

# Thy Will Be Done

A question often asked by Mr Armstrong was “What is uppermost in God’s mind?” The answer was the re-establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth.

*Matt 6: 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

*10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Mr Armstrong built on that idea. If that was the first thing we should pray about - the focal point - clearly it is something God is concerned about. Then Christ says “Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” God’s will is done absolutely in heaven.

Rev 12 - occasions in which Satan has sought to overthrow the throne of God - he has always been rebuffed and cast back down.

*Rev 12: 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*

*4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

Satan was thrown out of heaven together with those angels who rebelled against God.

*7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,*

*8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.*

Talking about a future event - Satan once again seeks to overthrow God. Then he is thrown out and is no longer even to come before the throne of God.

Job tells us that at this time, Satan is able to come before the throne of God. But he is only allowed to do what God permits him. There are restraints placed on Satan. We have this portrayal of God’s will being maintained in heaven. Satan seeks to fight against it, but never prevails.

*9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him*

We have a view of heaven which Satan has tried to disrupt unsuccessfully. God’s will is done in heaven. Even Satan is not able to disrupt the doing of God’s will in heaven.

So when will God’s will be established on the earth as it is in heaven? Isaiah 11 talks of the Kingdom of God and the knowledge of God overflowing the earth as the waters cover the sea. A scenario of the animals being at peace and little children playing with vipers.

*Isa 11: 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

*8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.*

*9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea*

The knowledge of the Eternal will be available to everybody. But there will still be human problems. Revelation 20 shows that at the end of the thousand years, Satan will be released. Everyone will be living by the will of God. But Satan is able to deceive a great multitude who come up to wage war. They are destroyed by fire from heaven.

There will still be human difficulties in the World Tomorrow even though Satan won't be around. What about after the Great White Throne Judgment? The new heavens and new earth - new Jerusalem.

*Rev 21: 27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

We know from earlier in the chapter that those things that defile or work abomination are going to be destroyed in the Lake of Fire. We can see that now there is an opportunity for God's will to be done perfectly as it is in heaven. We long for that time.

In reality, what Jesus was telling us, is not something we have to dream of in the terms of the future. We can seek it now. It has an application now in our lives. It's not just something we look for in the future. It can be found now because it shows our commitment to God's Kingdom being established. The very reason we want to see God's will done on earth is an indication how much we want to see the Kingdom of God established on this earth. The Church of God is a microcosm of the Kingdom of God. We have the opportunity to live and conduct ourselves as the Kingdom of God should be. If we really want to see God's Kingdom established, then that should be coupled with another focus - seeing God's will being done in our lives.

Therein lies a real challenge for each one of us. We do have examples that we can look to and be encouraged by.

*John 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.*

His life, in every event, was an example that we should follow. John, in his gospel, talks numerous times about Jesus setting an example for us.

*John 5: (Jesus has healed the crippled man at Bethesda - the man was told to pick up his bed and go home. The rulers came to Jesus querying this.) 17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

*18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, (broken their regulations about the Sabbath) but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.*

*19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*

The actions I take are what I have learned of my Father. I don't just do things of my own volition.

*20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.*

*21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

*22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:*

*23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*

*26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;*

*27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*

*28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,*

*29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Verse 30 sums up all which Jesus had been talking about as a result of the healing of this man.

*30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just;*

*because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

“My whole life rotates around this simple principle. That I don’t seek my own will. I’m not doing the things that come into mind. I seek what it is my Father wants to be done.” He reiterates that in chapter 6. Having fed the multitude by the lake:

*John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

*36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

*37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

*38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.*

Jesus realised he had a commission. To fulfill the will of the Father who had sent him.

*John 8: 28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*

*29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.*

Here Jesus was, at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles, just a few months before He was crucified, saying “Look the whole purpose of my life has been to do those things that please God. That is my mission. It is what I am motivated by.

This was not just John’s perspective either. Luke 6 refers to a similar account.

*Luke 6:12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

*13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;*

Why did Christ spend all night in prayer? The purpose was to find God’s will in the choice of the twelve. It is very easy in the human frame to have favourites. We overlook a person’s shortcomings because they are just like us. It’s easy for us to choose those people we get on well with. Jesus didn’t want to do that. He wanted to know what the will of His Father was.

