

The Marks of a True Believer
Message Three
Praying: “Thy Will be Done”
Matt 6:5-15

- 5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
- 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
- 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
- 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
- 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
- 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
- 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
- 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
- 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Introduction:

Is there any way for us to truly comprehend the Enormity of the topic, “The Will of God?” How monstrously serious it is.

The Infinite God

The Infinitely Holy God

The Infinitely Wise and Knowing God

His Will for me, for my life, for my thoughts and my behavior. Is there anything except for God Himself that is more important for me, for you?

Consider how profoundly honest and sincere a human being must be to make with true integrity the statement, “***Thy Will Be Done.***”

Remember how it worked out for the Jews at Sinai?

Ex 19:7-8

7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Forty days later or so Moses was ordering the Levites to walk through the congregation and slay the people for worshiping the golden calf. Three thousand of them died.

Remember how it worked out for Solomon after God asked him what he wanted and then gave it to him?

2 Chron 1:7-12

7 In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

8 And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

9 Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.

10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?

11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

12 Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like. KJV

But Solomon on several levels did not follow the wisdom that God has given him. He set it aside and did many foolish things contrary to the Revealed Will of God.

1 Kings 11:9-11

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

Remember how it worked out for Jesus' disciples?

Matt 26:33-35

33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

But they did not remain committed to that promise, did they?

Matt 26:55-56

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief

with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

Do you remember how saying these words has worked out for you up until now? Have you remained faithful to them?

Let me ask another question. If I were to ask you to write me an essay this morning on the issue of the will of God for your life, are you confident that you could give a biblical answer?

I. God's Holiness demands a corresponding holiness from us.

Lev 19:1-2

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

1 Peter 1:15-16

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

It is both an OT and a NT concept and principle. It has not vanished because the New Covenant has been fully revealed in and through Jesus Christ. It is, literally, the Will of God and when we say in prayer, to the Father, "Thy Will be done," we are committing ourselves to pursue holiness *as defined in scripture*. I add that because if you ask 1000 Christians in our day what 'holiness' is you will get 1000 answers. At the same time well more than half of those will think that everyone else's answer is fine too because we as a people no longer believe that there is a objective standard of righteousness to which everyone is commanded to conform.

So the words, "Thy Will be done..." are essentially meaningless to modern Christianity. They have no form and substance but are like water, continually shifting and changing with every new breeze that blows.

II. But when you think of it, if a human should be expert on anything it should be the Will of God, right?

If you get a new job, they will put you through training, give you books to read, or possibly a video to watch. They will teach you the skills that you are to master on this job. And, they expect you to become pretty good at it or they will stop paying you and tell you not to come around any more. So, we try to become as good as we can possibly be at those skills....for money, for a paycheck.

God holds out two Amazing Incentives.

Deut 30:15-20

- 15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;
16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.
17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;
18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.
19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:
20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Refuse to do His Will and you will be dying and suffering eternally in a place called The Lake of Fire. Do His Will and live eternally in a state of unimaginable blessing.

So, with the possibility of the Lake of Fire on one side and the New Earth on the other and the difference in the two being that those in the one **DID** the Will of God and those in the other **DID NOT** do His Will, one would think that every human who ever heard that reality would busy himself becoming an **EXPERT** on the topic, no?

At least, one would assume, every one who considered himself a Christian would be an expert...."? Every 'serious' Christian...?

Sadly, no. In fact and for the most part humans have busied themselves contriving ways to **avoid** doing His Will, to excuse themselves from it, or to pretend that they **are** doing it when they are not... and they don't even actually know what 'it' is.

Sadder still, many if not **most** of the supposed '**gospel**' messages are configured to excuse people from any serious effort at doing God's Holy Will. Some even brag about the fact that they have freedom and security even if they **willfully shun** God's Revealed Will and refuse to give it any serious consideration.

So, here is my question to you, ***How on earth can a person honestly say to God, "Thy Will be done," who has no intention to give any serious effort to the task? In what Universe does that make any sense whatsoever?***

Another question, ***Why would Jesus teach us to pray, "Thy Will be done" if the matter was one that could be safely ignored?***

He declared Himself to be 'The Shepherd of the sheep,' so would He ever lead them wrongly?

Would He suggest (command) His sheep to pray concerning an issue in which they could be comfortably indifferent?

Listen to some of the things that Jesus said about the Will of the Father.

