

Prayer in the Shorter Catechism (8)

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Preacher: Colin Dow

[0 : 0 0] one of the questions that young christians often ask me is what is the will of god for my life it's a very good question because they want to perhaps explore career options or the prospect of a relationship and they want to make sure that they're walking in the will of god i do sometimes wonder whether while asking the right questions we are at times searching for the wrong answer in the third petition of the lord's prayer we read these words may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven and in that context we're not asking what the will of god is for my career or for my relationships we're asking for something altogether bigger what then is the will of god we're asking and praying to be done on earth well according to the prayer itself it is the will of god which is currently being done in heaven we're praying that earth would mirror heaven in our knowing obeying and submitting to the will of our heavenly father our westminster father saw it this way as the angels do in heaven the angels worship god in the beauty of his holiness praise him in the splendor of his glory they magnify him in the wonder of his majesty this is what we pray for in the third petition of the lord's prayer an orchestra of praise for god's creation to sing forth his glory both in their holy words and by their holy works this is the will of god for your life and for mine that by his grace through faith in jesus christ our lives would ring out for the praises of the glory of god that these great pictures in the book of revelation of heaven and earth joining together to sing the praises of the lamb who's seated on the throne that they become a living reality in our day and experience well while never losing that that bigger picture that wonderful picture of the universal chorus of praise to king jesus these thousands of thousands of angels let's break this prayer down and let's study it under three headings assistance attitude and action assistance attitude and action first of all assistance assistance when our fathers in westminster asked the catechism question what do we pray for in the third petition they answered in the third petition which is your will be done on earth as it is in heaven we pray that god by his grace would make us able and willing to know obey and submit to his will in all things as do the angels in heaven it's that first clause i want us to consider for a moment that in order to be able and willing to know obey and submit to the will of god in all things as do the angels in heaven we need god's assistance we need his grace for those of us who are disabled there are signs up in our church building here in st vincent street saying if you require special assistance please ask the idea is you can get

someone else to help you with your wheelchair or or to guide you to your seat or whatever the truth is that as christians we all need the special assistance of the grace of god to believe the gospel and to live out that gospel in genuine love and humility in thought word and deed we can't do it by ourselves our father in heaven doesn't want us to try to do it by ourselves rather from beginning to end in the christian life he wants us to depend upon his grace in hebrews 4 16 the writer encourages us saying let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need now the third petition of the lord's prayer is encouraging us much along the same lines that we need the grace of god to give glory to god that we need the help of god to give honor to god that we need the assistance of god to give adoration to god because the sacrifice in our prayer of our praise does not consist so much in the songs we sing as it does in the in our gospel-centered character behavior and lifestyle that we are living as redeemed and renewed men and women the aim of every parent is to try and train up our children to make them ready to live without us to be independent to be independent to be able to look after themselves the aim of our heavenly father is to train us up to make us completely dependent upon him and to be unable to live without him because only then will we be truly human even as god designed us to be at the beginning and so when we pray your will be done on earth as it is in heaven we're praying first and foremost for god's assistance and help for his grace to strengthen us that we may know obey and submit to his will as to the angels in heaven we're praying my father

