

"..... THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH"

Matthew 6:9a, 10b *After this manner therefore pray ye:^{10b} Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [KJV]*

Thus the Lord Jesus taught in the Sermon of the Mount and heeded it Himself in His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, before Calvary:

Mark 14:36 *"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." [NIV]*

Because He understood His purpose and mission on earth as,

John 6:38 *"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me." [ESV]*

We ourselves repeat this teaching often, when reciting the "Lord's Prayer."

I always welcome the Father's will for I have learned that it is good and it is always for the good of all those who trust Him.

Then I might ask: "How would I know what is His will? What is it that I may think, say and do to fulfill His will?"

A first step is to recognize that His will is not my will and to submit my will to His will, to the point of denying my will, as Jesus did in Gethsemane, because:

Exodus 20:3 *"You shall have no other gods before Me." [NKJV]*

"no other gods": not even myself, my reasoning or my common sense. The denial of myself, required by the Lord, is total and encompassing:

Luke 9:23 *Then He said to them all, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me." [HCSB]*

This entreaty of the Lord, presented in each one of the synoptic Gospels, is for me to follow Him; not to follow nor to join a religion, a theology, a creed.

Rather it is being a new creature altogether:

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. [NASB]*

Because,

Romans 6:4 *We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. [ESV]*

Similarly, His will — expressed as the great commission, at the end on His earthly ministry — is:

Matthew 28:19 *"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." [NRSV]*

"make disciples" He said, not "make converts" to a religion, a theology, a creed: "disciples," who would follow Him in every circumstance — no matter what the circumstance might be — having only one loyalty, a loyalty to the object of their faith: the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hence, the relationship with Jesus Christ, the One and only Living God — that is: abiding in Him — is the foundation of my knowing His will.

This relationship begins with unfettered faith in Him, Who — when returning — will be looking not for wisdom, nor peace, nor love, but faith:

Luke 18:8b *..... Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? [KJV]*

Because,

John 3:18 *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." [NKJV]*

We have also been taught that the first step towards faith and entering His kingdom is repentance: recognizing my own sinful condition of not acknowledging my complete dependence on God.

Matthew 9:13b *for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. [KJV]*

And, in fact,

Matthew 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. [KJV]*

Without repentance, there ensues destruction:

Luke 13:5 *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. [KJV]*

Then, faith — once born — grows by trials,

1 Peter 1:7 *These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. [NLT]*

There are physical trials, which can be painful and difficult and there may be — more insidious yet — trials of the intellect, when we deem God to be contradicting our common sense, our prejudices or our traditional values:

Luke 13:1-3 At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did." [NRSV]

Wouldn't my judgment be that the slaughtered Galileans were indeed worse than the others? Not so, said the Lord. Am I then willing to accept the God, Who would do so?

Yes, I must and I will,

1 Corinthians 1:19-20 For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will set aside the understanding of the experts. [HCSB]

In fact, I have no choice, but to accept, once I realize that:

Isaiah 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. [NRSV]

Once I deny my right to myself, the Lord is free to do His work through me.

I may then begin to seek to understand His will by not being unwise,

Ephesians 5:17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. [NJKV]

but by seeking the wisdom, which I still lack:

James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. [NASB]

The importance of asking in prayer to know His will is fundamental, as the Apostle Paul reassured the church at Colossae:

Colossians 1:9 So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. [NLT]

To the church at Thessalonica, the Apostle explained further that praying and giving thanks to the Lord not only will give wisdom and knowledge of His will, but are — by themselves — instances of doing the will of God

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 Pray without ceasing. ¹⁸In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. [KJV]

Next, I may consider the truth given to Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. [KJV]

which is the basis for the instruction in the first letter that, while waiting for the arrival of the Apostle, his disciple Timothy should:

1 Timothy 4:13b focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them. [NLT]

Further there is this advice for the ministry of the church family:

Hebrews 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. [ESV]

It is important to consider that encouragement can be provided by example:

Matthew 5:16 "..... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." [NRSV]

However, I must be mindful of my heart and my intent:

Ephesians 6:6 Don't work only while being watched, in order to please men, but as slaves of Christ, do God's will from your heart. [HCSB]

I must also understand that the will of God may well be different for each one of us in the church family and not impose my example or my ministry on another:

1 Corinthians 12:29-30, 13:1 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way. ^{13:1}Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. [NKJV]

In conclusion, I am to:

- Believe,
- Repent,
- Pray,
- Ask to be wise and to know His will,
- Study the scriptures,
- Encourage the church family,
- Give good example,
- Recognize that God wishes to use different people for different purposes and not impose my will on others.

Finally, for encouragement and guidance:

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is God's will, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality. [HCSB]