



# THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PRAYER CLOSET MINISTRIES, INC.

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VOLUME XVI

MAY/JUNE, 2013

ISSUE 3

## Thy Will Be Done

In **Luke 11:1**, the disciples listened to Jesus pray. When He ceased from praying, these men made a request of the Lord Jesus Christ, “Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples to pray.” In response to their request, Jesus gave them the Model Prayer (**Luke 11:2-4; Matthew 6:9-13**).

In this Model Prayer, Jesus Christ teaches us how to pray. He instructs us on how to seek and communicate with our heavenly Father. He provides a basic outline for developing our communication with God. He begins by teaching us about our Father. Our Father is in heaven, the one Sovereign God, reigning over all. He is our Father through faith in Jesus Christ. The foundation for all true prayer is knowing that the one true God is our merciful, sovereign Father through personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus then teaches us to pray that God will be glorified. Our great concern should be that God is magnified in all things, especially in our personal lives. When we pray, we must ask and seek Him for those things that will manifest His greatness.

Following this, Jesus calls us to pray for the coming of the kingdom. The kingdom has two aspects – a present and future aspect. We are to pray that people will hear and receive the good news of Jesus Christ, bowing to Him as Lord and Savior and entering His kingdom. Yet, we are also to pray for Christ’s return. We are to pray that we are prepared for the coming of that glorious day.

Jesus’ next instruction for prayer is found in these words, “Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (**Matthew 6:10**). Our praying has to be anchored in God’s glory, God’s kingdom, and God’s will. The Lord Jesus Christ teaches that we are to seek our Father for His will. As a child of God, the priority of our lives has to be doing what the Father wills. By faith in Christ, we are to die to our will. We are to forsake the desires of the world. We are to resist the will of Satan our enemy. Now that we have come to know God as our Father, the will of God has to be the passion of our lives.

### What Is The Will Of God?

When Jesus teaches us to pray, “Thy will be done,” what does He mean by the will of God? The Word of God gives us the answer in **Deuteronomy 29:29**, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children for ever; that we may do all the words of this law.”

First, there are the “secret things.” This refers to the plans of God known only to Him. These things are locked away in the heart of God and no man or angel has the key to it. This refers to the unfolding of God’s wise and sovereign purpose for our lives. We do not see or know these things until they unfold in our lives.

The “secret things” are the ups and downs of our lives, the times of blessing and the times of adversity, the days of joy and the days of sorrow. God is in control of our lives, working in and through our circumstances. He sends to us and withholds from us by His own wise purpose. He allows a variety of circumstances in our lives to accomplish what He wills for our lives.

Yet, **Deuteronomy 29:29** speaks of “those things which are revealed.” This refers to the will of God as revealed in the Bible. The Bible is the declaration of the will of God for every person. In the Bible, God has revealed what His will is. He has revealed our sinful state and need of salvation. He has made known the way of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. He teaches us to how please Him and how to live a life that glorifies Him.

In the Bible, God has made clear how He wants us to live. Through the commands and precepts, the examples and exhortations, God makes known His desire for our lives. If you want to know that God desires for your life, then you must saturate yourself with God’s Word. You must read, study, memorize, and meditate on God’s Word. God is not silent about His will; He has given us the Word of God to show us what He desires. The will of God is not some murky, mystical mystery. God has revealed His will in the pages of God’s Word. He directs our lives as we seek to align ourselves with the teaching of His Word.

When Jesus speaks about the will of God in **Matthew 6:10**, He refers to His secret will found in God’s wise and loving heart and the revealed will found in the pages of the Bible. Christ has both of these in mind as He teaches us to pray for the will of God to be done in earth. These two things comprise the will of our heavenly Father.

## What Does It Mean To Pray “Thy Will Be Done”?

Praying for God’s will to be done calls for us to seek the Father in two ways. First, it teaches us to pray for a submissive spirit to the way God works out our lives. In the previous

section, we looked at the secret will of God. This refers to how God unfolds the events and circumstances of our lives. God sends and withholds from our lives. He sends blessing and adversity. He allows a variety of circumstances to place in our lives. To pray God’s will be done is to pray that you will trust Him as He orders and directs your life.

