

## Praying According to God's Will

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I thought it would be good to talk just once more on prayer, just for the last time in this series, loved ones. So, I just ask you, do you pray each day? Do you say your prayers each day, really? And then for those of you whom I haven't asked the question of before, do you realize that all the church going is kind of silly hypocrisy unless you are praying each day, do you realize that? It's just the same thing as the pagans went through offering their sacrifices to kind of bribe God and get him off their backs, that's all we are doing here each Sunday unless you really do pray each day. Because of course, there is going to come a day when you meet God and then it's vital that you will have spoken to him at some time during a whole 70 or 80 years of life. He will just ask you on that day, "Now why didn't you speak with me?"

So loved ones it's vital that you speak with God. It's really important that you speak with him each day and that's what prayer is, it's just talking with God. And I just repeat briefly in a couple of minutes that the objection that especially we men often make, but some of you ladies are just very earthy practical types and we all tend to say the same thing, "Well I don't know how to pray and I don't get anything out of it when I do pray." And I remind you of the truth in this dear Book that there is only thing that you need in order to pray and that's mentioned if you would like to look at it in Hebrews 11:6. "And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." That's actually all you need in order to pray. "For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." That's all you need, loved ones.

So I just encourage those of us who are maybe very cerebral or very practical and down to earth, guys or girls or men or women, that you don't need to be mystical or emotional nor do you need to wonder, "What am I getting out of prayer?" It doesn't matter whether you get anything out of prayer. You have to talk with God, it's just good sense. So could I plead with you just once more? Because there will be some person here that will die before the end of this year and none of us are going to be near you. It's important for you to talk with God before that moment arrives. And then all of you here are going to have some guy like myself coming and looking at you in a casket and then at that time that fellow won't be able to say anything to you, so I am speaking on behalf of that minister. I am speaking on behalf of the pastor or the priest that will bury you and I am pleading with you now, talk with God, start talking with him. And all you need to do is believe that he is there, you don't need to feel that he is there, you don't need to feel any good feelings. That's not what prayer is about. You need to believe that God is there and you need to talk with him, that's all you do your bit; let him do his. So loved ones, do you talk with God?

One of the difficulties that many of us have in asking God for things comes up in the question that probably you put yourself. Is it right to put the tag on the end of the prayer "if it be thy will"? And I think a lot of us wonder about that, where we ask God for something and then it sounds the right thing to do to say "if it be thy will". And so many of us do pray like that. We go to God in prayer and we pray the best that we know for ourselves or our friends or our relatives or our colleagues and then we add the tag on at the end "if it be thy will". Now, we realize that there is a difficulty in that because other people tell us to pray in faith and then somebody like me says to you, today exercise faith through the rest of this week for what you have prayed for. And of course in the back your mind that little tag kind of undermines it because you've said to yourself, "Well, yeah, but how can I continue to exercise faith for this answer if I am not really quite sure that it

is what God wants? And that's why I've said, Lord if it would be your will." And for those of us who are kind of practical business people we know ourselves that it gives you no confidence at all, that it's just a bluff thing. You are just shooting a prayer up to God and you are saying, "Answer it if it be your will" and you kind of have to leave it up there in the air somewhere and maybe hope that it will fall down. If it falls down it was his will and if it doesn't fall down it wasn't his will.

And so most of us who have anything to do with ordinary business or professional life know that we couldn't operate that way, we couldn't. We couldn't go into a bank and say, "Well, I'd like this \$25,000, it's vital to my business, so I ask you for it if it's your will. And meanwhile I will go on and if it falls down on my head then I will know it's your will. If it's not I know it's not your will." We wouldn't operate that way and we wouldn't go to the dentist and say, "Look I would like this molar filled." I believe we fill molars. My wife is a dentist. Now I am supposed to know all this in detail, "but I want my molar filled and it's paining me and I'd ask you to do it if it's your will?" And then go away from the dental office and wonder "Well, I wonder if it's his will?" And then he happens to call you for an appointment, so you say, "Oh! It must be his will, good."