Matt 7:21

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. KJV

Matt 12:50

50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother. KJV

John 5:30

30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. KJV

John 7:16-17

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. KJV

This sounds to me like the Will of the Father is a really important thing.

III. The Old Testament contains many lessons, examples, and warnings but three things it teaches are beyond all argument.

1. The Will of God is vast and very specific.

Have you ever read the instructions for the building of the tabernacle in Ex 37-40? One wonders why we need such detail. I am convinced of at least one reason: so that we will know and have illustrations that God is very specific concerning His Will. He is not indifferent as to how it is to be done nor is He nonchalant about the diligence that is to be given to it.

2. He is absolutely serious about it.

Remember when the two oldest sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, decided to ‘change up the order of service?’ In one sense it was ‘no big deal,’ they just changed the formula for the incense to be burned inside the tabernacle. What difference could it possibly make? Incense is incense, right? NO!

Lev 10:1-2

1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Aaron could not even mourn for them.

Remember when King Uzziah decided that he would burn the incense in the temple?

2 Chron 26:16-19

- 16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.
- 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:
- 18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.
- 19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. KJV

Remember when Jonah decided *not* to go to Nineveh?

3. The story of the OT is the story of a group of people who were serious about the Will of God, all of those who had saving faith anyway.

Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David. None of them were perfect for sure but how can anyone read Psalm 119 and think that David, a flawed man for sure, was not serious about God's Will. We could mention many others as well: Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, etc.

The Old Testament is a standing document and record that the Will of God is a crucial issue.

IV. I know that many say some version of this. "Oh, but the NT brings a time of grace and mercy, of forgiveness and longsuffering... we need not fear the Law any more."

And, there is a *sense* in which those words are true... but most people use the idea in the wrong way. They use it to mean, "all we have to do is ask Jesus into our hearts... we don't have to worry about that old law any more."

I suppose they have forgotten that the NT says this.

1 Cor 6:9-10

- 9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
- 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall

inherit the kingdom of God.

Looks like there are a lot of people who need to be afraid of *something*.

Or, what about this:

Rom 13:9

9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. KJV

Paul was quoting directly from the Law of Moses.... *to Christians!*

Many, many, so-called 'New Testament Christians' seem unaware that there is nothing in the biblical concepts of Grace, Mercy, Redemption, or Forgiveness that absolves one person from his/her obligations to the Revealed Will of God.

The OT opens with the issue of obedience and the NT closes with the same issue.

Rev 22:14-16

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.
16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. KJV

V. The most prominent doctrine of Jesus' ministry, and the whole of the Word of God for that matter, is totally without meaning unless the Great Will of God is considered.

"Repent," He said. From what? The violations of God's Will.
Unto what? Unto Obedience to that same Will.

In all honesty the very capstone of Repentance is the surrender of the heart and mind to that principle that Jesus taught us to pray, "*Thy Will be done.*"

When God the Holy Spirit has sought us and found us, when He has laid the charges of our sin upon us and the held on as we ran and twisted and complained and resisted facing up to them, when we have finally given up to His Work as He wrought in us repentance and faith, when at last we have confessed to our rebellion against the Will of the Father and surrendered/committed ourselves to the doing of it, and at last we are saved, it is on the terms of "*Thy Will, not mine, be done.*"

The Doctrine of Repentance, which is essential to our salvation, is actually defined by the Will of

God.

VI. So, how can a person know and understand what the Will of God is?

My recommendations:

1. Put down the phone, close the computer, turn off the TV.
2. Pick up your New Testament.
3. Ask God to show you what is true.
4. As much as you possibly can, set to one side everything you have been taught. (Don't throw it away, just set it to the side.)
5. Remind yourself that everything in the NT is true and right and that practically all of it is for you.
6. Resolve that you are going to believe, surrender to, and obey everything that you find.
7. Read it and re-read it. Take your time. Muse over everything.

Each time it touches on something you have been taught, pull that teaching out and compare it with scripture. If it agrees, hold on to it. If scripture disagrees with the teaching or opinion you hold, receive the Word of God and let the other go.

8. When you are done you should have a working understanding of the Will of God as delivered to you by the Lord Jesus and the apostles.
9. If you do not, start over. Don't stop until you do.

VII. I would have you pay close attention to the fact that the Will of God is defined more by concepts and principles than by details and technicalities.

For example, consider this passage.

