

Angela Pound

Lord's Prayer

Notes

Teaching (Practicing the Way)

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As I mentioned last week when talking about, “Your Kingdom Come” of which would follow today, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven, that this phrase put together, can be considered to be the priority of the prayer - for God’s kingdom to come, God’s will to be done. While last week was a bit more on maybe what you might consider the technical side, this week is a lot more personal. A lot of reflecting, some of which I have shared with you in the past, but I want to relate it again, to how it fits with, “your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

It was the Sunday evening after Spencer preached here on Hallowed Be Your Name, which started to stir up thoughts for this weekends message. These thoughts though came about it a very round about way, so hang on until the end if you’re wondering where I’m going or how this all fits together, sometimes things seem much more aligned in my head than what they actually are.

So back to that Sunday. My sister was home so Madi and I

were out with my sister and mom to my dad's place for supper as the boys were at a Scout dinner. We were playing a game of 45s, a favourite card game of my paternal's grandparents family. I remember watching family play it at just about every family gathering. The kids would sit off to the side watching while the adults played until we figured out how to play it for ourselves and then we would eventually be invited to play, but that's besides the point. We were playing 45s, when somehow we got talking about math. I think because Madi, who always does the score, gypped my sister of points by mistake, as she didn't realize who was partners in that round (for we were playing 5 handed...my favourite version, but partners change every round so you have to keep on top of it as to who gets what points each round). Either way, we were talking about math and how both of my kids enjoy math, just like me, and my sister was saying how much she did as well and that she skipped a grade in math just like me, which surprised Madi as she didn't know that, but you could see the pride in her face as it added one more thing that she was just like her aunt.

Why math? Why have I enjoyed it for so much of my life? To the point that from my earliest memories of school I would work on math problems outside of school, while others were outside playing, or one time when my brother and sister went fishing to the local river, I went with them, but

with my school books in tow, doing math problems on the bank of the river.

I think it was not only because of the joy in solving a challenging problem or how uncovering a solution is highly rewarding, but more so for me, math offered a clear, logical structure that made sense to me. The rules and patterns were consistent, it created a sense of order and predictability in a world that for me, could sometimes feel chaotic. It, unlike a class like English, had a right or wrong answer and a way (sometimes multiple) to get there, but I didn't have to worry about the interpretation of things, unlike English class. I've always loved to read, but not for English class. It was one of my high school English classes, when we read *Animal Farm*. I read the book, thought it was weird, but got through it, to all of a sudden have conversations in class about what it was actually about, the Russian Revolution, and I was like, how would I know that from reading the book. I knew nothing about the Russian Revolution at the time and so couldn't understand the connections they were making to the book until I understood the history more, and then would have to reread the book with that new information. So, how does this all come up from hearing, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?

6 years, I asked God to use me in a prayer one evening and continued to do so, looking back now it was similar to me

praying to God for his will to be done just using different words, but the meaning being the same. God use me in whatever way you need to for your world, and I had no idea of the change in trajectory God would have for me and my family. I had to let go of my own sense of order and predictability, or really the security in me that math was offering me, the sense of control that I was able to have within my small part of my own world. Instead of avoiding the feeling of chaos, or what felt like chaos to me, I instead needed to face it, seeking God throughout it and knowing that things were going to be okay on the other side. As Pastor Chris would say to me during this time, everything's going to be okay in the end, and if it's not okay, it's not the end.

I had to rest in the fact that God would see me through, to keep searching God's will not only for my life, but for the world around me. I've had to face things I'm scared about. Remember English class, well sometimes in my divinity classes, or in reading for my sermons, I'll read one interpretation of a passage, to then read something different, and then try to figure out what to do with that. That was why I didn't enjoy English class growing up, but it's right where God has me as I continuously rely on Him asking, what are you trying to reveal to me?

I read a blog by someone who said, "the idea that God *uses* people to accomplish his purposes is too

utilitarian and mechanical to do justice to what we see in the scriptures about how God relates to his people. It assumes that all God really cares about is *getting his stuff done*, and people are just there for him to “use” to get that stuff done. Like tools. Or dogs pulling sleds. Objects whose sole purpose is performing a function. You use them until they wear out, then you get a new one. But that’s not the picture scripture gives us of how God relates to us.” I understand where they are coming from, but for me, that’s not how I saw it when I asked God to use me. Another individual said, “Will I have the nerve to go beyond studying the love of God and allow God to love me in such a way that I feel his love in this world? If so, I’m certain that walking in the good works prepared for me won’t feel so much like “work” but will in and of themselves feel much more like the reward because I’m going to work with my Abba Father. Bottom line - God has children, not employees. God gives us a covenant, not a contract. God gives us love, not busy work.” Asking God to use me was a phrase that I said to God knowing I was asking God to reveal to me how my life could be used to further His kingdom, for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, and it has been a wonderful, rewarding, challenging adventure, that I am so thankful God has asked me to go on.

You have probably repeated these words, your kingdom

come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, but have you truly meant it? I prayed them for years, for as long as I've known the Lord's Prayer, I've repeated the prayer in church anytime we were asked, but did I mean it? Even when I initially prayed to God to use me, I didn't really mean it. Or at least whatever God wanted. You see, if it was something I was in agreement with, sure, I was all on board, but when it wasn't? God asked me to help out with VBS...I didn't want to, that was my summer vacation. God then asked me to go back to school....I didn't want to, I had just finished what I thought was my last degree, my kids were busy how was I going to add in studying? God asked me to leave my job to go back to school full time....how were we going to afford to live? God asked me to apply for the pastor position here....how was I going to do this, I didn't feel equipped. I was the one who liked a sense of order, predictability.....but God was telling me, this was His will, and there was a peace in there.

