

OUR FINAL PRAYER

By Terry Jones, March 9, 2008
Christ's Church at Tiffin, Ohio

Matthew 26:36-42

CENTRAL SERMON THEME – Jesus' submission to the Father's will means He decides to willingly die on the cross and models how we are to respond to God's will.

INTRO. - I am Terry Jones and I approve this message. I am speaking on behalf of a King. The Bible calls Him King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Most of us have confessed Him as the Son of the living God. We call Him our Savior. His name is Jesus Christ. Our campaign is to invite everyone to submit to Him as our God. Jesus is a submissive King. Before His death He prayed to His Father in Heaven, "*Not my will but Your will be done.*"

Jesus struggled before He prayed, "Your will be done." We struggle with submission to the will of God. I resisted God's first tugging at my heart when I was young. I was not ready to pray to God - not my will but Your will be done. My mother gave us boys a haircut once a month on a Saturday night to appear our best on Sunday. My haircut followed my older brother's haircut. After she had finished about half of my haircut the clippers broke. I had a half haircut. My parents decided going to church with half a haircut was not good. I am ashamed to confess I was glad the clippers broke on me. I did not want to go to church. I was resisting God's will.

Finally I decided to give my life to Christ. What a memorable day! On an Easter Sunday, I decided to stop being so resistant to becoming a Christian. For the first time in my life I prayed - *Not my will but Your will be done.* Our minister was a wonderful teacher, preacher, and Christian man. He put his arm around me as he introduced me as 'one of the Jones boys.' There are five of us. I made my confession of Christ as the Son of God. That night my father attended church to witness my baptism. I had found a new freedom. My resistance to God disappeared.

I thought God would leave me alone once I had confessed Him and surrendered my life to Christ in repentance and biblical baptism. God was still after me. I thought, "Okay, God. I will read my Bible and study the lessons on Sunday. I will memorize the memory verses." Then I went to church camp where God was everywhere. I agreed one night during a camp worship service to stop resisting and say - *Not my will but Your will be done.* I would accept the call to ministry. After my first year in Bible College I

decided to transfer to a university to study another field. God closed those opportunities so I returned to Bible College with a more serious and mature approach to my studies. I preached at a small church on the weekends for thirty dollars to help provide some of my expenses. I agreed with God to accept His call to ministry.

To test my new calling, a friend and I spent a summer doing evangelistic work. Afterwards, I became seriously ill. I was mad at God for my illness. I gave up my will for God's will and I found myself half dead. I learned a whole new approach to God's will and not my will. I am praying for the first time just to live. I surrendered to God's will but I believed one time would do it. Now God is teaching me - *Not my will but Your will be done* - as a continuous process not a one time event.

How are you doing with God's will? Have you submitted to God? Before we think about God's will we need to know what God's will is.

I. SEEK GOD'S WILL

A. God has a general will for everyone.

1. 2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.
2. In John 3:16 the direct object of God's love is the world that those who believe may be saved.
3. Jesus died for every sin of every person who ever lived and does not want to waste any of His grace.
4. When we pray to God, "Not my will, but Your will be done" God's first response is to save us from our sins.
5. God's will is to save everyone.

B. God's will is for all the saved to be transformed.

1. Rom. 12:2 - And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is.
2. Col. 1:28 - We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.
3. Rom. 8:28 - God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

- a. V. 29 - Those whom God foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.
- b. 2 Cor. 3:18 - We are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
- 4. Applic. - I fear that many of God's people were born again but never been transformed past our spiritual infancy.
- 5. Illus. - In Acts 5, Luke reports the Apostles of Jesus were brought before the Council who ordered them to be flogged and not to speak any more about Jesus the Christ. After they beat them, the council released them. Verse 41 - They went on their way from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. American Christians would have been screaming and yelling about their mistreatment. Why do I say this? We complain about much smaller problems than the Apostles suffered. The Apostles had been transformed to submit to God's will and rejoice in His will.

C. We want to know God's will for His church.

- 1. Our Long Range Plan, The Bridge, is made up of five categories.
 - a. EVANGELISM – Focusing on presenting the message of salvation to those who are not saved. Matt. 28:19, 20 - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
 - b. DISCIPLESHIP - Training those who are Christians to mature in their faith and Christian character to become like Jesus Christ. Mark 12:30 - You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.
 - c. SERVICE - Christians mature and grow as they serve within the ministries of the church James 2:18 - "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
 - d. RELATIONSHIPS – Christians are to love another with the love of Christ within their own families and within the church family. John 13:34 - Love one another, even as I have loved you.
 - e. SUPPORT – In order to accomplish our mission to lead others to a personal, lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ the church

will need proper tools such as land, facilities, technology, and equipment. Ephesians 4:15, 16 - But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

2. Our Vision for Christ's Church in 10 to 15 years is: *A church of Christ-sharing believers who study and apply the Bible, selflessly serve, display a Godly love for families, friends and community, and provide the necessary resources to support the mission of the church.*
 - a. "Christ-sharing believers" is Evangelism.
 - b. "Believers who study and apply the Bible" is Discipleship.
 - c. "Selflessly serve" is Service.
 - d. "Display a Godly love for families, friends and community" is Relationships.
 - e. "Provide the necessary resources to support the mission of the church" is Support.
3. Our Mission is to lead people to a personal, lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ.

