

Thy Will Be Done

Our attitude and approach to all of life should be like Jesus who prayed, "My father ... not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). We don't want to be like Adam and Eve who ignored God's will (Genesis 3:1-6), or like Saul who partially obeyed God's will (1 Samuel 15:13-15), or like Naaman who wanted to change God's will (2 Kings 5:12), or like Jonah who ran from God's will (Jonah 1:3), or like Peter who resisted God's will (Matthew 16:22), or like the Pharisees who added to God's will (Matthew 23:4).

God has a prescriptive will to be done. It is prescribed in the New Testament (Hebrews 10:7-10). Will we say, "Thy will be done" when the New Testament challenges us to change, forbids us to do something, calls what we are doing "sin", or runs contrary to our reasoning?

God has a desired will to be done. His desire is reveal from his heart (Matthew 18:14). Will we say, "Thy will be done" when God desires us to be pure (1 Thessalonians 4:3), to be thankful (1 Thessalonians 5:18), to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4), or to repent (2 Peter 3:9)?

God has a providential will to be done. His providential care over all creation comes from his love. Will we say, "Thy will be done" when we lose a job, lose a child to death, lose our health, or we are mistreated? In all things, let us say with Jesus, "Thy will be done." - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- If some people should not be Christians, then no one should be.
- If you want to convince others to be a Christian, be one yourself, live like one, and talk about it to others.
- You are best to yourself when you are good to others.
- Many would rather hear a good sermon on Sunday than live it the rest of the week.
- Abhor what is evil; cleave to what is good.

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Assembly Times
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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

The Transformed Life and Three Attitudes Toward Evil

The book of Romans in the New Testament can be divided into three sections. In this book, Paul deals with 1) the problem of mankind: sin (Romans 1-3), 2) the provision for mankind: a savior (Romans 4-11), and 3), the practice of mankind: sacrifice (Romans 12-16).

In this article, I want to focus on the last section of the book of Romans. I want to consider the Christian's sacrificial life, and in particular, the Christian's transformed life and his relationship to the evil around him in the world. Christians are a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God..." (Rom. 12:1). Holy and acceptable living for the Christian does not include evil.

Christians are "transformed" by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:2). The transformed life and the will of God for the Christian does not include evil, but only good. Part of living the sacrificial, transformed life involves three proper attitudes and actions toward evil and good. First, Christians are to abhor evil and cleave to what is good (Romans 12:9). Second, they are not to render evil for evil (Romans 2:14). Third, they are to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:17-21). Let us examine each of these further.

Consider what many in our society call "evil" and "good" (Isaiah 5:20; Micah 3:2; Malachi 2:17). Religion, for example is "evil" and abortion is "good". Many today are "inventors of evil things" (Romans 1:30) and "no lovers of good" (2 Timothy 3:3). The truth is, "evil" and "good" are determined by the standard of God's word, not by the opinions of society.

Christians must abhor evil. Christians must have the same hatred (abhorrence) for evil as God does (Psalms 5:6; 26:5; 34:14; 36:4; 37:27; 78:59; 119:104,128). Christians are not to engage in or fellowship evil, not support, defend, or condone evil, not speak lightly or jokingly of evil, and not appreciate or value evil in any way.

In contrast, Christians must hold to (cleave) what is good like God does (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 1 Peter 3:10-11). Christians are to practice and fellowship what is good, support and defend teachers of good, speak complimentary of what is good, and value greatly what is good.

Christians must never render evil for evil, but render good for evil. Some render evil for good (Psalm 35:12; 38:20; 109:5). Others render evil for evil (Romans 12:17). Some render only good for good (Matthew 5:46-47). True Christians, however, always render good for evil (1 Thes-

salonians 5:12; 1 Peter 3:9). Christians let God (Romans 12:19) and civil government (Romans 13:3-4) take care of the evil-doer.

Finally, Christians overcome evil by practicing good deeds toward the evil-doer (Romans 12:20-21; 1 Peter 2:12; Proverbs 25:21-22; note: "*heap coals of fire*" in Romans 12:20 does not mean do someone literal harm, but cause one's conscience to burn with guilt, shame, or remorse). Christians overcome evil by preaching truth (1 John 2:13-14) and by resisting the influence of the evil-doer with faith (1 John 5:4).

How do we know what is evil and good? We can know by Bible study (Deuteronomy 30:15-16), prayer (1 Kings 3:9), experience (Romans 16:19), discerning (Hebrews 5:14), and being careful who we make friends with (1 Corinthians 15:33; 3 John 11).

We have to get a handle on the standard of evil and good because our future destiny depends upon it (John 5:29). The transformed life is a life where (1) evil is abhorred and good is held fast; (2) where evil is not rewarded with evil; and, (3) where evil is overcome by good. Are you living the transformed life today? - *Chris Reeves*