I met a very dynamic speaker this week and pulled him aside to get some advice on preaching. I told him what had gone on these last number of years, but particularly this last year being called to full time ministry here where I am now preaching most weeks without a lot of experience, and I haven't taken classes in it yet. I remember once I finished his eyes were slightly wide and he said, "Oh Wow!" He gave some advice, including using the skills I had

learned in my teaching career and some books that he recommended to read, but he ended with amongst other things, “You do you...God didn't call you to these moments to be someone other than you.” If you align yourself with God’s will He will make things happen and put people in your life to lead and support you, as I have discovered, especially these last 6 months as many individuals have come alongside me to support me.

Phillip Keller writes, “The tremendous truth is that the will of God and the doing of that will is the most important activity in all the world. The will of God is of such enormous magnitude and majesty that it completely overshadows all other concepts in the Christian life. Doing the Father’s will is the one gigantic, central theme which should dominate the lives of all God’s children. That is why Jesus put it at the very heart and center of the prayer. It is the central theme about which all the others are grouped. It had been and was and ever would be the lodestar by which His own life was lived. What had He come down to earth for? To do the will of God. Why had He, the Son of God, set foot on the stage of human history? To do the will of God. Why did He condescend to be born among us; to grow up among us as a man, carpenter; to minister to us as a wandering prophet; to die deliberately for us, the sinless One for sinners; to be buried and rise again; to return to heaven? All of this was but to do the Father’s will.”

Jesus specifically states in the Gospel of John, “for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” In Matthew, Jesus says, “not my will, but yours” to his Father, not once, but twice in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was arrested. He prays for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, just as he taught his disciples to pray.

God’s will penetrates every area of life. This mighty will reveals itself in the beauty and wonder of nature. If you’ve ever seen the show, Young Sheldon, a spin off series from the Big Bang Theory of Sheldon when he was younger, Sheldon is talking to his mom after being concerned for her. He says, he’s scared, she didn’t go to church or say grace, he’s wondering what’s going on. She explains that she is struggling with her faith, at which point Sheldon says to her, do you know that if gravity were slightly more powerful the universe would collapse into a ball, and if gravity were slightly less powerful the universe would fly apart and there would be no stars or planets. She asks where he’s going with this. He points out, that gravity is precisely as strong as it needs to be. And if the ratio of the electromagnetic force to the strong force wasn’t 1%, life wouldn’t exist, what are the odds that would happen all by itself? She asks why he’s pointing this out when he doesn’t believe in God, at which he says, the universe at least makes it logical to conclude there is a creator. God’s will

can be seen and sensed in all the exciting environments of our planet. And it was most remarkably demonstrated in the life of Jesus. It is found at work in any human heart and character when a sincere soul seeks to know and do the will of God. It finds an outlet in the details of day-to-day decisions which Christ's followers make for His sake. If we are to understand and appreciate God's will, we must know something of God, for we can't separate God from his will. To recognize and acknowledge the will of God, you must recognize and acknowledge God.

If God is good, if He is reasonable, if He is compassionate, then His will is too. This is what I had to recognize. We need to know, not just in our head, but in our hearts, God is for us. If I loved God, which I do, then I had to stop fearing His will, I had to trust Him with my actions, not just my words. The will of God is found in both his works and His word. In what he has done and still does, in what He said, and still says. It continues in the Holy Spirit working in our hearts and lives. As Paul says in Ephesians 1:9–10 “he [God] has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”

So, are you seeking his will for your life, your community, your church, for God to reign in all human hearts. When we pray, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven we are

asking for the reign and rule of heaven to be experienced on earth. We are crying out to God, come, Lord Jesus, come, we care about the advancement of the gospel and we pray with hope. Some of you, will be the answer to other people's prayers and some of you will be the answer to your own prayer. Trust in the Lord and His promises.

When we align our wills with God's, we invite the power of heaven into our situations. Whether it's in the form of reconciliation, restoration, or healing, God's will has the power to break through and change lives. For years, I have battled the what if's with so much anxiety. Not always trusting in the Lord and His promises. As I was writing this sermon, I gave my notice to my teaching job that I wasn't coming back next year and I read in a book the passage, "The joy of serving Jesus cannot be duplicated by the world." There was no apprehension this time, I knew this was exactly God's will for my life in this moment. I have had numerous people say to me over this past year that they notice a difference in me, a more peace, and I can feel it. God is so good, pleasing and perfect. So when you pray, "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" mean it. Invite God to work in and through you to bring His will to earth. This is not just about our effort. God's will, when it is done on earth, carries with it the power to transform. It brings healing, redemption, and renewal. Just as Jesus brought the kingdom of God near in His life and ministry,

we are called to be ambassadors of that kingdom today. You are called to participate in His kingdom now and until the day when it will be fully realized. Right now, live as those who are already living in the light of that kingdom, working to bring heaven to earth in all that we do. May you pray with hearts full of trust, surrender, and hope, knowing that the will of God is and always will be the best place to be.