D. Illus. - At a meeting of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Bobby Richardson, former New York Yankee second baseman, offered a classic prayer: "Dear God, Your will, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else. Amen." Bobby Richardson.

E. When we have done all we can do, our final prayer is one of submission to God - Your will be done.

II. UNDERSTAND JESUS' SUBMISSION

A. Jesus submits to God's will.

1. He goes to Gethsemane to pray.
 - a. Gethsemane means "oil press."
 - b. Groves of olive trees grew on this hillside and still grow there today because olive trees reproduce with sprouts from their roots.
 - c. The olives were squeezed until they gave up their oil.

- d. Jesus will feel the squeeze of God's will in his soul and the end product will be complete obedience.
 2. Jesus goes there to pray about His impending brutal death.
 - a. He understands God's will is for Him to suffer and die on the cross.
 - b. Jesus is human with all the desires to live.
 - c. At thirty-three He brings these desires before His Father praying - If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.
 3. Illus. - A mother had a young son who could not handle a 'no' from his mother. After an especially trying day, she finally flung up her hands and shouted, "All right, Billy, do whatever you want! Now let me see you disobey THAT!" Our Daily Bread.
 4. Illus. - As the Union Pacific Railroad was being constructed, an elaborate trestle bridge was built across a large canyon in the West. Wanting to test the bridge, the builder loaded a train with enough extra cars and equipment to double its normal load. The train was then driven to the middle of the bridge, where it stayed an entire day. One worker asked, "Are you trying to break this bridge?" "No," the builder replied, "I'm trying to prove that the bridge won't break." In the same way, the temptations Jesus faced were not designed to see if He would sin, but to prove that He would not sin. Today in the Word, March 14, 1991. Jesus obeyed all the Father asked of Him.
- B. Jesus enters Gethsemane burdened with sorrow and grief.
1. "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death."
 2. Luke's gospel says His sweat was like drops of blood.
 3. Jesus is about to break under the burden of suffering the cross for the sins of humanity.
 4. Jesus knows the Father's will is the suffering of the cross.
- C. Jesus prays under the pressure of the cross in submission.
1. "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me."
 - a. Cup is God's wrath against sin.
 - b. Jesus is a normal man who does not want to suffer.
 2. "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."
 3. Jesus obeyed the Father's will to become our Savior and our Lord.

D. Jesus decided to become our substitute on the cross.

III. SUBMIT TO GOD'S WILL

A. We will pray "your will be done" but we attached some conditions.

1. Jesus submitted Himself without any conditions.
 - a. "I will give You my heart if You will heal me."
 - b. "I will give You my money if You make me rich."
 - c. "I will forgive if you humble them first."
 - d. "I will submit to You if you will never let me have pain again."
2. God will work in His own timing.

B. Jesus prayed knowing God's will but we pray to know God's will.

1. We believe we have found God's will but we are not sure.
2. Ex. - I have prayed, "God, what do You want me to do? Show me your will." God is silent. I pray again to know God's will. God is silent. I have prayed for God to inform me what His will is before I submit to Him. The Almighty and Sovereign God responds, "Submit to Me first without any conditions and then I will show you My will."
3. The first part of submitting to God is - *Not my will*.

C. Submission to the will of God benefits other areas of life.

1. Eph. 5 - Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.
Wives, submit to your husbands as you do to the Lord.
 - a. A husband submitted to God will love his wife with the love of Christ who gives up his will to lust to follow God's will to be a one-woman man.
 - b. A wife who is submitted to God will follow the leadership of her husband.
 - c. Children, submitted to God, will obey their parents.
 - d. Obedience follows when we first surrender to God.
2. Men submitted to God will become emotionally and spiritually stronger.
 - a. We men fear that submission to God means we are weak.
 - b. When we submit ourselves to God we are uniting with the all-powerful supreme God who will give us the power He wants us to have.
 - c. We are empowered with God's Spirit to forgive others and to resist temptation.

3. In Russia, Christians are tested by hardship, but in America you are tested by freedom. And testing by freedom is much harder." Pavel Poloz, recently (1987) exiled from Russia, Moody Monthly, April, 1989.
 - a. Our faith grows under adversity.
 - b. Pain and sorrow make us receptive to God.

D. God is glorified when we humbly submit to Him.

1. God wants us to submit during our grief and distress and blessings.
2. God wants us to submit to Him when we do not understand.
3. Illus. - A woman rushed up to famed violinist Fritz Kreisler after a concert and cried: "I'd give my life to play as beautifully as you do." Kreisler replied, "I did." Bits & Pieces, Vol. F, No. 41.
4. "Not my will but Your will" is our final prayer before we have a life that glorifies God.

CONCLUSION - Testimony by Jim Steinmetz