Luke says Jesus prayed all night. A choice had to be made. In Acts 1, where a choice was made for an individual to replace Judas Iscariot, the disciples prayed and said “Oh God, who knows the hearts of men, you choose who it is that should replace Judas.”

God knows the hearts of men in a way people never can. We humans are limited. These weren't just words on Jesus' part. He sought the Father's will.

*Luke 2: 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

*41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.*

*42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.*

*43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.*

*44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. (A different type of society to that of today)*

*45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.*

*46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.*

*47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.*

*48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.*

Parents will understand the trauma that must have been involved. However, Joseph and Mary knew who Jesus was, and the way God had already protected Him. They need not have worried - but like humans, they worried!

*49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (We would have probably made the same mistake as Joseph and Mary did)*

*50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*

*51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*

*52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

Quite an example for us - that commitment, even from the age of 12, to the calling that was there.

*John 17: 1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:*

*2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

*3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

*4 I have glorified thee on the earth: (I have magnified your name) I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

*8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.*

They understood that Christ had given them His Father's words.

*Matt 26: 36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.*

*37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.*

*38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*

*39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

Even in the face of death, He realised He was not in it for Himself. The whole purpose was His Father's will.

*40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

*41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

We can all identify with that.

*42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*

The bottom line is that God's will is to be done.

*43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.*

*44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.*

This was the commitment He had. What was important was His Father's will being done in His life. The Father's Plan being fulfilled. Christ was totally committed to doing the will of God.

We desire to be Christ's younger brothers. We live in a very self-centred world. A society that is reaching a pinnacle of self-centredness. Where the will of the person is of paramount importance. We're educated in a system where there are no absolutes - other than the absolute which states that no one can dictate to you what you want to believe. We face those problems on a daily basis. Where our own will becomes of great importance. We are faced with and encouraged to make choices.

We have a relationship with the Father. We made a commitment to the Father and to Christ and His Way of Life at baptism. We died to ourselves at baptism.

*Rom 6: 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

*9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

*10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

*11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

*13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

We're dead to sin and to this world - and we have the opportunity of being alive to God. Reflecting His Way of Life. We're not to obey the lusts of sin. We're to yield ourselves to God. Righteousness is a state of being right with God - living in harmony with what God says is right. The way God establishes. Not the way we establish. We just choose.

*16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

Being a servant is not a popular idea in the Western world today. If we are servants of God, we should be focused on the will of God. We don't have the prerogative of choosing what is his / her right. The prerogative is doing the will of the Master. As servants we are to do God's will. These are lessons that are to be learned for all eternity. By seeking God's will we are developing His Holy Righteous character. The characteristics God is looking for in regard to the furtherance of His Kingdom.

Paul was speaking to the Corinthians about the battle we face.

*2 Cor 10: 1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:*

*2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.*

*3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:*

*4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

Saddam Hussein loves to build strong holds. He moves Iraqis into these sensitive areas - reacting to the psychology of his foes in this day and age. The role of an army is to seek to defeat the foe. Paul said God has given us the weapons that can break down the strong holds that have been built in our lives.

*5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

How many thoughts do you think a day? Ten million? The human mind is an active, vital mechanism. How often do we think of those in the terms of bringing them into captivity to the obedience of Christ? Our whole life being lived in harmony with the will of Jesus Christ and the Father. That is the challenge we have. Every thought is to be brought into captivity to the will of God. Obviously some of them more easily fit in harmony with the will of God than others.

*Ps 19: 14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*

On what basis would it have to be pleasing? You would have to be seeking the will of God.

*Matt 7: 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

*14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Talking of two ways of life. The majority of humanity seeks to fulfill and please itself. Or obeys only when it is expedient to obey. The population - 5 billion - could walk shoulder to shoulder in the broad way of life. That's how broad the way is. But narrow is the way which leads to life and only very few find it. The choice on our part was made when we found the gate. When God said "I'd like you to enter in". The choices then stopped. Our commitment was then to seek the will of God in our lives.

People are known by their fruits. Do the fruits reveal the will of God being fulfilled in a person's life? Some think all you have to do is talk about it.

