



March 27, 2017
The Lord's Prayer, The Third Petition
"Your will be done on earth as in heaven..."

[Read John 6:35-40](#)

"And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day." John 6:39

Some Christians spend a great deal of time trying to discern God's will for their lives. "God has a plan for me," they may say, "and I just need to be open to what that plan is." I'm grateful that some folks have such certainty about God's precise plans for them and their lives. At some moments I am more than a bit envious of those with such clarity. The Holy Spirit has typically (but not always) been a bit more vague in offering guidance to me.

I take comfort in the explanation Luther gives for the Third Petition. First, God's good and gracious will doesn't depend on my prayer in order to happen. Instead, as Luther says, "we ask in this prayer that it may also come about in and among us." I might spend so much time praying to know God's will that I have no time or energy left to be used by God to get things done.

I appreciate a prayer in the "big book" of Alcoholics Anonymous. The prayer is related to the third of the twelve steps and goes like this:

God, I offer myself to Thee to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy love and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always.

There it is. God, use me as you see fit. Let your will be done in and among us. Remove the roadblocks and resistance that get in the way of Your will in our hearts and lives. That's how you intend life to work. Please make it so here and now so that we can be little outposts of heaven in this earthly life.

Second, we come to the substance of the petition. What is God's "will" after all? We can read that in John 6—that nothing of value in this life should be lost. Rather that all that is given to our Lord Jesus will be raised up with him on the last day. This is God's good and gracious will—that nothing good will be lost.

So God's will is that the Resurrection will begin to have power now in and among us. And that the Resurrection will come to fullness on the last day when all that belongs to Jesus will be raised up with him—that God's will is accomplished on earth as it will be in heaven.

Let's pray. Good and gracious God, do Your will in and among us. Remove our resistance and use us for Your holy and loving purposes. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Do something: Spend time appreciating God's good and gracious creation. Work in the garden. Walk in a park. Enjoy a work of art. Listen to some excellent music. And reflect on the ways that this goodness is part of heaven on earth.

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