

Submit to the will of God – 23/10/2016

“Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. ² For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honour, ⁵ not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;” (1.Thes.4:1-5)

Beloved in the Lord,

Teaching His disciple’s to pray, Jesus gave them a model prayer which has come to be known as “The Lord’s Prayer.” This prayer succinctly covers all aspects of our daily lives. This prayer reminds us that we have a Father in Heaven who takes care of all of our needs, and whom we are to honour. In this prayer we are taught to pray for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. When we pray this, we are submitting to God’s will. This is the right thing to pray at all times.

Our old sinful nature does not like this prayer, because deep inside our old nature is a spirit of rebellion. We are born with this fallen nature that we inherit from Adam. This old nature is in constant rebellion against God and His will. Not only that, we live in a fallen world, where God’s enemy Satan has a lot of influence and power. He is at work night and day tempting, enticing, encouraging us to rebel against God. When we submit to God’s will, then we thwart Satan’s plans and we strike him in the head. We deal a blow to his kingdom when we walk in the will of God.

We all know that light is more powerful than darkness. Even the tiniest light is visible in the dark. The more we resist the devil and submit to God, the brighter our light shines. That is God’s will for us. This is stated so clearly in our text today. We read again:

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Clearly, it is the will of God that we live a sanctified or holy life. Some of you are thinking does that mean that I have to become a monk or a nun and pray and read the Bible all day? No, not at all. A holy life or a sanctified life is simply a life separated for God. A sanctified life is a life lived out to honour God.

At Baptism we were set apart for God. We received the sign of the cross as a symbol that we were placed into the Hands of Jesus. At our confirmation we publically attested to our faith

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Submit to God’s will

and confessed that we believe in Jesus. If we are Christians then our life is to be a holy life. We are to live in such a manner that God is glorified. We should live in obedience to God and His Holy Word. We should reflect God wherever we are.

A sanctified life gives God total; control. This life surrenders to God's will every day. This life is led by the Holy Spirit. It seeks to do God's work and is thankful to Him in all things.

A sanctified life is a good life. It is freedom, for when you surrender to God, you need not stress about things. When you trust in Him, you know that He is in control and all things are in His Hands. Everything that is in God's Hands is in good hands. It cannot go wrong. God knows what He is doing and He is in absolute control. He loves you and all His ways are perfect.

When our lives are surrendered to Him, then His provision for us is in His promises. One of the most powerful ones is in Philippians where we read:

***"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.²⁰ Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen."* (Phil.4:19-20)**

If our life is surrendered to God, then we can be sure that this promise is in effect. God knows our needs and He promises to fulfil them. God always answers our prayers perfectly. That is not to say that His answer is always the one we desire, but it is what we need. He knows better than we do. We often have trouble distinguishing between wants and needs. This is especially true of children, but also applies to us.

Paul struggled with a painful thorn in the flesh. We don't know exactly what it was, but it would seem that it was a physical ailment. He asked God three times to remove it and God's answer was "No – my grace is sufficient for you." Paul understood that there must be a reason why God said no and with time He came to understand that this thorn was to keep him humble.

I repeat what I sated earlier "God knows what He is doing." We have peace in our heart, when we learn to accept that, and we surrender to God's will. We can learn from Paul that it is not wrong to ask, but that we need to accept that God's answer will be the right one. It is not wrong to ask God to heal us, or to change a circumstance, but if He says no, then we must accept that He has a higher plan and purpose for us. If God says "No – my grace is sufficient for you" then we need to accept that.

When something is going on in our lives, it is good to stop and ask God what lesson He is teaching us. God will show us, because He is constantly teaching us patience and growing us up in Him. He is moulding our lives to honour Him.

There are people who wrongly believe that if you surrender your life to God, then all will be well and you will have no problems or pain. There are false teachers and preachers who spout this nonsense, but it is not true. In fact, the more you surrender to God, the more you

may experience some pushback, because God uses your setbacks and problems to mature you into a beautiful and powerful witness for Him.

Sometimes we must go through trials in order to learn compassion and so that we may learn to comfort others who are afflicted. Only a person who has suffered pain, can really understand what someone else is going through. God wants us to strengthen one another, to encourage and to love and care for one another.

When our life is surrendered to Him, then He can use us to be a blessing to others.

For example I know a family who lost their daughter in a car accident at the age of 21. She was not at fault. This catastrophe brought her parents into a deep committed relationship with the Lord, and with time, Jesus used them to counsel and comfort others who lost a child. They learned that all things work together for good to those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.

Had they not surrendered their lives to God, then their tragedy could have turned them into hard, angry and bitter and resentful people. There would have been no good out of that circumstance, and who knows how it would have ended for them.

Surrendering and submitting to God is an act of our will. It is the right choice to make – always. If we make this right choice we are guaranteed that in the end all will be well. When we submit to God, then we are useful to Him, and He can use us for His glory and our good and the good of others.

Our responsibility is to submit to God, and then He takes care of the rest. He gives us the strength, the faith, the understanding, the patience, the love, the wisdom, and the will to do what He has set out for us.

How good is that? Such is our God.

The world is rapidly descending into darkness. The news is getting worse every day. That means that now more than ever we need to be submitting to God's will. We need to be praying: *"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."*
May God help us. Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.***