

Thy Will Be Done

Matthew 26:36-46; St. John 6:35-40

Trinity Lutheran – Kearney, Missouri

March 10, 2010 – Wednesday of Lent III



In the name of the Father, and of † the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. In the Lord's prayer we pray for God's will to be done, and I suspect that's a pretty good thing to pray for. After all, if anyone's will is going to be done, it's probably best that it be God's. And that's precisely what Jesus does in the Garden when He prays: "Not My will Father but Yours be done. I will drink this cup since it is Your will." But what is His Father's will? His Father's will is to save a world chock full of sinners. And this He does only through His Son – by means of His birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection. It is the Father's will to crush Him in our place – to lay on Him the sin of the world – to put to Jesus' lips the cup of His wrath and damnation, so that He drinks it completely for you, for me, and for all – for your salvation, for my salvation, and for the life of the world. Or, more simply stated, the Father's will is that Jesus be your Savior.

His arrest in Gethsemane, the kangaroo court where He was tried before Pilate, and His bitter suffering, crucifixion and death on Good Friday – this is God's good and gracious will. For as the Scriptures teach, without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness. And Jesus was more than willing to do precisely that, as His blood was spilled on the altar of the cross, sprinkled on your body in Holy Baptism, and poured into your mouth in the Super – all so that you might be purified from your sin. Jesus was always about doing the Father's will. That was His whole life. "My food," He confessed in John 4:34, "is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish His work." In John 6:38 Jesus proclaims: "I have come down from heaven not to do My will but to do the will of Him who sent Me."

"It is finished," Jesus said from the cross – and God's will was done – by Jesus – and all without your prayer, as the Catechism reminds us. God created everything – including you – after having consulting with no one. God didn't ask the world, you or me if we wanted to be redeemed. To be sure, He sent His Son into this world without our prayers. God didn't wet his index finger, stick it in the air, and see which direction the latest opinion polls were blowing. God didn't need your permission to save you. He didn't ask: "Would you like to be saved?" No, wherever God causes His name to be hallowed – where God causes the reign of Jesus' death to come, be manifested and bestowed – **there is where His will is done!**

In heaven God's will is unopposed. But here on earth it's a different story. And so Jesus teaches us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," so that the good and gracious will of God might be done among us. So when you pray this way you'd better buckle up and strap yourself in, because you're in for a rough ride. Your bitter enemies – the evil trinity of Satan, the world, and your sinful nature – **aren't** going stand for all

this hallowing of God's name stuff – **aren't** going to stand by idly while Christ's reign of forgiveness rules over you, but **are** going to stand in the way of God's will being done in your life. Satan **is** going to go on the offensive like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. "For where God's Word is preached, accepted or believed, and bears fruit," Luther reminds us, "there the blessed holy cross will not be far away." This evil trinity will stop at nothing to blaspheme God's Name and assault God's kingdom so long as you live, so that His good and gracious will might not be done among us.

So, with His very own words, Christ leads you, carries you, and enables you to fight back against your old Adams and Eves, against this world, and against Satan. When you pray: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," these words aren't going to change God's will. Instead, this prayer is that He would change and align our will to His – that His name would be hallowed, and His will be done among us. And this means **our** stubborn, wicked wills have to be crushed, drowned, and put to death! Everything in us that will not hallow God's name nor let His reign come must end.

What is it in your life that refuses to hallow God's name, or let Christ's reign of redemption have its way with you? Whatever it is, that's the time to pray: "Not my will be done Father, but Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Praying this way with Jesus puts to death all that would prevent, hinder or block the hallowing of God's name and His gracious kingdom among us. And so we pray: "Thy will be done" in our families, homes, marriages, bedrooms boardrooms, and congregations. We pray: "Thy will be done" in our sicknesses, sufferings, and service to others. We pray: "Thy will be done" In our doubting, our despair, and especially in the hour of our dying.

The liturgy of private confession and absolution in the Small Catechism and the hymnal goes like this: "Dear pastor, please hear my confession and pronounce forgiveness in order to fulfill God's will." Is that not incredible to consider – that forgiveness for Christ's sake is God's will for you? That's precisely why God gathers you into His Church – so that you **can** hear this forgiveness in the Word of the Gospel, Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord's Supper. Here is where Your prayers are answered. God's good and gracious will is done among you in the forgiveness of your sins. Hence Jesus promises: "This is the will of Him who sent me: that I shall lose none of all that He has given Me, but raise them up on the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Thank God for His good and gracious will for you! In the Name of Jesus. Amen.