So we couldn't operate that way in ordinary practical life. And actually brothers and sisters you must admit with that kind of tag on the end of a prayer you don't operate realistically with God, you don't. You eventually give up praying I think because you recognize this is just a game. I'm just shooting up these wishful thoughts to God and asking him to answer them if it's his will. And really it just becomes very unreal as far as the relationship goes. Another difficulty with it is in 1st John 5:14. "And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the request made of him." So you see verse 15 is the basis of being able to walk in faith. "If we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the request made of him." So if we know he has heard us, we know he is going to answer the request.

Now how do you know that he hears you? Well, you have to go to the previous sentence. "This is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us." So, if we ask anything according to his will we know that he hears us and if we know that he hears us we know that he will answer us. So the whole basis of prayer is, being able to ask according to God's will. Brothers and sisters it's no use this stuff of "Lord do this, if it's your will." That's not the way we've to pray. This dear Word emphasizes that we have to pray according to God's will and the only way we will know that God is going to answer us, is if we've prayed according to his will. And you remember we spent the past three or four Sundays saying what Jesus said, "You have no need to ask because God knows what you need before you ask it." And he says, "God knows it already." So the only reason for asking is that you know what God wants you to have and you know that he won't answer it unless you agree with him.

So the only way is to know God's will. God has a will for every detail of your life, you see. There is nothing in your life that God does not understand and that he has not an answer for. But he cannot make that real in your life until you ask him because he won't overrule your freewill. He won't just drop things on you that he knows you need unless you ask him for those things. Otherwise you become a little passive robot who receives and is operated and ruled and run by God independent of what you want. So even though the Father knows what you need he knows the money you need, he knows the job you need, he knows what your family needs he cannot do it unless you ask him. And the only way you can ask him is if you know what he wills for you. You have to know God's will for your life. That's it, loved ones.

If you say to me, do you mean generally? You mean broadly speaking what his will is for my career? No, for every detail of your life. God knows what you should do with that difficult situation in the office. He knows that. He knows what you should do in that business transaction that you are trying to decide about, he knows; he has a will for that. And he wants you to know it and then ask him for it and he will manifest that. He will bring it about.

Now, how can you know God's will? How can you and I come to know God's will for our lives? Why I felt I should speak once more on prayer is because of the answer to that question, it's so important. How do you know God's will for your life or how can you come to know what his will is for you in every little detail of your life? There is a vital key that is the answer to that and I'm introducing it to you and preparing you for it because it's so important, loved ones. There is only one way in which you can begin to know God's will for your own life. Now I will show you. It's in 1st Thessalonians 5:18, and this loved ones is just a deep one, so you really need to let it come into your heart, and your spirit. "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." In your present state exactly as you are at this moment with the car that you own at this moment, with the wife that you have at this moment, with the sick friend that you have at this moment, with the pain in your leg that you have at this moment, with the hideous work situation that you have at this moment, with the hopelessness with which you look forward to the next few months that you have at this moment, give thanks, give thanks. Give thanks in all circumstances, why? "For this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus", that's it.

If you won't stop being squirrely, if you keep on wriggling and saying, "Well I know this isn't God's will, well I know this isn't God's will, I know it wouldn't be his will that I would be in this situation. I know this isn't, so I will squirm and I'll squirrel until I wriggle myself into a situation that I think might be his will", loved ones do you see God will never be able to get through to you his will because you will never be at rest. Your own mind will be sending up so many prayers. Your own heart will be desiring so many things that God will not be able to reveal his will to you for your life. The first step is to accept what you are now, where you are now in all the circumstances that you are now, as God's will, start somewhere. You see you have to start somewhere and that's such a step of faith. It's such a great step of faith because it's saying, "Lord God, it's you that have allowed me to come into this situation at this time. I have made mistakes, I have made errors, people have done me in, people have betrayed me, and things have not fallen out right in the economy. Physical things have taken place that I couldn't control but those things did not bring me where I am today. You were able to overrule all those things and I believe that you were in everything working for good for me. And so Lord God with all the errors and sins and mistakes that I have made and done and with all the things that people have done against me and with all the things that have happened by chance, Lord God I give you thanks in these circumstances. Because I know that this is the will of God for me in Christ Jesus at this time."

