

ENJOYING GOD // Your Will Be Done

The most influential person in the history of the world, was asked: “Teach us to pray... teach us how to connect with God. Teach how we are to be with God, to enjoy God, to commune with Him.” And Jesus gave us the Lord’s Prayer.

Over the last 6 weeks now we’ve been talking about what it means to enjoy God, to be with God, to be loved by Him, to receive His love, and to respond in love toward Him.

Christianity isn’t just a set of beliefs that we’re supposed to adhere to, but a lifestyle we’re invited to follow.

God isn’t just some impersonal distant being. He’s deeply personal, unbelievably relational and He’s created us to enjoy Him forever!

“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

- Westminster Shorter Catechism

Our goal in this series isn’t to improve your prayer life. Our goal is to help you enjoy God, because if you begin to enjoy Him, your prayer life will improve.

Now, today we’re talking about submission. It’s about surrender. 4 words.

Matthew 6:10, “Your will be done....”

Now, when you read this at first, it feels like you’re resigning yourself to something that you’re not a participant of.

But that’s not what this means. Jesus is praying, *God, may Your will happen. May Your desires happen. May everything that You want to happen, not just out there somewhere, but right here. In me. Through Me. Around Me.*

Thomas Watson, a 17th century writer said,

“When you pray thy will be done, Jesus is telling you to pray two things. You are praying that you might do diligently all that he commands and that you also might submit patiently to all He inflicts.”

There is both full participation and full surrender. It’s both cooperative and submissive.

“Your will be done” comes before “give us this day our daily bread.” And the order is extremely important.

“Your will be done” before “give me this day,” means that the purpose of prayer is not to bend God’s will to do what you want, but to bend your will to do what God wants.

E. Stanley Jones, wrote this,

“If I throw out a boathook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.”

“Your will be done” comes before any personal requests.

Now, does that mean your wants don’t matter? Does that mean your desires aren’t important to God? Not at all.

In fact, we’re commanded to bring our wants, our desires, our requests to God.

Philippians 4:6 “...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

Psalms 37:4, “Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

Your desires matter to God... He loves you... He’s your Father, and He invites you to bring your wants, your desires to Him...

The question isn’t “does God care?” the question is “are we aware?”

See, the bigger problem is that the majority of Western Americans are sprinting so fast through life completely unaware of what our desires even are! We race through life at such a hurried pace that we’re not even paying attention to what’s driving us or what wants or desires are buried underneath. If someone were to ask us what we want or what we’re after in any given situation, a large portion of us would have to stop for a significant amount of time to even figure out an answer!

And the reality is, if you don’t know what your desires are, not only can you not understand why you’re doing the things that you’re doing (why you think, act, behave in certain ways), but you can’t genuinely pray “your will be done.” Because what are you even saying? What are you even submitting to?

Think about Jesus in the garden the night he was betrayed. He knows the crucifixion is coming His way, and look at His request.

Luke 22:41, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me.”

What is Jesus' desire? To not go to the cross! In fact, He doesn't want to go to the cross so badly, His stress level is so high that He begins to sweat drops of blood. He REALLY doesn't want to do this, at least not this way.

Have you ever thought about that? Jesus had a will, and it was different than His Father's will. He names it and brings His desire to the Father.

That's what God wants from you. Become aware and name what it is you actually want. Don't lie, because He knows it already. Bring it to Him.

But then Jesus says, **Luke 22:41**, **"Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done."** If you don't know what you want, if you can't name it, praying, *"Your will be done"* holds little weight because it is vague! What are you even praying? What are you even submitting to?

But only when you name and bring your specific wants, only then does *"Your will be done"* hold any weight because only then does it actually MEAN something!

The Christian view of the will of God is that God cares deeply about your desires, and invites us to bring those to Him, and choose to release our will freely, and trust Him with whatever it is He wants to do, knowing that He is a good Father who loves His children. It is absolutely radical.

It's not, "God do whatever you want and what I want doesn't matter." It's "God this is what I want, and it does matter, but I choose to trust and submit to you because what you have planned for me is far better than anything I could come up with on my own. Your will be done."

John Wesley wrote this, and this is essentially an expanded version of the your will be done.

*"I am no longer my own, but Yours.
Put me to what You will, rank me with whom You will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for You, or laid aside for You,
exalted for You, or brought low for You;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing:

I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
to Your pleasure and disposal."*

It's "Your will be done, NOT MINE. All my wants, all my desires, all those things I think I need or want to happen in my life... they matter. They matter to me. But I trust You to take care of me.

See, if you don't know God as your Father, if you don't Hallow His name, if you're trying to build your own kingdom rather than seeking His, you can't pray this prayer. At least not in its fullness because you can't trust your life over to someone that you don't know. Or someone you don't trust.

But God has invited you to know Him deeply. Personally. To be with Him. To know Him as your Father. To enjoy His presence and to be enjoyed by Him.

And if you know Him like that, only then can you pray, "I know what my will is, but I want yours to be done. Not mine."

What you'll discover in those moments is a sense not only of God's pleasure over you, but you'll know that He's with you, walking beside you. And you'll live with a peace and a restfulness that the world can't understand.

