

## **“Thy Kingdom Come ... the second petition”**

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Luke 17.20-25, Matthew 6.5-15  
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I must be very insistent on always paying attention to each of the words of our Lord's Prayer as each of them is full of meaning. Especially "your kingdom come, your will be done" since it is the most radical, demanding and expensive request.

Although the Kingdom of God does indeed come by itself without the need for our prayer, to ask that his Kingdom come and that it also takes place among us; that his Kingdom come means that Christ always rules more in our hearts, that his kingdom always comes to us in greater measure.

This life is not to build "our kingdom" or "make our plans or our will by our own efforts", but all our plans, dreams, decisions or projects must be adjusted to the principles of the Kingdom of God and not vice versa. Allowing our life to be governed by God both in good times and not so good.

“Thy will be done” is one of the requests in the Lord’s Prayer. In part, Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9–10). Jesus Himself pleaded for God’s will to be done in the Garden of Gethsemane. Prior to His crucifixion, He prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matthew 26:39). Jesus was committed to seeing God’s will accomplished, and the prayer “Thy will be done” was a theme of His life.

Most simply, to pray, “Thy will be done,” is to ask God to do what He desires. Of course, we’re praying to the God whom we know that His sovereign decree will be accomplished, whether or not we pray for it. But there is another aspect of God’s will, which we call His “revealed” will or “preceptive” will.

This is God's "will" that He has revealed to us but that He does not force upon us. For example, it is God's will that we speak the truth in love and that we not commit adultery or get drunk. When we pray, "Thy will be done," we are asking God to increase righteousness in the world, to bring more people to repentance, and to further the cause of the kingdom of His Son.

When we pray, "Thy will be done," we acknowledge God's right to rule. We do not pray, "My will be done"; we pray, "*Thy* will be done." Asking that God's will be done is a demonstration of our trust that He knows what is best. It is a statement of submission to God's ways and His plans. We ask for our will to be conformed to His.

The Lord's Prayer begins by acknowledging God as Father in heaven. Jesus then models petition, presenting three requests to the Father:

- 1) That God would cause His name to be hallowed; in other words: that God would act in such a way that he visibly demonstrates his holiness and his glory.
  
- 2) That God would bring His kingdom to earth; that is, that the preaching of the gospel would convert sinners into saints who walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and that God would rid the world of evil and create the new heavens and new earth where God will dwell with His people and there will be no more curse and no more death.

3) That God's will would be done "on earth as it is in heaven". In heaven, the angels perform God's desire completely, joyfully, and immediately—what a world this would be if humans acted like that!

As a point of clarification, "Thy will be done" is not an impassive prayer of resignation. Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane was not passive or fatalistic in the least; He bared His heart before the Father and revealed His ultimate desire: for God's will to be accomplished. Praying, "Thy will be done," acknowledges that God has more

knowledge than we do and that we trust His way is best. And it is a commitment to actively work to further the execution of God's will.

Romans 12:1–2 says, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Understanding who God is, we submit ourselves to Him and allow Him to transform us. The more we know God, the more readily our prayers will align with His will and we can truly pray, “Thy will be done.” We can approach God in confidence that “if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us”. By faith, we know that praying, “Thy will be done,” is the best thing we can ask for.

Our Lord's prayer does not consist in getting what we want, but in becoming what God wants us to be. It is about being reformed and transformed, whether we are seekers or mature disciples. Praying is adapting our desires to God's and living those holy intentions so that they are as real on earth as they are in heaven.

By praying "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven," we ask God to save us from any unwillingness to learn God's will and embrace God's kingdom; may he save us from choosing our own plans and desires; and save us from trying to limit the scope of God's purposes.

Does this sound like a "safe option" to you? Are we willing to practice what we pray when we pray the Our Father?