



Lord's Prayer (4): *Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*

Q192. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition (which is, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven*), acknowledging that by nature we and all men are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and to do the will of God, but prone to rebel against his word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray, that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart; and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy, as the angels do in heaven.

1. God's Will

What is 'will' anyway? = what God *wants* to happen.

But that is not so simple.

Did God want the Jews and Romans to crucify Jesus?

Discuss, and when you have some thoughts, look up Acts 2:23 to get some more ideas.

God's Two Wills

God's will of *decree*
Sovereign will
Hidden
Providence
Never broken

God's will of *command*
Will of *desire*
Revealed
Laws
Often broken

(This is not so strange – we too often have two wills:

Shall I go running this morning? Do I want my son to do his homework?)

Acts 4:27-28

We cannot ever fail to follow God's sovereign will! This prayer is about his revealed will: to do God's will is to obey his *commands*.

2. God's will and our will

...as it is in heaven. What does happen in heaven? Psalm 103:20-21

How is earth different?

Sin is choosing our will over God's will.

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:4-6

Psalm 1

1 John 3:4

John 8:42-44a

Breaking God's will of command never means we escape from his will of decree; but it does bring God's wrath and judgment down upon us and others.

This is a prayer that we and others would obey God's commands, and do what is right – just as the angels do in heaven.

3. Jesus: God's will on earth as it is in heaven

John 6:38-39

Does Jesus have the same will as the Father?

Some basic Trinitarian theology...

Some basic Christology...

Matthew 26:36-42 Gethsemane

4. Salvation from our will, that we may do God's will

The reason we don't do God's will is because *we don't want to*.

John 8:34-36; Galatians 5:4-5; Ephesians 2:3-5; Philippians 2:13

Salvation and Sanctification come by the Holy Spirit transforming our will so that we *want* to do God's will. To do God's will on earth, as it is in heaven.

And note: we *pray* for this to happen!

So to pray 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven' is to pray

- For God to overcome our stubborn wills, soften and change our hearts so that we love to do his will.
- For God to do the same for our fellow-Christians
- For the church to flourish and delight in submitting to God's will
- For God to save non-Christians from following their own wills and open their hearts and minds to see and to love God's will.

Prayer with our tables

I'm trying to decide whether I should ask out Gertrude or Hephysibar, so I'm praying for God to show me his will.

I'm trying to decide whether I should go out and get drunk tonight, so I'm praying for God to show me his will.

I'm trying to decide whether I should be baptised, so I'm praying for God to show me his will.

We shouldn't pray for people to become Christians, because God has left that up to them.

The reason that there's evil in the world is because God chose to give us free will.

I'm so pleased I decided to become a Christian – especially because so many people decide not to.

I've tried so hard to do the right thing, and I'm sure God will reward me for that.