Your life is not governed by chance or fate. There is no such thing as luck. You are in the hands of a wise and loving Father. This wise and loving Father has a plan for your life. This plan is good, wise, and holy. It is always for your best, even when you can’t understand it.

Praying for God’s will to be done means asking God to be submissive to what He sends or withholds from your life. It is crying out to Him to help you to be faithful to Him no matter what unfolds in your life. It is seeking the Father for the grace and power when your life doesn’t work out like you desire, when you have to watch your desires die, when the exact opposite takes place in your life of what you thought ought to happen.

Praying for God’s will to be done is a radical prayer! You are asking God to give you the strength and peace to accept what He gives and to submit when He withholds. You’re calling on God to provide you with the grace to submit when God takes you life in a different direction or allows your dreams and goals to die. It means asking for the divine empowering to be patient and not to murmur and complain when you have suffering, disappointments, hardship, and bereavement. You are praying for the help to trust and wait patiently on God through the ups and downs of life.

To pray for God’s will to be done is an act of trust. It is trusting that God knows what is right and best for you. It is believing that God always does right and He unfolds His wise and loving plan for you daily, even though you might be able to understand it. This prayer is an act of implicit trust in the wisdom and goodness of your heavenly Father.

Praying for God’s will to be done also means asking for God to teach you the truth of the Word of God. It is pleading for Him to help

you understand the Word of God. We pray that God will empower us to obey His Word. It is crying out to God to grant us understanding in the Word and power to put the Word into practice in daily life.

Praying for God's will to be done means asking God to create within you a heart that receives, understands, and obeys the Word of God. We are pleading with Him to help us walk in obedience to His commandments. This is exactly how David prayed:

"I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes" (**Psalm 119:26**).

"Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works" (**Psalm 119:27**).

"Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end" (**Psalm 119:33**).

"Make me to go in the path of thy commandments: for therein do I delight" (**Psalm 119:35**).

"Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness" (**Psalm 119:36**).

Notice the phrases, "teach me thy statutes," "make me to understand," "teach me," "make me to go in the path," and "incline my heart." This is praying for God's will to be done in our lives! Praying for God's will to be done is seeking God for the insight and power to live in obedience to His revealed will – the Word of God. It is striving with God in prayer in order to understand His will in the Word and then putting it into practice in our daily lives.

## **What Does Jesus Mean By "In Earth As It Is In Heaven"?**

When Jesus uses this phrase "in earth as it is in heaven," He refers to the obedience of the angels. The angels of heaven excel in strength. In the entire universe, no creature equals them in power. They are ready, humble servants of God. They use this strength and

power in doing anything and everything that God commands. They do God's will with indescribable pleasure and promptness. They wait upon His bidding as faithful and willing servants.

Jesus teaches us that we are to obey like the angels of heaven – promptly and with joy. The angels exist to do God's will and to delight in God's will. This is to be our reason for existence and our delight. In heaven, God's will is done perfectly by the angels. That is to be our prayer and our goal!

By using this phrase, Jesus is teaching that we must not only do God's will, but also do it with the right attitude. God longs for us to do His will with the right frame of heart. In heaven, the angels do His will with delight and promptly. Jesus says that our obedience is to be like theirs! We must consider our hearts. We must seek to obey God promptly, sincerely, fervently, and with joy. We have to keep in mind Proverbs 16:2, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes: but the LORD weigheth the spirits." Not only does God see what we do, He sees how we do it.

You may be thinking, "We can't perfectly obey God in this life." Yes, that is right. Born-again Christians who have the Holy Spirit working in their life can obey God's Word only in part in this life. Yet, this perfect obedience is the ideal for which the believer is to strive with all his being. It is not only our destiny in the life to come, but it is also our duty in the present.

Therefore, we must always strive to press on and to walk in greater conformity to the will of God as revealed in the Word of God. Though we do not attain to this perfection in this life, we are to aim at it, long for it, and pray for it. Aim for it, don't be content with sluggish obedience. Long for it, there is a time when we will be able to render perfect obedience. Pray for it, we can only understand and obey the Word with God's help.