give me a sufficiency of your grace enough to do your will and to live in a way that brings glory to your name even as the angels of heaven do assistance second attitude that by god's grace he would make us able and willing able and willing now these two able and willing sound like two shipmates on an 18th century merchantman but in reality they are the two wings of our attitude toward knowing obeying and submitting to the will of god here on earth even as the angels do in heaven able corresponds to can do willing corresponds to want to when we take that third petition of the lord's prayer on our lips we're praying that we can do and want to do god's will we're praying for a transformation in our attitude we're sinners and we're scottish which means that all too often our attitude is both can't do and don't want to do we need to realize the truth afresh of what jesus said in john 15 15 whoever abides in me and i in him he will bear much fruit but apart from me you can do nothing our ability to know to obey and to submit to god's will comes as we abide in christ jesus sorry we appear to have lost colin again if you just bear with us and hopefully help me back again that's him back sounds like good so here we are we've just read john 15 5 and i've said that the grace of christ is sufficient for us to do but not only so his grace is sufficient to change our hearts and our desires so that we want to do the will of god we want to walk in god's ways rather than our own we want to know more about him we want to obey him we want to submit to his will our attitude changes from negativity to positivity from can't do to can do from don't want to to want to as we pray this third petition of the lord's prayer god begins to change who we are on the inside to make us both able and willing to know obey and submit to the will of god in all things now this sounds fine it really does until the westminster fathers insert three little words in all things in all things yes when life's going well when the winds are behind us perhaps we feel able to and we really want to worship god to pursue love humility and christlikeness but when life is going badly and the winds are against us then perhaps comes the crisis of our faith when we neither feel able to nor do we want to pursue love humility and christlikeness but in all things at all times as we pray together your will be done on earth as it is in heaven whether the wind is behind us or whether the wind is against us god will begin to change our attitude to him as he fills us more with his grace thirdly and lastly we have our attitude we have assistance and now we have action action well for all that we may think or feel and for all the assistance god may give us by filling us with his grace it is all for nothing if we do not do the will of god time and time again the bible says blessed is the person who does the will of god and so ultimately in praying the lord's prayer we are preparing for action like a hundred meter sprinter takes off her tracksuit before she races so our prayers are a necessary prelude to our doing and in this context our doing consists in three things know obey and submit know obey and submit let's go back to the beginning how can i know what the will of god is for my life we don't do christian horoscopes we don't need to we have a word more sure in that we have the word of god the bible to tell us exactly what the will of god is for us in every situation god's will is that we love him with all our heart soul strength and mind that we love our neighbor as ourselves that's true holiness the holiness of a humble heart filled with the love of christ for his world that love translates into how we speak to one another how we act toward one another how we put the interests of others before our own how we become more and more and more like jesus so this prayer may your will be done on earth can be applied very practically by all of us in that whenever we open god's word first of all we pray for god's grace to help us know what god's word is saying to us simple as that begin your prayers this way don't rush in with your own requests calmly pray that god would help you to know and understand what he's telling you in his word so that you may know his will second obey obey and what is one of the most challenging verses in the bible jesus tells his disciples by their fruits you will know them it's not the man who merely knows what god's will is who shall be blessed it's the man who knows it and then puts it into practice and so through the reading of the word he realizes that a certain course of action he's been pursuing is wrong a certain relationship is wrong a certain character flaw needs to be dealt with in his own life he doesn't ignore what he's read rather he prays for god's help to repent of his sin and to walk in the newness of the gospel he finds himself able and willing to obey to change for the better you know obedience isn't a word we use enough in the modern church but we need to remember the summary word of the old testament as it were the summary verse to obey is better than sacrifice to obey is better than sacrifice and that we're called to work out our own salvation faith without works is dead we have been saved by grace in order that we may walk in the good works which god has prepared beforehand for us so once again we we can apply this third petition prayer in a very practical way in that we're praying for god's grace to make us able and willing to obey in any and every situation however hard it may be to obey in all things and then third

and last submit submit to be close i want to return to that difficult phrase that our fathers in westminster inserted into their catechism answer namely in all things in all things so let's go together to the garden of gethsemane this evening with jesus and let's listen to him praying for the cup of the wrath of god to pass from him he knows how painful the cross will be he knows that he will be forsaken by god

on account of our sin and he prays so earnestly that his tears fall like great drops of blood to the ground he's right there in the all things of which our fathers spoke 400 years ago life is going badly the winds are against and he prays nevertheless not as i will but as you will with such deep submission jesus submits to the will of his heavenly father if he does not walk the path of the cross if he does not die there his people will never live they shall not be saved and so he willingly submits to the will of his heavenly father gethsemane is the ultimate picture of what it means to pray this third petition of the lord's prayer may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven for not only did jesus submit to his father's will so that god's will could be done on earth and that a people saved by his blood could worship him but jesus is the ultimate example of submitting in action to the will of god we don't like to submit it's not within our nature especially when the will to which we must submit leads us into the storm the christian with cancer hates the thought of submitting to the will of god the christian who feels alone desperately wants a relationship hates the thought of submitting to the will of god the christian whose mind is broken hates the thought of submitting to the will of god and yet it's here in the very depths of this question are you willing to submit to the will of god we have ultimate faithfulness to the goodness of god's fatherly care over us and whether this third petition is just words we speak in church on a sunday morning or whether it's the heartfelt resolve of our lives we pray this pray it every week in church many of us pray it every day we take these particular words on our lips with excitement and apprehension knowing that god will take us at our word and as a result he will send his grace into our lives to change our attitudes and our actions our great vision is it not is the great orchestra of praise in which both heaven and earth engage where together we worship with the angels and all the mighty creatures we worship the lamb of the throne with holiness with joy and with thankfulness it is that

[19 : 37] Wasn't it? It was a very great choice but it was always unfortunate and so Rhett is a favorite thing that is it's just moving does