

The Lord's Prayer: The Third Petition

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

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is this done? When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow the name of God nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

1. Our prayer that our heavenly Father's will be done, "as in heaven, so on earth," reflects whose prayer? (Matthew 26:36–42) What does this connection teach us about what this petition means?
2. What, ultimately, is the will of God the Father for us in our lives on this earth? (John 6:37–40; 1 Timothy 2:3–6) How does this put into perspective those times when our will runs counter to His?

From Luther's *Large Catechism* (III: Lord's Prayer)

⁶¹ For as in a good government it is not only necessary that there be those who build and govern well, but also those who make defense, afford protection and maintain it firmly, so here likewise, although we have prayed for the greatest need, for the Gospel, faith, and the Holy Ghost, that He may govern us and redeem us from the power of the devil, we must also pray that His will be done. For there will be happenings quite strange if we are to abide therein, as we shall have to suffer many thrusts and blows on that account from everything that ventures to oppose and prevent the fulfilment of the two petitions that precede.

⁶² For no one believes how the devil opposes and resists them, and cannot suffer that any one teach or believe aright... Therefore he chafes and rages as a fierce enemy with all his power and might, and marshals all his subjects, and, in addition, enlists the world and our own flesh as his allies.

⁶⁵⁻⁶⁶ If we would be Christians, therefore, we must surely expect and reckon upon having the devil with all his angels and the world as our enemies who will bring every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where the Word of God is preached, accepted, or believed, and produces fruit, there the holy cross cannot be wanting. And let no one think that he shall have peace; but he must risk whatever he has upon earth—possessions, honor, house and estate, wife and children, body and life. Now, this hurts our flesh and the old Adam...

⁶⁷ Hence there is just as great need, as in all the others, that we pray without ceasing: "Dear Father, Thy will be done, not the will of the devil and of our enemies, nor of anything that would persecute and suppress Thy holy Word or hinder Thy kingdom; and grant that we may bear with patience and overcome whatever is to be endured on that account, lest our poor flesh yield or fall away from weakness or sluggishness."