

“THY WILL BE DONE”

Lincoln Park Baptist Church, West Newton, Massachusetts
December 13, 1964

Scripture: The Lord's Prayer

Introduction: Previous sermons on the Lord's Prayer

- A. What do we mean when we call God our Father?
 - that we trust in Him to provide for our needs;
 - that we can go to him in prayer in the confidence that he will answer;
 - that we can confidently commit our spirits to him.

- B. “Hallowed be Thy Name”
 - We mean God is he who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and in his acts.
 - We proclaim that we belong to him in our baptism.
 - There is always a dimension of God that remains hidden.

- C. “Thy kingdom come”. We considered this when I preached on the parable of the hidden treasure on Friendship and Fellowship Sunday.
 - Kingdom of God = God reigns
 - In the message and deeds of Jesus, the Kingdom of God is already at hand. Yet the Kingdom is a future reality. Our text for today is actually an explanation of what the Kingdom of God means: *“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* The concept of Kingdom of God is a meaningless phrase unless we really do the Lord's will – on earth as it is in heaven.

- I. It is men who do the will of God here on earth. Men and women who have accepted God's call to obedience.
 - A. *“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men!”*

We are here on earth for a purpose, just as salt has a purpose. When salt loses its capacity to preserve and give taste, it no longer has any reason for existing. It becomes insipid and ready to be cast away.

Likewise, we Christians, if we do not accomplish the purpose for which God has called us, we bear the name Christian in vain. It has no significance. As a matter of fact, it is more serious than that – we bring judgment on ourselves. As the salt is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men, so the follower of Christ who does not do the will of his Father who is in heaven is as good as nothing. He

is as useless as saltless salt. As tasteless salt is no salt, so a Christian who does not do the will of the Father is no Christian at all.

- B. *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."*

The function of light is to show things, to bring them into focus so that what was opaque or in darkness might now be seen. Likewise, the Christian has a task. His life and deeds are to be such that men might give God the glory. It is important to note that we are not to parade our good deeds nor to claim merit for what we do. Rather, our deeds of mercy should point men to God and not to ourselves.

In our lives many times we have said, "Thank you, Lord, for the witness and kindness of such a person. Ex. Dr. Mergal's influence on my life: (a) in arts and letters; (b) in Christian faith.

II. What are the specifics of doing God's will?

- A. No grudges against the brother

"You have heard that it was said to men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to council, and whoever says 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

Anger -- brings judgment

Insult -- brings judgment

Foolish talk -- brings hell fire

We can kill with our intentions. Furthermore, our gifts are not acceptable unless we are reconciled with our brother.

- B. No retaliation

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I say unto you, Do not resist one who is evil." And Paul says: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." This refers to behavior within the community. This is not a matter of national policy nor of the police department.

- C. Love even your enemies.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be one with your Father who is in heaven, for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those that

love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" Again, this is the behavior of the Christian community. It might perforce become the behavior of the world.

Conclusion:

- (1) Doing God's will involves no secret knowledge. It takes a deep commitment to God and a knowledge of the Scriptures. Ethics are grounded on faith.
- (2) It involves our social behavior, our relationship to the people within the congregation and those outside.
- (3) Doing God's will is one way of pointing people to the Father.

Do we now know what we are saying when we say: *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"*?

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