Most people are walking around getting the Lord's prayer out of order. They're praying, "Give me" before "Thy will" and what Jesus is teaching us here is that we'll never truly enjoy or know God if we're always pray "give me" before you pray "your will."

If you can pray "thy will" before "give me" it will completely change the nature of what you ask for when you get to your requests.

If you can pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done," that when you get to "give me this day," you'll recognize He's already given you everything you could ever want or need. And all of a sudden, you're not praying for God to fulfill some superficial or materialistic desire. Everything you need is already satisfied in Him. You're not praying *to be* satisfied, you're praying from already being satisfied in Him.

If you can say "your will be done," then the very nature of what you pray for will be transformed into the things you know God desires.

In the Old Testament, there's a guy named Jacob. You can read about this story in Genesis 32.

Jacob was a man filled with self-pity. He was always lying and cheating to get what he wanted and was never happy with the way his life was going. He was mad that he didn't get the wife he wanted or the career he wanted. He was always fighting with his father and his uncle. And this is one of the heroes of the faith.

One night he was out in the desert alone and a mysterious stranger pounced on him and began to wrestle with him. And Jacob wrestled back. And they wrestled all night.

And at some point, Jacob realized who he was wrestling with. This was not an ordinary human being. This was God himself come to wrestle with Jacob.

His whole life flashed before his eyes and he realizes that his whole life he hadn't been fighting with his father or his uncle or his circumstances but with God. Jacob thinks, as would many of us, *AHA. Here is my opportunity to pin God. Finally I will get from God what I deserve. Finally the blessings I've always wanted!*

This is how most people view prayer. The opportunity to pin God. We say, *I've been a Christian for 5 years, and I've abstained from bad things, and I go and do good things and because of my service to you, I pray that you'd finally give me what I deserve! You owe me!*

If that's how you pray, you're trying to pin God. It's "My Will, not thy will."

Jacob keeps wrestling, even harder after he realized who he's wrestling, and at one point it seems like he's doing pretty well.

But the stranger shows how much power he really has, and how little effort he was putting into this wrestling match, he reaches out and touches Jacob's leg, and it goes totally dead.

Jacob is then permanently crippled and suddenly Jacob realizes the futility, the sheer idiocy to think He could wrestle GOD into submission to his will! But he doesn't let go, and Jacob is transformed... totally crippled, clinging to God. Listen to what Jacob says now:

Genesis 32:26, "...I will not let you go unless you bless me."

Now, God says, the sun is coming up, and if you see my face you'll die.

Do you see what Jacob is asking for? It's not bless me with things, or stuff, or with career, or status. It's bless me with YOU. I just want YOU! I want to see your face!

And then God gives him a new name. No longer Jacob, but Israel – which means, one who has wrestled with God and triumphed.

Don't you see what God is saying!? He's saying *Jacob you wrestled with me and now you get it. You've triumphed because you're no longer after what I can give you, you're after me! You're no longer trying to get me to submit to your will, you're submitting not just your will, but your whole life to me.*

Jacob, I've been waiting all your life for this moment and now you've triumphed!

Is God waiting for you to triumph? Is he waiting for you to say what Jacob said? Bless me... let me see your face... all I want is YOU!

See, church – no other religion teaches something so upside down, so inside out. Do you see?

Look at Jesus... His life is the perfect example of everything He taught us.

"You don't win by winning, you win by losing, you gain by giving, you live by dying! You only become truly great when you stop thinking and acting like you're something great. You're only great when you're not trying to prove how great you are... when it's no longer about you. Only when you're humble and meek are you truly great. If you're after worldly power, you're weak. But only when you're weak does true power show up. Only when you're weak will My strength be perfected in You. You'll never find yourself if you're seeking to find yourself. You'll only ever find yourself when you abandon yourself and come to Me."

When you pray *"Your will be done,"* you're praying, *Lord, if I get nothing else, if I only ever have you, it's enough. All I want is you, and I want to give myself completely and utterly to you. "Your will be done."*

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

You have to see that there was someone besides Jacob who wrestled with God. The night before He was going to die, Jesus Himself, wrestled with God, for you in the garden. And it was all about whose will would be done. Jesus saw something bearing down on him, the weight of the whole world was about to crush him.

The wrath of God against sin was coming down on Jesus. And he prays, "Father, let there be another way. Is there any way out of this?" And God says no. And what did Jesus do? He wrestled, but in the end, he said, "Your will be done."

And because He submitted to His Father in heaven, He won through losing, he gained by giving, he lived by dying. Jesus Christ triumphed over sin and death, by losing, giving, and dying and it was all because of "Your will be done."

Think about Jesus, look at what was coming down on him! Look at what He was up against, look at the life he lived. If anyone ever had a reason to say – *"but look at how well I've served you"* – it was Jesus, but he didn't.

Knowing the price he had to pay, that it would cost Him everything, He still said “Your will be done.” You saying, “your will be done” costs you nothing compared to what it cost him. If Jesus can pray it in those circumstances, you can pray it in yours.

Church, if you live “my will be done” you’re enslaved. But only when you can pray “thy will be done,” will you truly be free.