

Thy Will Be Done

Luke 11:2-4

March 14, 2021

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What is God's will?

My twin brother, Kun Jung drowned while enjoying surfing at Redondo Beach in Torrance, CA. It was when he was only 21 years ago on the 2nd year anniversary of our family arriving in CA. It was a tragedy. I was shocked and immensely sad over the loss of my twin brother. At that time, my father, then 58 years old, served a church. The church family members visited their pastor's family to give condolences. I still remember my father saying to his church members, "Thanks for coming. Don't cry. It is God's will." I know that was his way to overcome the horrible accident. But it was too much to bear. Is it God's will my twin brother died at the Pacific Ocean? Is it God's will Kun Jung lost all the life opportunities, such as graduating from college, marrying his love and making a family? I was only 21. I did remember my oldest brother, Kun Kap begging my father, "Father, please stop saying it is God's will. It is not God's will. It is a human tragedy."

What do you say?

Ask people why some folks suffer excruciating illness or die by unexpected accidents, and you might hear them saying, "It must be God's will." Pick a disaster, any disaster, and someone is sure to tell you that it has happened because it is God's will. Is it true? Is it the will of God people die and suffer from any natural disasters? Is it the will of God or the act of God that people in CA lost their property and beloved ones due to wild-fires or earthquakes?

I heard some saying, "it is God's will that we have been under this Covid-19 pandemic." Is it?

As of yesterday, March 13, 2021, 2,653,822 people have died from the coronavirus Covid-19. More than 500,000 people have died in the United States. This number is higher than all the people died during World War 1 and 2 and 9/11 combined. Is it God's will these many lives have died due to the virus? I lost one of my best friends who served a church with great passion early this year. Is it God's will Douglas finished his ministry abruptly this way?

Whenever we do have anything big gone wrong or any disastrous events, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes or tsunamis happening, we have tendency to say, "It must be God's will. It is acts of God", haven't we? We blame God. Maybe we need to stop praying, "Thy will

be done," if we want to see all these terrible, horrible and horrendous things stopped happening on earth.

To begin with, I should say I do not believe that God is the author of disaster. I do not believe that God who loves the world and all the livings in it does not go about looking for ways to wipe out some people and communities. I also do believe that God has created the universe according to certain natural laws and we live according to these natural laws. Those can be called God's will.

I also believe that God does not suspend those laws precariously. If that were the case, we would have no way of ordering our lives. We would not be able to get up in the morning because we could not be sure that gravity would keep us on the floor. We most certainly could never fly in a plane because the laws of aerodynamics would not guarantee our safety in the air. But we do not worry about things like that because we do live in an ordered universe. That is God's will.

What about disease? We know that our bodies are very intricate and precious organisms. As the Psalmist says, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139) It was God's will that we be created that way. But, if we abuse our bodies with improper diet and exercise, by introducing strange substances like smoke and drugs into them, we are getting into trouble and we know it. Sickness and disease are not God's will.

What about things like earthquakes and hurricanes and tsunamis and wild-fires? Those are not our fault. Are they? Well? A few years ago there was another earthquake in California, this one centered in the little town of Coalinga. It totally wiped out the downtown area and did some 31-million dollars worth of damage. An act of God? Scientists did not think so. They feel that the whole thing was caused by too much oil drilling in the area.

Again, we are back to an ordered universe. If we do things to upset that order, even unknowingly, we invite disaster. I suspect that as our scientific understanding increases, we will see more and more why these so-called "natural" disasters happening in this world and how we humankind invite them to this world.

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There are two different Greek words which can both be translated into English as WILL. One (boulé) has to do with the unchanging, predetermined counsel of God...God's purposes in creation, the order in the universe that we have been talking about. But the other word that translators render as "will" (thélema) has the idea of desire or yearning or wish in it, and that is the word we find in the Lord's prayer.

Thy will be done.. Thy wish, thy desire, they yearning be done.

Jesus taught us to pray that God's wishes, desires, yearnings to the world may be realized or fulfilled on earth as it is in heaven.

Parents have will, wishes for their children. They wish that their children grow up to be Godly people, good citizen, a find husband or wife, mother or father. But if their children do not cooperate, parents' wishes stay as wishes. Parents can train them properly and provide them with all the tools and make the way as easy as possible. But it is up to their children: they are individuals with freedom of choice,

It is the same with God. There are certain things God would like to see happen in this world...God's will... God's wishes. But we have been created as free beings, not robots, so whether that will is realized greatly depends upon us.

When we pray "Thy will be done," we, God's children express our willingness to align ourselves with God's desires and making ourselves available to respond to God's desires. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven through me and through us."

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Now, how do we find out what God does wish or desire? The will of God can be known. It is not secret and hidden. It can be found in the Bible. If you want to know what God wish and desire, read the Bible and do study the Bible!

For example,

God who created us in the image of God wants us to stay in touch with God.

God wants us to serve as good stewards of all creation.

God wants to see peace on earth.

It is the will of God that children be cared for. "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God."

It is the will of God that we treat each other with respect, especially those in society who cannot care for themselves.

It is the will of God that we love one another.

It is the will of God that we forgive one another as God in Christ has forgiven us.

It is the will of God that we serve one another as Christ served us.

It is the will of God that the lost be found.

It is the will of God that the least be helped.

This list could go on and on. The point is that what God desires for us and from you and me is right here in the Bible. Surely the Bible does not have a specific word to say about everything.

If searching the Scripture for God's will on a certain issue does not help, the next step is to listen to what the church has said through history. God can speak through the church.

We, United Methodist Church have Our Social Principles that tells us where we, United Methodist Church stand on many issues in our contemporary world. It comprises of 6 different sections covering the Natural World, the Nurturing Community, the Social Community, the Economic Community, the Political Community and the World Community.

For example, the Social Community section includes statements about the UMC beliefs regarding individuals in categories such as children, men, women, different races and ethnicities, as well as people of different sexual orientations. It also includes sections related to population, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, rural life, genetic technology, medical experimentation, sustainable agriculture, media, and the right to health care.

I strongly encourage you to pick up your own personal copy for reference. I will make sure we do have several copies of our Social Principles at the church for you to check out.

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"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

As you know, Jesus not only taught us to pray this prayer, but, prayed it himself. The night before the crucifixion, his prayer in Gethsemane was "“My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” (Matt. 26:42). It must have been a difficult time for him, knowing what was about to happen. But after he made his prayer, he faced the crucifixion with calmness. He trusted and knew that his Heavenly Father was in control, and that made all the difference.

"Thy will be done." May thy desire for you and me and all the world be done. To pray this prayer may be challenging, because it may mean that we will have to adjust or change completely our thinking and acting to align ourselves with God's desire. But we pray it and mean it, because we know that God knows us and knows better than we do and God's will, those desires God has for you and me are for our best.

Is that your prayer today? Is that my prayer today? Is that our prayer every morning?

So not only during the communion service, but also every morning, we sing, "Melt me, mold me, fill me and use me, O Lord." Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In the name of triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.