Matt 23:23-24

- 23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.
- 24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

The Pharisees were so fastidious about the details of God's Law that they tithed even the spices from their cabinets. Jesus said that they should have done so but condemned them for forgetting the most important issues of doing the Will of God. He mentioned three particularly: judgment, mercy, and faith.

Several of the good translations render '*judgment*' as 'justice,' dealing rightly and fairly with others. I tend to agree with this use of the word. We remember that Jesus said, "However you

would like for others to treat you, do that to them.” And, Paul captured another piece of this idea when he said,

Eph 4:32

32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. KJV

“However you would desire that God forgive you, in just that same manner forgive others.”

This cannot be reduced to a list of ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts.’ It touches every part of our lives and sometimes the most sensitive and difficult parts.

The next concept Jesus emphasized here is ‘*mercy*’ or ‘compassion,’ almost always rendered ‘mercy’ in the KJV. But consider a few passages in which ‘compassion’ might be the better reading.

Mark 10:46-48

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. KJV

Bartimaeus was not asking for ‘mercy’ in the classic sense, the forgiveness of sins and pardon from condemnation but rather that Jesus would show compassion on him and deliver him from his blindness.

Consider also:

Luke 1:57-58

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. KJV

Again, this is not mercy in the sense of pardon for sin but compassion upon an elderly lady who had longed for a child all of her life.

It is this principle of compassion that the Pharisees lacked and which Jesus was urging upon the believers who heard him in this rant against the religious pretenders. They had no compassion but this is one of the *weightier matters* of doing the Will of God.

It is:

readiness to help,
generosity of soul,

compassion for the hurting,
and the willingness to sacrifice one's self in the exercise of compassion.

This essence of God's Will also cannot be quantified with scales and counting tables or lists. It is a disposition of soul, a commitment of the life... and it is either present or it is not.

James 2:12-13

- 12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.
- 13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. KJV

He who has no compassion is unconverted, not a child of God, not a doer of the Will of God. He shall perish without mercy under the condemnation of God.

I have always struggled with the meaning of the last part of v.13 but I think I realized what it is saying. "The merciful shall escape condemnation." They will rejoice that judgment passes them by for they will be shown to be doers of the Will of God.

The third principle of doing the Will of God that Jesus mentioned in Matt 23 is 'Faith.' This is the usual word we often find mentioned as the vital issue in justification but it seems to be used here in a different sense. The word can also mean 'moral conviction,' a resolve and determination before God, to do what is right.

Consider:

Matt 9:1-2

- 1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.
- 2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. KJV

It seems more consistent with the story here to consider that Jesus saw, respected, and rewarded the faithfulness of the man's friends, their willingness to labor earnestly to get him to Jesus, to do what was the right thing to do in spite of the fact that it cost them much effort.

Also:

Luke 17:3-5

- 3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.
- 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.
- 5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. KJV

Did they want an increase in their trust in God or an increase in the resolve to obey Him? One might argue that they are the same things but this was the element missing from the souls of the Pharisees. They knew right from wrong but they did not have the God given determination to do

the right and forsake the wrong. Otherwise they would have abandoned their wicked behaviors.

If you think about it, every time we sin it is that moral conviction, that determination to do right, that leaves us. When it does we find ourselves powerless against our temptations. And, when God grants it to us we find ourselves capable of resisting the wrong and giving ourselves to do right, to do the Will of God.

And, it is true. Somewhere at the bottom of it all in this thing of doing the Will of God, there must be a God-given, driving determination and resolve to do what He has commanded us:

to do right regardless of the cost to ourselves,
regardless of the difficult of it,
or the opinions of others,
or the effect on our personal status
or even.... our own lives. Was it not this determination that took the martyrs to their deaths?

Without this there is not another part of the entire picture that works right.

Even the Lord Jesus Himself operated from this same sort of determination to obey the Father, to save His people from their sins. It took Him to the cross and to death. It was a determination fashioned by love to be sure but determination and resolve all the same.

This is that mysterious quality of the True Believe which is the most difficult to understand. He will give up his rights even to do things that are lawful for him to do if the welfare of another is somehow endangered by it.

1 Cor 8:8-13

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. KJV

So, you see the importance of being clear and to understand what we are saying when we say, "Thy Will be done."

It is imperative that we be doers of His Will and, so, it is imperative that we understand the topic.

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”