We must have the same attitude as the apostle Paul, "Brethren, I count myself not to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of

the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14).

## Why Does Jesus Teach Us To Pray “Thy Will Be Done”?

Why does Jesus instruct us to pray for God’s will to be done in our lives? *First, we want to do our will!* Jesus says not pray for His will to be done in opposition for our will being done. We are to pray for His will to be done because we desire our way. We want what we want. We are more interested in our own will than the will of God. Because of his sinfulness, lost man is unwilling to hear and receive the truth of God’s Word and to obey it. The Word of God says in **1 Corinthians 2:14**, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Because of their remaining sinfulness, believers struggle to know and obey the Word of God. The Word of God says in **Romans 7:18**, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.” We must pray for God’s help and insight in order to know and do His will. We are prone to do what we want – to live the way that we want. We must seek God for His help. In teaching us to pray that His will be done, Jesus is pointing out our self-seeking hearts. He is calling on us to forsake our self-centeredness and become God-centered in what we believe and how we live.

*Second, we are prone to rebel against the Word of God.* The Word of God says in **Romans 8:7-8**, “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” These verses describe the sad plight of sinful man apart from regenerating work of the Spirit. Sinful man rebels against God’s Word. He is opposed to it and does not want to submit to it. Because of this opposition and lack of submission, he cannot please God.

At the same time, if it weren’t for the work of God’s Spirit, believers would be in this hopeless condition. Yet, even as believers, we still have the power of evil operative in us. We are no longer slaves of sin because of the work of the Spirit liberating us from that slavery (**Romans 6-8**). Yet, we live with a constant struggle within us as Paul so painfully describes in **Romans 7**.

Paul defines this inner conflict and the way to victory in **Galatians 5:16-17**, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”

Paul’s point here is that, although we have been spiritually reborn and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, ferocious evil still rages within us, “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit.” It is only as we walk in the Spirit’s power and according to the Spirit’s written rule, the Word of God, that we can gain victory over this monster within us. Therefore, we are to pray continually for us to do God’s will on earth.

Because of our remaining sinfulness, we are prone to rebel against God’s Word. We are prone to seek out our own way. This is why Christ teaches us to pray for God’s will to be done in our lives. We are to seek Him for strength and insight to receive and obey His will as revealed in the Word of God. We need God’s grace to help us overcome our sinful tendencies and to yield ourselves to His Word:

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I’m constrained to be;

Let that grace now, like a fetter,  
Bind my wand’ring heart to Thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;

Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.

*Third, Jesus teaches us to pray this petition because we are prone to murmur and complain against God’s providence.* God is in

control of our lives. He is working out His good and wise plan for us. He sends and withholds exactly what we need and when we need it. Yet, we are prone to get upset with God when things don't go the way that we want. We want to complain about what God is doing when we have adversity. We want to murmur if God doesn't work when we want in the way that we want.

During Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, after their exodus from Egypt and before their entrance into Canaan, God generously provided for them. In some instances, He miraculously provided for them with all they needed. God guided and protected them. They were safe in His hands.

But, Israel griped and complained about God's providence time and again. They murmured about the way God worked and when God worked. One example is **Numbers 14:1-2**, "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, 'Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God that we had died in the wilderness!'"

The ten spies had just given the bad report to the Israelites. They affirmed that the land was as God had said. Yet, there were giants and fortified cities. Therefore, they could not take the land. The Israelites forgot about God's continual and miraculous provision. They forgot about His care and His sustaining power. They were filled with unbelief and dissatisfaction with God and His will. God was not working in the way that they expected! They would have chosen security as slaves in Egypt or the "peace" of death rather than God's will.

When we fail to walk by faith in God's faithful promises and to be content with His will, we will grumble and complain at what He is doing. If things don't go our way or in our timing, we have a tendency to murmur and get upset with God. These things are gross ingratitude and great wickedness.

