

Lord, Teach Us To Pray

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Lesson 4

On Earth As It Is In Heaven: Praying for the Father's Will To Be Done

Objective: To discern the relationship between Heaven and earth so as to be deepened in what it means to pray the first half of the Lord's Prayer. With this as background and foundation we will then address the question, 'What does it mean to pray, "Thy will be done."'

1. Recap From the Previous Lessons and Where We're Going

2. Why 'On Earth As It Is In Heaven?': The Interrelationship Between Heaven and Earth

a. Two Stories

- Lucy and the Wardrobe
- Elisha and the Syrian Hordes (2 Kings 6.8-23)

b. Five Examples/Pictures and the Great Wedding

- Male and Female (Gen. 1.26)
- The Garden of Eden (Gen. 2)
- Jacob's Ladder (Gen. 28.10-22)
- Moses, the Intermediary (Ex. 20-34)
- The Temple (God's Dwelling Place on Earth)
- The Word Became Flesh (John 1.1, 14)
- The Wedding of Heaven and Earth (Rev. 21.1-4)

c. A Short Summary Concerning the Interrelationship Between Heaven and Earth

Heaven and earth are not to be regarded as absolutely distinct, but neither are they to be regarded as essentially the same. Rather, *they are to be seen as two dimensions of reality, distinct, yet made for each other.* In the 'now time' God's space, Heaven, and ours, Earth (see Ps 115.16) *interlock* and *intersect* and yet they remain distinct. However, they will one day be joined in a new and visible way. The two will be one.

3. Praying 'Thy Will Be Done'

a. The Request, 'Thy Will Be Done,' is Bound Up With the Previous Two Requests

b. This Request Was Jesus Own Request, the Request He Came To Fulfill

- Jesus purpose in coming into the world was to do the will of his Father (Jn. 5.38)
 - To honor his name and to establish his good reign through his obedient life unto death (Phil. 2.6-11)
 - This obedience was not a passive, thoughtless resignation, but a purposeful submission to the Father's plan of redemption (Matt. 26.36-46)

c. Making This Request Our Request

- Acknowledge that God is at work in every circumstance for his glory and our good
 - This truth is meant to give us confidence and hope in the face of fear, despair, and even painful confusion (Rom. 8.20, 28)
 - This truth enables us to trustfully and willingly submit to God's will even in the face of difficulty and death (Acts 21.1-14)
- Cultivating a longing for the Day when Heaven and Earth will be one (Is. 11.9; Rev. 22.20; 2 Tim. 4.8)
- Acknowledging and grieving in the middle of a world yet to be redeemed in full (Rom. 8.18-27)
- Submitting our will to God's will no matter the cost, i.e. praying that our desire would be the honor of his name and the establishment of his kingdom in and through us
 - The struggle between our will and God's will

What do we together and individually really desire from Christ? Let's admit it – the fulfillment of *our* own will. We desire that God would assure our happiness. We want him to defeat our self-defined enemies in our own time and way. We want him to realize our dreams and consider us kind and good rather than sinful and in need of constant renovation. And then when God fails to do our will we are frustrated and upset, and are ready over and over to forsake and deny him (Schmemmann, Alexander, *Our Father*, pp. 48-49)

- Questions to ask yourself as you pray, 'Thy will be done':

Do I really desire that which is from God?

Do I really desire to accept the difficult demand of the Gospel, i.e. 'if anyone desires to come after, let him take up his cross and follow me'?

What is it that I really want in life?

What forms the main and highest value in my life?

What captivates me most in life?

- How do I discern God's will for my life with regard to honoring God's name and extending his kingdom?
 - Be filled with God's Spirit and Word (Eph. 5.18; Col. 4.16)
- How do I discern God's will in making decisions for my life, i.e. whom I will marry, what job should I take etc...?
 - Search the Scriptures
 - Pray for wisdom
 - Assess your desires, talents and the timing
 - Seek out godly counsel
 - Make a decision trusting that God is at work in you and for you
- A prayer to pray along with 'Thy will be done'

Our God, fill us with the knowledge of what you want for us, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This will mean that we will be able to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the Lord, so as to give you real delight, as we bear fruit in every good work and grow up in the knowledge of God. Give us all possible strength, according to the power of your glory, so that we'll have complete patience and become truly steadfast and joyful. And may we learn to give thanks to You, Father, who has made us fit to share the inheritance of your holy ones in the light. You've delivered us from the power of darkness,

and transferred us into the kingdom of your beloved Son. He is one in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Amen. (Col. 1.9-14)