

# (God-Centered Praying) 5. the Will of God

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the necessity of surrendering our will to God to experience true holiness and joy in our lives.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:10, Matthew 11:28, Luke 9:23, John 6:38

**Topics:** "God's Will", "Holiness"

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## Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the necessity of aligning our will with God's will in his sermon on God-centered praying. He explains that true conversion occurs when we yield our will to God, echoing Jesus' prayer of submission, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' Poonen highlights that the path to holiness involves denying self-will and embracing God's commands joyfully and completely, just as the angels do in heaven. He urges believers to pray for God's will to be done in their lives, as this is essential for spiritual growth and fulfillment. Ultimately, he warns that neglecting to obey God's will can lead to regrets in eternity.

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## Transcript

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

We can call Jesus Lord only when we are willing to do His will in our daily life. True conversion takes place, not when a man is stirred in his intellect and his emotions, but when he yields his will saying, "Lord, not my will but Thine be done in my life." If we maintain this attitude before the Lord consistently then we shall be sanctified increasingly.

### The Secret of Holiness

Jesus Himself prayed saying, "Not My will but Thine," to His Father all through His earthly life (Jn.6:38). If it was necessary for even Jesus to live like that in order to please the Father, we can be certain that there is no other way for us to please God either. We won't make any progress in our walk with the Lord if this is not the consistent attitude of our lives.

We can spend hours praying and studying the Scriptures and attending hundred of meetings. But if all of that does not lead us to this point, where we say, "Thy will be done on earth (in our own life first of all) as it is in heaven," then we've wasted our time. Every means of grace must lead us to the point where we say from our heart, "Father, not my will but Thine be done."

The secret of true holiness lies here.

When Paul wrote to the Galatians about the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, he was referring to this conflict of man's will with God's will.

The flesh with all its lusts could be summed up in one word: SELF-WILL. Wherever you read of "the desires of the flesh" in the New Testament you could replace that phrase with "Self-will and self-centred desires." Then you'll understand what those verses mean.

For example, we're told that the Holy Spirit is in opposition to the flesh (Gal. 5:17). What that means is that the Spirit is always fighting against our self-will and our self-centred desires. The Spirit knows that without slaying our self-will and our self-centred desires first, He can never fit us for heaven or make us holy and Christ-like.

The way of holiness and sanctification is the way of death to self - saying 'No' to myself and 'Yes' to God. It means saying, "Father, I have no desires or plans or ambitions outside the circle of Your will for my life. I want nothing outside Your perfect will."

### The Cross in the Daily Life

Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk. 9:23). We find our cross at that point where God's will crosses our will every day. To take up the cross is to say, "Father, not my will but Thine be done."

Only one who has said NO to his own will, his own plans, his own desires and his own ambitions, etc., and who has said, "Lord, I want to take up my cross, die to my own desires and follow You and do Your will alone" can truly pray this prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28). But He did not stop there. He went on to tell us how He would give us that rest.

He said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls." (Mt. 11:29). In other words, you'll never know that rest until you take up the cross and say 'No' to your own will. All unrest comes from doing our own will. You cannot come to the Lord if you do not want to take up the cross.

Only a true disciple can pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Jesus Himself prayed this prayer all through His life. He practiced what He preached. He lived as a man and his greatest longing was to do the will of His Father.

Why did Jesus come to earth? The answer is: To do the will of the Father. That was what He Himself said in John 6:38, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." He didn't come primarily to die for the sins of the world. No. He came to do His Father's will. He went to Calvary and died only because that was part of the Father's will for His life.

Jesus said in John 4:34, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work." Just like a hungry man cries out for food, the whole being of Jesus cried out to do the will of the Father. To follow Jesus is to have a similar longing to do the will of the Father in every area of our life.

The reason why there's so much happiness in heaven and no sorrow at all, is because the will of God is done completely there. God's will is something that makes people supremely happy and full of joy.

Peter writes, "Since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for THE WILL OF GOD" (1 Peter 4:1,2).

John the apostle writes, "And the world is passing away and also its lusts; but the one who does THE WILL OF GOD abides forever" (1 Jn. 2:17).

The burden of the prayers of the apostles for the believers was, that they might "stand perfect and fully assured in all THE WILL OF GOD" (Col. 4:12). Those apostles knew that a salvation which consisted merely of the forgiveness of sins without leading a man to dedicate the rest of his life to do the will of God, was a false salvation. Forgiveness of sins is only meant to be a door by which we enter in to walk the narrow way of doing all the will of God.

#### How God's Will is Done in Heaven

We are to pray, "Thy will be done on earth AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." How is God's will done in heaven? Let me mention four things.

First of all, the angels are in a perpetual state of WAITING UPON GOD for His commands. They don't run around heaven trying to do `something for God' according to their own ideas. No. They wait for God to speak first - and only then do they act.

God says, "I'm looking for one who will wait and watch For My beckoning hand, My eye - Who will work in My manner the work I give, And the work I give not, pass by. And oh the joy that is brought to Me When one such as this I can find - A man who will do ALL My will, Who is set to study his Master's mind"

So, when we pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," it means, first of all that we want to hear what God has to say to us.

Secondly, when God speaks, the angels obey IMMEDIATELY. They don't say "Lord, I'll wait a few days and think about it. I want to find out what my fellow angels think about this." There's no such thing in heaven. When God has spoken, that is final. Obedience is immediate.

Our prayer then should be, "Father, help me, that I don't delay when I hear Your voice. I don't want to rush ahead of Your time, but once You have spoken I want to obey immediately."

Then thirdly, when God commands something in heaven, it is done COMPLETELY. Those angels don't go out and obey God partially. Our prayer therefore should be, "Father, help me to do ALL your will in my life - to obey every commandment completely, whatever the cost."

And finally, the obedience of the angels is JOYFUL. They are not grudging and complaining in their obedience. No angel compares his task with another's and says, "Lord, why have You given me a more difficult task than You've given that angel!" etc.,

We hear such complaints even among believers, "Why should I make all the sacrifices? What about him/her," etc., But we never hear such words from the angels in heaven. They consider it a privilege to do anything for God and they rejoice at every opportunity to obey Him.

And so when we pray this prayer, we are asking that God's will may be done in our lives like that - joyfully and without any complaints and without any comparisons with others.

## No Regrets in Eternity

If you do the will of God like that on earth, you won't have any regrets when you get to heaven.

Bye and bye, when we see our Lord face to face, we'll wish we had given Him more of our lives and that we had obeyed Him more completely. Heaven will lose some of its sweetness for you if you get there without having obeyed all of God's commandments here on earth, immediately, completely and joyfully.

Sadhu Sundar Singh used to say, "You'll never get another chance to carry the cross for Christ once you leave this earth." If you want to prove your love for the Lord, now is the time to do it - not when you get to heaven.

Think of the three petitions that we have looked at. "Father, Let your Name be hallowed, Let your Kingdom come, Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Even before we ask for forgiveness of sins, which is so necessary, the Lord taught us to seek first the hallowing of the Father's Name, the coming of His kingdom and the fulfilling of His will in our lives.

May we learn what the Lord is trying to teach us.

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