Brothers and sisters that is such a step towards reality that you cannot grasp it because a mere man says it. But it's such a magnificent step towards maturity in your life if you will stop this morning wishing it was different. If you will stop pretending that it is different. If you will stop pretending that it is different and if you will just accept the circumstances and the situation that you are in today and not with resentment but giving thanks to God. "Lord God, I want to thank you for the present situation I am in. I want to thank you for the situation I am in internally, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically. I want to thank you for the position I am in financially and economically. I want to thank you for the position I am in domestically. Lord God, I want to stop wriggling. I want to stop being a squirrely stupid little thing that will not accept that you have brought me to this place. Lord God, thank you, thank you for this situation." Loved

ones, there comes into your heart and your spirit such a peace and a rest when you at last do that, that God is at last able to begin to get through to you and reveal to you what his next step for you is. But you see unless you do that you are so filled with discontent, you are so filled with dissatisfaction, and you are so filled with wishes and your preferences that God can't reveal to you what his will is.

Now I know what some of you are saying. "Brother, if you knew my circumstances, you would know that it cannot possibly be God's will for me. If you knew my financial situation, you would know it could not possibly be God's will for me." Loved ones, that's why it says, "This is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." Because in Christ Jesus God has done something that negates and neutralizes the bad effects of your circumstances upon you. Now I will show what it is, it's in Galatians 6:14. "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Now I know loved ones that some of you may have real trouble with that phrase but I would be glad to attempt to explain it.

In the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which the world was crucified to me, God took the cosmos, that's the Greek word for world, the cosmos. It's not the physical earth. It's the whole world system that has been set up independent of God. He took that whole world system with all its principalities and powers and spirits and he put it into Christ and he destroyed it there so that that cannot have the effect on you that it is intended to have. So, you were deceived into some ridiculous loan. Maybe you wanted instant gratification the way most of us do and you just had to have the car or you had to have the building, you had to have this other business or you had to have the stereo but somehow or other, you were deceived or you've fumbled your way into some ridiculous loan, which is now exerting it's usual enslaving, imprisoning pressure upon you. So that, dear love you, you are like a little robot or the money comes in and goes out, you don't have much discretionary money left because you are just shelling it all out in this loan or in a series of loans.

So you were deceived or you've fumbled your way into a loan or a series of loans, that you are now paying big payments on each month and of course you are experiencing what we've all experienced in that situation. You are experiencing just bondage. You are just bound hand and foot, you can hardly move. You have just a little money to deal with the groceries and the gas and a few other things and you are tight. And so there are spirits and powers behind that. You are not tight just because your poor old mind has worked out "Boy, if I don't pay they'll repossess it or if I don't pay this I'll go bankrupt." That's not it; it's not the little mental calculations that are wearing you down.

There are spirits and powers behind a whole loan system of the world. The whole loan system was set up because we can't wait, we can't wait, we can't wait, we must have it now and we've got used to it. I mean we are all in it together, we've got used to this system, but its set up basically independent of God. God's plan is, give us this day our daily bread. You love the daily bread and you'll be worried only about today; you won't worry about tomorrow and that's his plan. But all of us have got out of that plan in different ways and we've wanted to have the thing today and we pulled upon ourselves all kinds of spirits and powers and principalities that lie behind the loans.

You remember I once outlined to you where your money probably comes from. It's ridiculous because it shows you that we human beings are the innocent or the simple dupes of the spirits. A lot of your loan money, you think it comes from some huge Norwest National Bank or some huge financial organization that you just hate like crazy or it comes from some subtle money lenders, who actually want to choke you to death, it doesn't. It probably comes from some dear old lady whose son owns

Schmidt's Beer Company or owns some other company and she is the last remaining unmarried sister or daughter and she is sitting in some mansion in Minnetonka or somewhere else and she hasn't a clue that her money is causing you the agony that it's causing, she has no notion. She is just fiddling about feeding the birds and her attorney or her accountant comes in from time to time and tells her how much she has made on the millions. So you see it's not that we human beings hate each other, we are choking ourselves to death but there are spirits and principalities and powers that are involved in the whole system. And the loan system is only one part of the cosmos you see, the pecking system. The pecking order, that's another one. The whole pecking order in businesses and in professions the whole business of touching your forelock, it used to be in old Irish days but it's still that we don't touch our forelock but it is still the same thing.

You know who you have to please and who you have to avoid displeasing. It is spiritual principalities and powers that exert the binding power of those things upon you. You think it's the loan, you think it's the boss; you think it's the economy, it's not. Behind all that cosmos system are spiritual principalities and powers that bring the real agony into your dear heart that makes your tummy turn and turn at night and makes it impossible for you to sleep and makes you worried and weary of life. It's the spiritual principalities and powers that do that.

