

2010 Lenten Series: “Teach Us to Pray That We May Not Be Tempted”–Lord of Life, Westfield, IN – 3/10/10

Title: “Your Will Be Done”

Text: Matthew 26:39, 42, 44: ³⁹ Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." . . . ⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." . . . ⁴⁴ So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Intro: Video clip – “The Stool”

Is prayer about bending God’s will or aligning mine?

- God invites us to share “the desires of our heart”
 1. *Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4*
 2. **Illus.** "There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way.'" —C. S. Lewis (1898–1963)
 3. Jesus was not trying to manipulate the Father but was confident because of his rock-solid relationship with Him
 4. Learning to **wrestle with God** over my life’s direction so it becomes God’s will for me (like Jacob and Jesus)
 5. *This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him. 1 John 5:14-15*
- Prayer plumbs the depths of God’s great love for us in Jesus
 1. Jesus drank the **cup of wrath** for our sins so that we never would and so opened up
 2. When we come to the Father, we can anticipate a redeemed response from Him (**Hebrews 4:14-16**)
- God promises His Spirit, living within us, **to align our need with God’s will**
 1. *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. Romans 8:26-27*

Let God’s plan for a future hope drive the attitude and direction of your prayer

- *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:2-3*
- Surrendering your heart
 1. Jesus said, “Not what I wish, but your wishes” and “let your will be done”
 2. Surrendering my will is not about a hostile takeover
 - a. **Illus. Continuing an unnecessary battle**
 - b. It is not fatalism that gives up and assumes the worst from God and life
 - c. It is not destiny or karma in which we are at the whim of some evil divine force
 - d. It is believing and trusting that the salvation plan that the Father has tailored for your life is complete/unique
- Seeking his face
 1. Jesus wanted so much to do the Father’s will, that he check often (three times)
 2. Paul in his prayer (3 times) asked the Father to remove the trial but instead found sufficient grace (**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**)
 3. God’s will is that we seek him out continually throughout our day so that we experience full measure of His will
 - a. *Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me. When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O LORD, I shall seek." Psalm 27:7-8*

Continuing an unnecessary battle

On March 10, 1974, Lt. Hiroo Onada was the last World War II Japanese soldier to surrender. Onada had been left on the island Lubang in the Philippines on December 25, 1944, with the command to "carry on the mission even if Japan surrenders." Four other Japanese soldiers were left on the island as Japan evacuated Lubang. One soldier surrendered in 1950. Another was killed in a skirmish with local police in 1954. Another was killed in 1972. Onada continued his war alone. All efforts to convince him to surrender or to capture him failed. He ignored messages from loudspeakers announcing Japan's surrender and that Japan was now an ally of the United States. Leaflets were dropped over the jungle begging him to surrender so he could return to Japan. He refused to believe or surrender. Over the years he lived off the land and raided the fields and gardens of local citizens. He was responsible for killing at least 30 nationals during his 29 year personal war. Almost a half million dollars was spent trying to locate and convince him to surrender. 13,000 men were used to try to locate him. Finally, on March 10, 1974, almost 30 years after World War II ended, Onada surrendered his rusty sword after receiving a personal command from his former superior officer, who read the terms of the cease-fire order. Onada handed his sword to President Marcos, who pardoned him. The war was over. Onada was 22-years-old when left on the island. He returned a prematurely aged man of 52. Onada stated, "Nothing pleasant happened in the 29 years in the jungle." Like Onada, many people are fighting a lonely battle against the God who is offering reconciliation and peace. **From a 1974 story in Newsweek**