that God would continue to reveal Himself to them,

b. Ask God to reveal the ways that your life is not in line with His will, and that He would empower you to live differently as a follower of Jesus,

c. Lift up the Nominating Committee's work, that willing servants would come forward to serve in love as Elders and Deacons.