

# THE LORD'S PRAYER Chapter 4 The Third Petition

by A.W. Pink

---

## Transcript

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Chapter 4

The Third Petition

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"

Matthew 6:10

The connection between this third petition and the preceding ones is not difficult to trace. The first concern of our hearts, as well as our prayers, must be for God's glory. Longings after God's Kingdom naturally follow, as do honest endeavors to serve Him while we remain on this earth. The glory of God is the great object of our desires. The coming and enlargement of His Kingdom are the chief means by which God's glory is manifestatively secured. Our personal obedience makes it manifest that His Kingdom has come to us. When God's Kingdom really comes to one's soul, he must, of necessity, be brought into obedience to its laws and ordinances. It is worse than useless to call God our King if His commandments are disregarded by us. Broadly speaking, there are two parts to this petition: (1) a request for the spirit of obedience; and (2) a statement of the manner in which obedience is to be rendered. "Thy will be done." This clause may present a difficulty to a few of our readers, who may ask, "Is not God's will always done?" In one respect it is, but in another respect it is not. Scripture presents the will of God from two distinct viewpoints: His secret will and His revealed will, or His decreive and His preceptive will. His secret or decreive will is the rule of His own actions: in creation (Rev. 4:11), in providence (Dan. 4:35), and in grace (Rom. 9:15). That which God has decreed is always unknown to men until revealed by prophecies of things to come or by events as they transpire. On the other hand, God's revealed or preceptive will is the rule for our actions, God having made known in the Scriptures that which is pleasing in His sight. The secret or decreive will of God is always done, equally on earth as in heaven, for none can thwart or even hinder it. It is equally evident that God's revealed will is violated every time one of His precepts is disobeyed. This distinction was clearly drawn when Moses said to Israel, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Law" (Deut. 29:29). This distinction is also found in the use of the word counsel. "My counsel [God's eternal decree] shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. 46:10), says

Jehovah. But in Luke 7:30 we read that "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected [that is, frustrated] the counsel [or revealed will] of God" as to themselves, being not baptized by John. On the one hand we read, "For who hath resisted His will?" (Rom. 9:19). On the other hand we are told, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3). The revealed or preceptive will of God is stated in God's Word, defining our duty and making known the path in which we should walk. God has provided His Word as the appointed means for the renewing of our minds. A laying up of God's precepts in the heart (Ps. 119:11) is essential to the transforming of one's character and conduct; this vital discipline is an absolute prerequisite to our proving, in our own Christian experience, "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2). The will of God, then, is a phrase that, taken by itself, may express either what God has purposed to do or what He has commanded to be done by us. With regard to the will of God in the first sense, it always is, always has been, and ever shall be done upon earth as it is in heaven, for neither human policy nor infernal power can prevent it. The text now before us contains a prayer that we might be brought into complete accord with God's revealed will. We do the will of God when, out of a due regard for His authority, we regulate our own thoughts and conduct by His commandments. Such is our bounden duty, and it should ever be our fervent desire and diligent endeavor so to do. We mock God if we present this request and then fail to make the conforming of ourselves to His revealed will our main business. Ponder our Lord's solemn warning in Matthew 15:1-9 (cf. Matthew 25:31-46 and Luke 6:46-49). "Thy will be done in earth." The one who sincerely prays this necessarily intimates his unreserved surrender to God; he implies his renunciation of the will of Satan (2 Tim. 2:26) and of his own corrupt inclinations (1 Pet. 4:2), and his rejection of all things opposed to God. Nevertheless, such a soul is painfully conscious that there is still much in him that is in conflict with God. He therefore humbly and contritely acknowledges that he cannot do His Father's will without Divine assistance, and that he earnestly desires and seeks enabling grace. Possibly the meaning and scope of this petition will best be opened up if we express it thus: O Father, let Thy will be revealed to me, let it be wrought in me, and let it be performed by me. From a positive perspective, when we pray, "Thy will be done," we beg God for spiritual wisdom to learn His will: "Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts. . . . Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes (Ps. 119:27, 33). Also, we beg God for spiritual inclination toward His will: "I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.... Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies" (Ps. 119:32, 36). Furthermore, we beg God for spiritual strength to perform His bidding: "Quicken Thou me according to Thy Word. . . .strengthen Thou me according unto Thy Word" (Ps. 119:25, 28; cf. Phil. 2:12, 13; Heb. 13:20, 21). Our Lord teaches us to pray, "Thy will be done in earth," because this is the place of our discipleship. This is the realm in which we are to practice self-denial. If we do not do His will here, we never shall in heaven. "As it is in heaven." The standard by which we are to measure our attempts at doing God's will on earth is nothing less than the conduct of the saints and angels in heaven. How is God's will done in heaven? Certainly it is not done reluctantly or sullenly, nor is it done hypocritically or Pharisaically. We may be sure that it is executed neither tardily nor fitfully, neither partially nor fragmentarily. In the heavenly courts, God's will is performed gladly and joyfully. Both the four living creatures (not beasts) and the twenty-four elders in Revelation 5:8-14 are depicted as rendering worship and service together. Yet heavenly adoration and obedience are rendered humbly and reverently, for the seraphim veil their faces before the Lord (Isa. 6:2). There God's commands are executed with alacrity, for Isaiah says that one of the seraphim flew to him from the Divine presence (Isa. 6:6). There God is lauded constantly and untiringly. "Therefore are [the saints] before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple" (Rev. 7:15). The angels obey God promptly, wholly, perfectly, and with ineffable delight. But we are sinful and full of infirmities. With what propriety, then, can the obedience of celestial beings be proposed as a present example for us? We raise this question not as a concession to our imperfections, but because

honest souls are exercised by it. First, this standard is set before us to sweeten our subjection to the Divine will, for we on earth are set no more demanding task than are those in heaven. Heaven is what it is because the will of God is done by all who dwell there. The measure in which a foretaste of its bliss may be obtained by us upon earth will be determined largely by the degree to which we perform here the Divine bidding. Second, this standard is given to show us the blessed reasonableness of our obedience to God. "Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word" (Ps. 103:20). Then can God require less of us? If we are to have communion with the angels in glory, then we must be conformed to them in grace. Third, it is given as the standard at which we must ever aim. Paul says, "For this cause we... do not cease to pray for you. . . That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. . . , that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Col. 1:9, 10; 4:12). Fourth, this standard is given to teach us not only what to do, but how to do it. We are to imitate the angels in the manner of their obedience, though we cannot equal them in measure or degree. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Weigh this attentively in the light of what precedes. First, we are taught to pray, "Our Father which art in heaven"; then should we not do His will? We must, if we are His children, for disobedience is that which characterizes His enemies. Did not His own dear Son render Him perfect obedience? And it should delight us to strive to render Him the quality of devotion to which He is accustomed in the place of His peculiar abode, the seat of our future bliss. Second, since we are taught to pray, "Hallowed be thy name," does not a real concern for God's glory oblige us to make a conformity to His will our supreme quest? We certainly must if we desire to honor God, for nothing dishonors Him more than self-will and defiance. Third, since we are instructed to pray, "Thy Kingdom come," should we not seek to be in full subjection to its laws and ordinances? We must, if we are subjects thereof, for it is only alienated rebels who despise His scepter.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-pink/the-lords-prayer-chapter-4-the-third-petition/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**