

God's plans will be fulfilled Sunday 9th February 2014

***“Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been done,
Saying, ‘My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;”*** Isaiah 46:10

Beloved in the Lord,

Teaching His disciples to pray, Jesus taught them what has come to be known as *“The Lord’s Prayer.”* The disciples had seen the importance of prayer in Jesus life; they had witnessed how much time He spent in prayer and they knew that this was the key to His power; His love; His life and ministry. They knew that prayer was his life source. So they asked Jesus to teach them to pray.

In giving The Lord’s Prayer Jesus was not giving them some magical incantation; but He was giving them a model on which to base prayer. This model would have them praying in such a way that God’s will would be sought and that He would be glorified and honoured through their prayers.

Today I would like to zoom in on the petition: *“Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”*

When we pray these words or similar words, then we are submitting ourselves to God’s will, to His plan; to His sovereignty. We place ourselves in the best possible position we can be in.

Our foundation text for today from Isaiah is a very important Scripture. It gives us a very basic principle, namely: *“God’s plans will be fulfilled!”* We read again, this time from the Expanded Bible:

“From the beginning I told you what would happen in the end.

***·A long time ago [From ancient times] I told you things that have not yet happened.
·When I plan something, it happens [[†] ...saying, “My counsel will stand”].
What I want to do, I will do.”***

These words testify to God’s absolute sovereignty. He is God and as God He does as He wishes, when He wishes, how He wishes. What He desires to achieve – happens. It is as simple as that. It is so vital that we grasp this truth with all of our heart and mind. God is God and He does as He wants. He does not need anyone’s permission, He is the Highest Authority that there is. He is God.

We have two choices in all things in life. We can choose to submit to God’s will or we can rebel. There is no third alternative. Jesus put it this way:

“He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.”
(Luke 11:23)

We are either with Him or against Him. When we pray: “Your will be done” we are placing ourselves on God’s side. We submit our will to His will. In order to do this we must do two things: We must let go of the steering wheel and secondly let God steer in our place. The first part is the hardest – letting go. We have a natural tendency to want to do it ourselves. We want to do our own thing, follow our own will and desires. We find it hard to submit.

This is where it is of vital importance that we know God’s Word. We need to know what God is like.

We read in Romans (10:17) –

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

Faith comes when we hear God’s Word. Faith comes when we absorb God’s Word. God’s Word works in us to produce faith. This is why I so often labour the point that we need to read God’s Word regularly. We need to read the Word, confess The Word; meditate upon it. The more we do, the more faith comes to us.

What does God Word tell us about God, in whom we are to trust? John gives us a very simple yet profound answer in his first epistle: “GOD IS LOVE.”

This is the central message of the Bible – God is love. God is not an angry judge sitting on the throne, waiting for an opportunity to punish us when we sin. No, He is a loving Father who calls us to Himself. His desire is to bless us, to protect us, to forgive our sin, to uphold us. His thoughts towards us are good and loving. Over and over we read in the Gospels how Jesus had compassion on people. His heart was moved to help and heal and save.

One example we find in Jesus dealing with a man who was suffering from that incurable disease of leprosy.

“When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. ² And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” ³ Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” Matthew 8;1-3

What I love in this encounter is the lepers’ humility and trust in Jesus. He did not insist on being healed. He was not presumptuous. He simply said to Jesus “If you are willing; you can make me clean.” See the humility. He was saying I know that You can; it is a matter of if Lord You are willing. Jesus reply is heart-warming to say the least: “I am willing, be cleansed!” The man was cured and saved.

This leprous man had the right attitude toward Jesus. He left the decision on His healing up to Jesus – If you are willing. He believed that Jesus could, and now left it up to His willingness to do so. Clearly his own desire was to be rid of this awful sickness, but he did

not impose his own will upon Jesus. He humbled himself. In this case the man's desire and God's will were in agreement and he got healed.

It is never wrong to express our desires to God, but it is important to submit to His will always. Lord this is what I desire if it is according to Your will. Ultimately God's Will, I will prevail anyway, so best to get in line with it at the outset.

A very powerful, in fact the most powerful illustration is Jesus praying just before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knew what awful events He would have to face. He knew what suffering stood before Him. Jesus prayed that if it were possible that this cup of suffering would pass Him by. However, He ended the prayer by submitting to the will of His Father.

We read in Luke 22:41-44

And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,⁴² saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."⁴³ Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.⁴⁴ And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

You see, submitting to God's will is not always an easy thing to do. Sometimes it is a struggle to death. Jesus prayed fervently, He was struggling in indescribable agony, but from the depths of His heart came the prayer: "Yet not my will, but Yours be done." His struggle was so intense that His sweat fell as drops of blood. Also note that God sent an Angel to strengthen Him.

That is encouraging to note because it tells us that we are not alone when we struggle to submit to God's will. He comes to our aid to help us trust in Him.

If Jesus had not submitted to the Father's will and the cup of suffering had been taken away, then we would not have salvation. We would not have a glorious future in Heaven.

No matter how great the struggle, how difficult it may be to submit, let us do so, because the outcome will be worth it, you will be blessed.

God always knows what is best, and His will and His ways are always right. It is better to be onside with Him at the outset.

We return to our text: ***"Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';***

We are clearly told that God knows the end from the beginning. That is a staggering thought. God knows the outcome before the outset.

We read in Ephesians 2:10:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

Before we were born, God knew us, He had a plan for us, He had our lives and works prepared. This was all known to Him before He even created the world. Each one of us is unique and we have a unique place in God’s plan and His Kingdom.

We are blessed when we realise this and submit to His will.

God told Jeremiah this truth:

***“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
And before you were born I consecrated you;
I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5)***

This underlines what I said earlier.

May we learn in all things to submit to God in faith. May we learn to seek and pray for His will to be done always, in all things. May our hearts be tuned to walk with Him in harmony with The Holy Spirit every day. Let us seek His will and then obey.

May we be convinced that God’s ways are always right. He makes no mistakes. He always acts in love because He is love. That is what motivated Him. He will always work to glorify His name.

Come to Him in childlike faith and trust and allow Him to lead you and guide you every single step of the way.

May we learn to pray and live like obedient children that fully trust in their Father.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.