This is why we must pray for God's will to be done in our lives. We must have God's help in overcoming grumbling and complaining,

especially in troublesome times. We need His grace to empower us to be content with what He gives. We must have power to accept what He sends and when He decides to withhold from us.

## How Can I Put This Petition Into Practice?

How can this teaching of Jesus shape our praying? *First, we must pray for the power to renounce our wills.* This petition of the Model Prayer is call to say no to our will and yes to the will of God. The Puritan Thomas Manton writes about our wills, "Our own will is the proudest enemy that Christ has this side of hell, and the cause of all mischief that doth befall us. The great contest between God and us is, whose will shall stand, God's will, or our own will." We must cry out to God for His power and help to forsake our self-centeredness. We must plead with Him to enable us to yield ourselves to His will.

*Second, we must pray for a heart to know and do His will.* The Word of God says in **Deuteronomy 5:29**, "Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always." We need the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives in order to yield ourselves to the Word of God and to offer obedience to it. We must plead for a heart that fears God and keeps His commandments always.

*Next, we must plead for greater understanding in God's Word.* In order to do the will of God revealed in the Word of God, we must know what His will is. We are to saturate ourselves with His Word, seeking to understand what God wants us to believe and how he wants us to live. As we scour and search the Bible, we must plead for the Spirit to guide us in truth. We must pray as the psalmist, "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness" (**Psalms 143:10**). As David prayed, we are to beg God to teach us the truth of His Word and to lead us in obedience to His will.

*Finally, we must cry out to God for a submissive spirit to God's wise and good plan for our lives.* Praying for God's will to be done means asking God to help us accept by faith God's work in our lives. There will be times of blessing and times of adversity. There will be times when we are supplied and times when we lack. There will be days of disappointment, pain, and wondering what God is up to. We must ask God to teach and empower us in these times to trust in Him. We must cry out for His help not to complain or grumble.

Praying for His will to be done requires trust in the goodness of God. You have to settle this in your heart and your mind. You have to be convinced that God is good. You must know that God is good all the time. This not a cute little saying that we use only for worship; it is living truth that must be deeply embedded in our hearts. He is always good; He cannot be anything else but God. Moreover, He is good even when we don't see it or understand it. Doubting the unchanging goodness of God leads to murmuring and complaining.

How do you put praying for God's will to be done into practice in your personal life? The following are some prayer pointers for doing this:

- Ask God to empower you to forsake your will for the sake of His will;
- Pray that You will grow in Your understanding of His Word – plead for the Spirit to teach you the truth;
- Plead for the power to obey. Confess your desire to obey His will and cry out for His help in doing it.
- Pray that you will be content with what God wills, acknowledging His goodness and wisdom;
- Ask God to deliver you from a spirit of complaining and murmuring against Him;
- Pray for 50/20 vision. This is based on Genesis 50:20. In this verse, Joseph confessed that God was at work even when his brothers did their worst. We need that kind of vision – a vision that sees the hand of God at work in all situations. We are

never forsaken. God never abandons us. He is at work!

How do you put this into practice in praying for your church? **Psalm 119** is a powerful example of praying for God's will to be done in the lives of believers. I strive to pray regularly through this psalm for myself and for other believers. It provides of a model of how to pray this petition of the Model Prayer. The following are Scripture prayers based on the first section of this psalm. In upcoming editions of *The Prayer Closet*, I will include more Scripture prayers based on this psalm. You can use these or develop your. You might consider praying them for yourself or for your church:

Father, Your Word says that blessed are those whose way is blameless, undefiled by sin. They are blameless because they live according to Your instruction. I pray that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church will walk in obedience to Your commands, living according to Your instructions (**119:1**).

Father, Your Word declares that blessed are those who keep Your decrees, those who seek You with all their heart. I plead that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church will keep Your decrees, seeking to understand Your Word with all their heart (**119:2**).

Father, Your Word states that those who follow Your ways do not practice iniquity. I ask that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church will follow Your ways, delivering each of them from their remaining sinfulness (**119:3**).

