

Ash Wednesday Devotional Message 2/20/2002–LOL, Westfield

Title: “Thy Will Be Done . . . *on earth as it is in heaven*”

Text: Luke 22:39-46 & Matthew 6: 9-10

Introduction: *Ills.: Heaven on earth*

Theme: Entrusting God to accomplish his will—his way involves a confidence that it will be good and a desire for it to be better.

Why pray for God’s heavenly will on earth?

- Earthly life, even at its best, sometimes is a living hell
 1. **Ills.: Headed to heaven or hell?**
 2. Jesus was real and serious about the ever present danger of living in a *sin-fallen world* (40–temptation–active)
 3. Trials and persecutions can actually make us “*sweat bullets*” (in Jesus’ case blood–vs. 44)
 4. Friends and circumstances can disappoint, let down, and even cause us great harm—we feel all alone
- God’s will is to visit us with his heavenly glory in the midst of our dark days
 1. God wants to bring His glory into our circumstance (angels came to minister to Jesus–43)
 2. God wants us to know that we never have to experience the aloneness of hell on earth because Jesus did for us

What will happen when we pray for God’s heavenly will to be done on this earth?

- He will start with a change in you and me
 1. Jesus perfectly lived within the Father’s will at all times and so lived in the glory of heaven in the midst of hell
 2. In heaven someday we all will have sin and sinful desires removed from us so that we will do God’s will perfectly
 3. We begin to taste in part what it means to live in perfect harmony with God when his will is done
 4. **Ills.: Tuned into another world**
- His Kingdom will come
 1. Often we get looped into a “bad situation” in our life because we refuse to let God implement his heavenly will
 - a. We are desperate because our plan hasn’t worked and we are out of options
 - b. We are afraid of letting God go forward with his plan (don’t you think Jesus was–humanly speaking)
 2. Jesus was moved forward through the cross and the grave to the resurrection and our redemption
 3. When finally we stop depending on our plan and release to God’s will, heaven on earth is accomplished
 - a. Jesus died for the sins of all and eternal life was ushered in for all who believe in it
 - b. *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life. Jn 3:36*
 4. As we live through this life awaiting the eternal life to come in heaven, God’s will is accomplished now and then
 - a. **Ills.: Finishing our work on earth**

Heaven on Earth

While leaving our small-town carnival, our sons, ages six and two, were walking hand-in-hand behind my husband and me. We overheard Tyler tell his younger brother, Cory, "This is what heaven is like--except heaven's free!"

Headed for heaven or hell?

Abraham Lincoln ran for Congress in 1846, and he faced a formidable opponent: Peter Cartwright. Cartwright, a raw-boned, circuit-riding Methodist preacher, was known throughout Illinois. During his sixty-five years of riding the circuit, he would baptize nearly ten thousand converts. During the intense 1846 Congressional campaign, some of Cartwright's followers accused Lincoln of being an "infidel." In response, Lincoln decided to meet Cartwright on his own ground and attend one of his evangelistic rallies. In due time Cartwright said "All who desire to lead a new life, to give their hearts to God, and go to heaven, will stand," and a sprinkling of men, women, and children stood up. Then the preacher exhorted, "All who do not wish to go to hell will stand." All stood up--except Lincoln. Then said Cartwright in his gravest voice, "I observe that many responded to the first invitation to give their hearts to God and go to heaven. And I further observe that all of you save one indicated that you did not desire to go to hell. The sole exception is Mr. Lincoln, who did not respond to either invitation. May I inquire of you, Mr. Lincoln, where are you going?" And Lincoln slowly rose and slowly spoke. "I came here as a respectful listener. I did not know that I was to be singled out by Brother Cartwright. I believe in treating religious matters with due solemnity. I admit that the questions propounded by Brother Cartwright are of great importance. I did not feel called upon to answer as the rest did. Brother Cartwright asks me directly where I am going. I desire to reply with equal directness: I am going to Congress."

Tuned into another world

An airline captain who flies overseas routes also runs a small filling station near his home. Between trips to Europe and the Middle East, he gets a kick out of changing plugs and points and talking to the folks while pumping gas. One Saturday morning, dressed in his greasy overalls, he walked down to the local hardware store to pick up a wrench. "What's new?" the store owner asked as he rang up the purchase. "Ah, I'm thinking of taking the Cairo run this month," the captain said. "I enjoy flying to London and Frankfurt, but I think the change of pace will do me good." He paid for the wrench and left. Another customer, curious, asked, "Who's the world traveler?" Rolling his eyes, the store owner nodded toward the departing pump jockey. "Some nut who runs the gas station down the street. Thinks he's an airline pilot!" Both men got a good laugh out of that one.

Finishing Work on Earth

This time, however, I witnessed something new. When the changing of the guard was completed, the commanding officer asked us to remain standing in silence. Sergeant Jennings had completed 27 months of this special duty and wanted now to pay his respect to the unknown soldiers. A guard escorted his family to a place of honor. The commanding officer handed Jennings four roses. He approached the great Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers from the First World War, knelt, and placed a rose before it. Then he moved with solemn dignity to the tombs honoring unknown soldiers from the Second World War, and the wars in Korea and Vietnam, kneeling to place one red rose upon each. He returned to his commanding officer and stood before him. At attention, with their eyes locked, they shook hands. Then Sergeant Jennings carefully removed his white gloves and returned them, his work finished. He saluted his officer, greeted his family, and left. With tears running down my face I thought of standing before my Lord Jesus someday, taking off my gloves and handing them to him.

Luke 22:39-46 & Matthew 6: 9-10

Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. ⁴⁰On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." ⁴¹He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, ⁴²"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." ⁴³An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. ⁴⁴And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

⁴⁵When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.

⁴⁶"Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation." [NIV]

Matthew 6: 9-10

"Hallowed be your name. your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.