

On Earth As in Heaven

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 'Give us this day our daily bread. 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'" (Matthew 6:9-13)

There is a phrase in verse 10 that is often overlooked during the analysis given to this sample prayer, *"Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven."* The expression of God's will to humanity has been provided by God, *"to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways"* and *"to us in His Son"* (Hebrews 1:1-2). This suggests that God has provided all that is necessary for us to understand what He wants us to do here on earth.

The second portion *"on earth as it is in heaven"* indicates that all other creation has been commanded and yields to God's will. Specifically, *"in heaven"* speaks of those created beings that serve the throne, both in the presence of the throne, and as sent forth by command of the throne. From the cherubim throughout all the myriads of angels, the singular objective of all inhabitants of heaven is to do the will of God.

Some also refer to the laws of nature and all portions of creation to conclude that the entire universe is continuously obedient to God's will. They say, "Stars burn according to his will; planets rotate in the paths He assigned, clouds float through the sky delivering rain." Every created being and object responds to the creator's instructions in uninterrupted obedience, except mankind. People are created with free will, the ability to choose between obeying God and doing as they feel. Too often, people make the wrong choice. As a result, we are continually reminded to follow God's instructions as the angels do.

The psalmist understood. In a passage that also refers to the Christ, he said, *"I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart"* (Psalms 40:8). The law in the heart of the psalmist caused praises to be shouted through the land and recorded for us in the scriptures. The law in the heart causes the individual to follow the angels in submitting to the will of God. The will of God in our hearts cause our attitudes, ambitions, and actions to conform to righteousness in all aspects of life. As the will of God changes our life, we will be changed as Paul urged the Romans. *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect"* (Romans 12:2). Blessings expressed in Luke 16:20-23 will be yours. You will do the right thing (Matthew 7:24-27). You will help and provide for others (Matthew 25:35-36). The anxieties of this world will not interfere with serving God (Matthew 6:25-34).

Jesus conducted Himself with the singular purpose to obey the divine direction to save mankind, *"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me"* (John 4:34). As Jesus was praying in the garden, just before His arrest, He prayed *"not as I will, but as You will"* (Matthew 26:39). Later in the same prayer, He prayed, *"O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done"* (Matthew 26:42). In all that He endured, He remained faithful to The Father.

By these examples, we are reminded to not only to take the will of God into our heart but to remain faithful. Paul tells us of the faithfulness of Abraham in Romans 4:20. *"He did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God."* Paul also advised the Ephesians. *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might"* (Ephesians 6:10). And the Hebrew writer presents reliable advice. *"Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised"* (Hebrews 10:35-36).

Our duty, as indicated by Jesus' words in Matthew 6:10 is to find and follow God's will. His will is contained in scripture. As we make that will the standard of our lives and the ruler of our conduct, our activities become like *"it is in heaven."* The summation of Solomon applies here as it does in many other lessons. *"The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man"* (Ecclesiastes 12:13, ESV).