



WEEK 3: YOUR WAY OR THE HIGHWAY?

TEXT: MATTHEW 6:5-13

Introduction:

The Lord's Prayer teaches us about how God's will, rather than our own, should be central to our prayer lives. This can come as quite a shock to those of us who have been given every opportunity in life to create our "own" futures. Jesus is our model of a life surrendered to God's will. He submitted himself to death on the cross, in order to carry out God's will on earth, even though in his humanity, it was physically and emotionally excruciating. He understood that God's will was perfect and that in submitting to it, God would bring about his great plan for humanity.

1 THE WILL OF GOD REIGNS SUPREME

- Read Isaiah 45:5 & 46:8

Although the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all equal, both Jesus and the Spirit submit their will to the will of the Father. This divine submission teaches us what it means to submit to God's perfect will. God's will is to establish his kingdom on the earth, which brings redemption, justice, restoration, healing, deliverance, joy, peace and freedom. His will is not subject to moods and feelings, or to the environment and circumstances. God's will remains constant and no plan or purpose of his can be thwarted.

- ❖ Q: How does Job 42:2 help us to trust in God's ability to fulfill his plans?
- ❖ Q: Why does it matter that God's will is supreme, and therefore cannot be undermined by anyone or anything?

2 THE WILL OF GOD BRINGS TO US WHAT OUR OWN WILL SIMPLY CANNOT

"God's grace will tear down our self-oriented, self-righteous, little kingdom, only to rebuild in its place a bigger, better and eternal Kingdom."
(Tripp, 2011)

We view all of life from a very limited perspective that is narrow, subjective and self-centred. We just cannot see from God's perspective and most of the time, our desire to know God's will is simply a control issue for us. We want to be in charge of every single outcome of our lives, believing (deep down inside) that our will is better than God's. And yet God is the only one who sees the bigger picture, and knows the plans he has for us that will bring about his good and perfect will. Sometimes we just need to look back at what God has done in bringing us to where we are now, in order to see that his plans do in fact have purpose, despite some of our desperate attempts to change the course of his will. Regardless of how uncomfortable the current road he is leading on may be, we can trust him to get us to the destiny to which he has called us.

- ❖ Q: What is your biggest struggle in trusting God with your tomorrow? (E.G. trusting his goodness, believing he is faithful, believing that his plans are for good and not for evil or that it may involve discomfort along the journey....etc.)
- ❖ Q: Why is our own comfort very often our biggest barrier to following God's will wholeheartedly?
- ❖ Q: In hindsight, in what areas of your life are you now thankful for God's will rather than your own, even though at the time you were disillusioned and angry with God?

3 WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD AND HOW CAN WE KNOW IT?

- Read Genesis 1:27, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Colossians 3:10, Isaiah 55:8-11

In the beginning, before sin entered into the human race, we were created in God's image. Those of us who are now in Christ are being continuously transformed into his likeness, which is God's main purpose for us. God also wills that we obey and apply the scriptures to our lives, so that we can imitate his character and live out of our new identity as God's children. This does not mean merely adhering to his moral absolutes, but rather that we intentionally put on his character in all that we say and do. We have the choice to obey or disobey God in every decision we make and in every interaction we have.

God's will never contradicts what the scriptures teach. When the scriptures teach opposite to our desires, we need to lay those desires down and trust that God's ways are better than ours, and that his plans for our good will prevail, regardless of the immediate cost to us. The only way that we will know what the scriptures teach, is by taking the time to study the Bible for ourselves.



- ❖ Q: Why is it important to know that being like Christ is God's primary concern for us?
- ❖ Q: How does one become more like Christ?
- ❖ Q: What is the difference between moral obedience and obedience to the scriptures from the heart?
- ❖ Q: Why is obedience to God's word, whether we understand its reasoning or not, critical for transformation?
- ❖ Personal Reflection Q: In what ways are you currently disobeying God's word, and letting certain things slide, because they have become acceptable within your community or in your group of friends? (E.G. Gossiping or being a busybody, spending money you don't have, breaking the traffic laws, drinking more alcohol than God would want you to, crossing sexual boundaries that are reserved for marriage, over-eating, being greedy, holding on to bitterness, not forgiving someone, being short tempered, selfish, lazy, jealous, prideful...etc.)
- ❖ Q: Do you study the Bible in order to know more about God, in order to live a life of obedience? If not, what steps are you going to put in place so that you can grow in this area?

4. IN ORDER FOR GOD'S WILL TO BE DONE.

WE NEED TO LAY DOWN OUR OWN

True submission to God's will is not just passive surrender. It comes from a place in our hearts of love and trust in our heavenly father, where we truly believe that he is good and that his will is far better than ours. True submission is not just a relinquishing of our control, but it is a willing 'handing-over' of our hopes, dreams, feelings and desires into God's hands. This is so counter-intuitive for us and feels incredibly risky. In our sinful nature, we are wired to worship anything and everything that will make us feel good and yet these are the very things that end up destroying our joy. Worshipping God and submitting to his will is what we really need most, and so in God's grace, he leads us time and time again, back to the place where we realise our absolute need for him in every area of our lives, which at times comes through our own suffering.

- ❖ Q: What is the difference between passively surrendering to God's will and choosing to submit to God's will?
- ❖ Q: Why do we so often feel as though it is risky to submit to God's will and why is this belief faulty?
- ❖ Q: Why is it the best thing for us to worship God and submit to his plans for our lives?
- ❖ Q: How does God use our own suffering to remind us of our absolute dependence on him?

Works Cited:

Tripp, P. (2011, November 02). *The Transforming Power of Prayer (Part 5)*. Retrieved May 04, 2015, from Paul Tripp Ministries: <http://paultrippministries.blogspot.com/>