Now in Christ, God crucified that world system. And in fact there is another place in the Bible where it says, "He destroyed the principalities and powers" and he took away their power to destroy you through the loan systems, through the pecking order systems, through all the other systems that you are involved in. That's why he says, "Give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." Because in Christ Jesus God has taken away the power of those circumstances to destroy you, he has. Even if you have AIDS, if you have AIDS, through your own lust or your own desire for the pleasure that God did not want you to have at that time. If you have AIDS you can give thanks to God because the Father in Christ Jesus has destroyed the power of that disease to bring you into overwhelming guilt and self justification that eventually causes you to be lost eternally. And he can enable you to be forgiven and to enter heaven with the rest of us, if you are willing to put your trust and your submission again in God.

So loved ones whatever your circumstances are God has destroyed the power of those circumstances to destroy you because he has taken away the power of the principalities to use them against you. That's why the first step is, give thanks in all circumstances. And those of you have had tragedies in your family or accidents, God has already taken away the power inside that circumstance to destroy your friends or your relatives or you and that's why he is saying to you, give thanks, settle, be at home, stop resenting, stop saying "No, no this isn't God's will." Because what you do when you do that is you stop exercising faith in God and you start putting your faith in Satan, the one who is out to bring chaos into your life.

So loved ones the first step in coming to know God's will for you, so that you will be able to ask him to fulfill that will in detail, is to come to a place of peace and rest about your present life. And could you do that just this morning? You know your life, each of us know the details of our personal lives this morning. Could you come to a place this morning where you just thank God?

"Lord, I thank you. I am going to stop resenting you. I am going to stop resenting these intrusions that have come into my life, these unpleasant circumstances. I am going to stop resenting that, Lord. You knew these were coming and you allowed them so you must know what you are going to achieve in me through them. So Father I want to thank you now for these circumstances. I want to thank you for everything that I have in my present life. I want to thank you for that person in my home that

just wears me out. I want to thank you for that person, Lord. I want to stop resenting her or stop resenting him. Lord I want to thank you for the shortcomings of my husband or my wife or my children. Father, I want to stop resenting them. I want to stop playing the big judge, the superior one, who knows how they should be. Lord, I want just to start thanking you for them. I thank you for even the shortcomings that they have. Even the things that up to now have irritated me, Lord, I want to thank you for these because I know you have put these here for my good and that you have taken away any power these things have to destroy me or hurt my life in anyway, so I know that all that remains is something good for me in these situations. Lord, I want to thank you for this ridiculous loan that I got myself into. It's wearing me down but Lord I thank you for it now and I know it's in your hands and I know you have destroyed the spirits and powers behind it that would wear me down with anxiety and wear me into the grave. Lord, I want to thank you for this loan. I know in some way I brought it upon myself but Lord you allowed it to come so I thank you for it and I thank you that you will provide the grace and strength to meet it and indeed I give it to you; it is your loan, Lord."

And then those problems that you have, those things that you have not solved. "Lord I want to thank you for this difficulty that I am facing. I want to thank you for this problem that I see no solution to. I see no way forward Father. Father I want to stop taking it as my problem, I want to stop resenting it, I want to stop worrying about it, I want to thank you for it and Lord it's not my problem. You allowed it to come here into my life so that you could show an answer for it. I want to give it to you. I won't accept that problem as mine. I give it to you, Lord. And I thank you for it."

Loved ones, how about just doing that this morning. You must be like me; so many things come into our lives that we end up resenting and we end up worrying about and wishing were different and the dear Lord is saying to us, "Would you stop wishing things were different and would you see that I have allowed these things to come and I have them all organized. I just want you to settle, for goodness sake, settle and begin to have faith in me and begin to thank me for these things." Loved ones, there will come a whole spirit into your life of light and revelation, there really will. So I don't want to make a big thing of it, I just want to ask maybe Carmen to play "Have Thine Own Way" on the piano and then just those of us who want just come up to the alter and give thanks to God. "In all circumstances for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." Just do it and go back to your seat and maybe then we'll at the end sing "Have Thine Own Way Lord".