

“Your Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven”

Make Me Like An Angel!

Matthew 6:10

August 23, 2015

(Part 4 of *Lord's Prayer* Sermon Series)

How would you finish this sentence? “I want to be like...” When I was in junior high everyone on my basketball team would have said, “I want to be like Mike,” Michael Jordan that is. Perhaps you want to be like a famous singer, a celebrated author, or a successful entrepreneur. But who does *God* want you to be like? That’s what counts doesn’t it? If I insisted on playing like Michael Jordan and driving to the hoop through traffic or taking outside shots beyond my range, I would have spent more time on the bench than I already did in Jr. High. For the good of the team I needed to be the player my *coach* wanted me to be.

Likewise it’s imperative that we be the kind of people *God* wants us to be or we won’t just be benched but banished from God’s love forever. In the Third Petition of the Lord’s Prayer, God tells us who he wants us to be like. When we pray, “**Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,**” we’re asking God: “**Make me like an angel!**” In what ways should we want to be like an angel? Let’s find out.

Angels are spiritual beings God created sometime within the six days of creation. But some angels, led by Satan, rebelled against God. God immediately judged these evil angels while he confirmed the good angels in their righteousness. What that means is that evil angels cannot be converted to do good while good angels cannot fall into sin but are always eager to do God’s will.

It’s in this way that God wants us to be like the angels – always eager to do his will. But like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden who declared: “My will be done,” we also often would much rather do our will than God’s. And so when we come to the Third Petition we’re asking that God would quash our sinful nature and carry out his will through us. While our will is to serve ourselves, God’s will is that we serve others. Our will is to be like the world, but God’s will is that we be like him.

But with the Third Petition we’re not just asking that we be led to do what God wants, we want to be led to do what God wants *with* the right attitude. When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before his death, he was in great anguish over his forthcoming crucifixion. He even asked his heavenly Father for another way to win our salvation. There wasn’t another way of course but you don’t hear Jesus let out a big sigh as if to say, “Well, if there’s no other way...OK, I guess I’ll do it. But don’t think I’m happy about it!” Compare Jesus’ attitude with yours when sweeping the floor or unloading the dish washer. You may be doing what Mom and Dad asked you to do but if you huff and puff in exasperation, as if saddled with a big burden, that would be a good time to pray: “Lord, let *your* will be done and not my will. Help me to honor my parents and to serve you with *cheerful* obedience, as your Son demonstrated and as the angels always do.”

One reason we’re often reluctant servants is because we don’t always understand why God tells us to do the things that he does. Why should I help my sister pick up her toys when she rarely does the same for me? And why should I forgive him when he doesn’t seem sorry for what she has done? It’s at times like these that we want to be like the angels that the prophet Isaiah saw at his ordination. In Isaiah 6 the prophet saw angels who had six wings each. With two of the wings they covered their faces in God’s presence because as awesome as the angels are, God is so much more awesome. And what else were these angels doing? They were praising God crying out: “**Holy, holy, holy!**” These angels weren’t trying to figure God out. They simply praised him for his perfect ways.

This humble angel-like attitude is especially needed when you read reports of catastrophes like the ones that came out of Japan years ago after the tsunami. Then I asked daily, “Lord, what’s going on?” I want to make sense of all the destruction that has occurred, not just in Japan but in Haiti and Chile and anywhere else hit by devastating disasters. It’s OK to ask the question but God wants us to trust, as do the angels, that he knows what’s going on and has a plan. Therefore we can simply pray, “*Your will be done. Lord, help me to trust that your perfect will is being accomplished even when I can’t make sense of it.*”

If we need proof that God’s will is accomplished in situations that don’t make a lot of sense to believers, we can think back to another dark day in history to find comfort. Wicked men gloated and made fun of Jesus as he hung from the cross. To Jesus’ followers it seemed that God’s will wasn’t being accomplished on Calvary. But at that moment God was taking our sins and placing them on Jesus, as if he was a huge garbage

truck designed to carry away the world's stench of sin. If God's will was carried out on such a day, it can and will be carried out no matter how bad things get in this world before Jesus returns.

So what is God's will with all this devastation in places like Japan or Nepal? His will is that through these hardships believers would be reminded again of their need for Jesus. When I saw entire houses float away, I was reminded how everything I own will be destroyed by fire on Judgment Day. Yet in spite of this knowledge have I become attached to my toys? Do I pay more attention to their upkeep than I do to the strengthening of my faith? If so, I need to repent and redouble my efforts to be in the Word so that my bond with Jesus grows stronger.

What does the calamity say to unbelievers? Well the locals that were hit by the earthquake and tsunami, like most rural people in Japan, had put great faith in the local deities – the gods of the ocean, the harbour, and the hills. But how were those gods able to help them? Perhaps now those people will be willing to listen to those who will tell them about the true God – the God who made and continues to control the heavens and the earth. But if God controls the earth and the sea, why did he allow so many people to die? I don't know. And so I need to humbly pray, *“Your will be done. Lord, make me to be like an angel who doesn't question your motives or your ways but simply trusts you and praises you.”*

Of course, we can be certain that God's will was done even with so many deaths. Every believer who died in the disaster went to heaven. That's God's *primary* will isn't it? He wants all people to be in heaven with him. On the other hand those unbelievers who died in the tsunami went to hell. This too is God's will, his *secondary* will for all who reject his Son in this life. Since our will should be in concert with God's primary will that all people go to heaven, when we pray, **“Your will be done,”** we'll want to take a moment to think of all of our missionaries and the national pastors in the various mission fields. Pray that God would grant success to their work so that many more people may come to enjoy the glories of heaven.

But when you pray the Third Petition you shouldn't just be praying for the success of the gospel in far-flung lands like Japan or Nepal. You'll also want to pray for God to bless his Word when *you* share it. This is another way in which you're asking to be made like an angel, for angels were often sent to deliver messages to God's people. In fact, “angel” means “messenger.” And so when you pray, **“Your will be done,”** take time to ask God to make *you* a faithful messenger of the truth. Pray by name for those people you are sharing God's Word with that the Holy Spirit would open their hearts to the message of Christ.

I still want to be like Michael Jordan, but God hasn't answered that prayer with a yes. He is, however, eager to make me more like his angels. That doesn't mean that I'll sprout wings, but as I study his Word I will become more angel-like in my attitude towards my neighbors and look to see how I can serve them rather than complain about them. I will also humbly acknowledge that God remains in charge even when this world turns chaotic. And I will also eagerly tell others what Jesus has done for them that they may enjoy the same peace I have. This is God's will for you and me. But since Satan and our sinful nature are opposed to that will we keep praying, **“Your will be done on earth (by me) as it is in heaven (by the angels).”** Amen.