*21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

Talk is cheap. Of no substance. It's what we do that is so important.

*22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

*23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

They may have had a good motivation. But it wasn't ultimately to seek God's will in their lives.

In the Constitution of the Church, one of the things that is so easily overlooked is that the Council of Elders and the General Conference of Elders must conduct themselves at all times in harmony with the scriptures.

At times the Constitution and Bylaws can become the most important things in people's minds. Yet the only reason they exist is so that we do what scripture says. The moment we stop doing what scripture says, there is no value at all.

Clearly God's will needs to be sought in all areas of our life, no matter what our calling in this life is. Each of us are called to a particular way of life. We're in the process of becoming perfect. We each wrestle with our own carnality. We have a responsibility to change ourselves.

In marriage so often people seek to alter the other person. Aisle - altar - hymn. God says, firstly there is an individual responsibility to do His Will. To change ourselves. I'm the only person who can change myself, to make myself a more godly person. Seek what God wants from us. What is the life He wants us to live? What is the relationship God wants us to have with other individuals? We have to work on overcoming. In terms of marriage, if it is to fulfill the will of God, and what He wants marriage to portray, it requires a Godly approach to that marriage.

A few years ago the US & World Report made a prognostication on marriage in that within 50 years, people would develop serial marriages. Others just live together, take what they want, and move on to the next person to get what they want. The fact that people relate together to get, is not seeking God's will. Husband and wife should live together to give of themselves to the other person - not to get.

It is one of the great tragedies of life in that we live in a society in which most of our ideas towards marriage have been formed by the society itself. Up until the second world war, marriages were held together by economic necessity. Marriages were based on business relationships. "This is what I want, and this is what I can contribute". It wasn't based on the Godly way of looking at the marriage, of building something that is representative of the Godly community.

How much fornication and adultery went on in World War 2? An incredible amount. The need to have sexual relationships within the confines of a marriage was no longer a necessity. Women also were taken into the work force. Women could make a major contribution - and provide for their own economic stability. In the City, a successful woman can make as much money today as a successful man. That need of someone to support and provide for the woman is no longer there. This has all happened in the past 50 years.

Yet the only thing that can contribute to creating a truly successful marriage is seeking God's will in a person's life. Seeking what it is that is needed in terms of how we relate to one another.

It is the same in terms of the family. We have children. They are a wonderful privilege - and a challenge. It is a challenge for us to learn the skills to help and direct our children towards God's will. Many scriptures talk of this. (Deut 6:6-10, Mal 4:5-6.)

Clearly within the church, these past few years, we have seen incredible difficulties. It's one of those areas where we collectively need to really be seeking the will of God. The transition from where we were a few years ago to where we are now has not been an easy path. I've heard and read comments based on hurt, anger, and hostility. Are such comments godly? Is such an approach seeking God's will?

I see comments on the Internet by people who suffer hurt, or who want their will to be done. In reality none of us exist for our own will. We exist for our Father's will. We are to pray that "Your will is done on earth as it is in heaven."

We do need to understand the will of God. We need to be sure it is being done in our lives individually and collectively. That ties in with the very important aspect of our orientation - whether we really want to see the Kingdom of God established. Do we desire it for all humanity - so that all humanity can learn to live in God's way of life?

*Matt: 46 While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.*

*47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.*

*48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*

*49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!*

*50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

When we pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" and we really seek it to be part of our lives, what we are partly doing is qualifying ourselves to be a mother / brother / sister of Jesus Christ. Being able to enter into that family relationship with Jesus Christ and the Father.

What is uppermost in God's mind? - the re-establishment of the Kingdom of God. The fulfillment of His will upon the earth.

What is uppermost in our minds? Is it the re-establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth. Do we just say that or do we show it in our lives - by seeking the will of God?

The General Conference is approaching. Each and every one of us needs to seek not our own will, but to seek God's will.

Your prayers and support will be very greatly appreciated. And in so doing each and every one of us can start to prepare a relationship to the honour and glory of God - and to the honour and glory of His name.

... Peter Nathan

14-Feb-98

Basingstoke

[Back to Top](#)

[Back to Sermon Summary List](#)