Father, You have commanded that Your precepts should be kept diligently. I pray that You would grant a heart to keep diligently Your precepts to all the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church (**119:4**).

Father, the psalmist cries out, O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes. Father, by the power of Your Spirit, direct us in the path of obedience to Your Word (**119:5**).

Father, Your Word says that we will not be ashamed when we seek to understand and obey Your commands. O God, stir each believer of \_\_\_\_\_ to know and obey Your Word (**119:6**).

Father, the psalmist declares that he will praise You with a sincere heart when he learns Your righteous judgments. I plead that the believers of \_\_\_\_\_ Church will grow in their understanding of Your Word and that they will abound in praise to You (**119:7**).

Father, I plead that we will keep Your statutes. O God, don't forsake us; revive us and lead us to greater obedience to You and Your will (**119:8**).

How do you put this into practice when praying for your community or city? The Bible reveals many metaphors in describing itself. You can use these metaphors to pray for your community or your city. It will provide you a model of how you can pray for God's will to be done in your area:

Father, Your Word is sweeter than honey. I plead that You would create a hunger in the people of this area for Your Word. I plead that it will be sweeter to them than anything that the world has to offer (**Psalms 19:10**).

Father, Your Word is like a hammer. I pray in Jesus' name that Your Word will shatter the complacency and self-centeredness of the people in this area. I ask that it would penetrate even the hardest heart, bringing many to saving faith in Jesus Christ (**Jeremiah 5:14**).

Father, Your Word is like fire. I pray that it would burn in the hearts of the people of this area. Grant conviction through the Word. Burn away all their excuses with the holy truth of Your Word (**Jeremiah 23:29**).

Father, Your Word is like gold. I ask that the people of this area will see that Your Word is more valuable than anything else. I plead that they will see it as more precious than any other

possession on this earth. Lead them to seek after Your Word more than any other earthly possession or position (**Psalms 19:10**).

Father, Your Word is like a lamp and a light. Your Word has the power to lead us out of darkness and into the light of Your salvation. I plead that in the darkness of this area, Your Word will shine brightly like a lamp. Cause it to shine into lives so that the lost will be saved, the hurting healed, the captives set free, the addicted delivered, the demon-possessed liberated, and lives transformed (**Psalms 119:105**).

Father, Your Word is like milk. Your Word is spiritual nourishment. I plead that the people of this area will crave for Your Word. I pray that they will long for the truth of the Word like a newborn babe does for milk. I ask that they will feed on the Word, finding salvation in Christ and growing in Him (**1 Peter 2:2**).

Father, Your Word is like a mirror. I ask that the people of this area will look into the mirror of the Word. I pray that they will see themselves for what they really are. Strip away all the self-righteousness and arrogance. Show them their utter sinfulness and their need for the Savior Jesus. I plead that they will continue to gaze into the mirror of Your Word, growing in Christlikeness (**James 1:23-25**).

Father, Your Word is like a sword. I pray that it will cut through all the bondage in this area. I plead that Your Word will penetrate lives, delivering people from the grip of the evil one. Cut the cords that have people bound by the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (**Ephesians 6:17**).

Father, Your Word is like water. I pray that it will penetrate the lives of the people in this area, leading them to Christ for forgiveness and cleansing. Use Your Word to clean out their lives. O God, let Your Word lead them to holiness before You (**Ephesians 5:25-26**).

Father, Your Word is like seed. I pray that it will be planted deeply in the lives of the people

throughout this area. Bring forth spiritual fruit in Your way. Empower my church to spread the Word everywhere (**1 Peter 1:23**).

Father, You send snow and it waters the earth, making it bud and flourish. The snow always accomplishes the purpose You send it for. Your Word is like snow. I plead that Your Word will go forth in this area, accomplishing Your good pleasure and bringing glory to Your great name (**Isaiah 53:10-11**).

The bottom line of this petition is surrender to God's will. It is surrender to His Word, yielding obedience in daily life. It is surrender to His providence, trusting Him in every circumstance in life. I hope and pray that this petition is not just one you repeat in a prayer but living truth that you embrace and seek to practice day-by-day.

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