

VIDEO SERMON SERIES

Sermons on the Heidelberg Catechism

by Rev. Bartel Elshout

Sermon #60, Lord's Day 49

The Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

John Knox Institute of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

© 2025 by John Knox Institute of Higher Education

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means for profit, except in brief quotations for the purposes of review, comment, or scholarship, without written permission from the publisher, John Knox Institute, P.O. Box 19398, Kalamazoo, MI 49019-19398, USA.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

Visit our website: www.johnknoxinstitute.org

Bartel Elshout is pastor of the Kalamazoo Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, Michigan. He previously served as pastor of the Heritage Reformed Congregations of Jordan (Ontario), Chilliwack (British Columbia), and Hull (Iowa). He continues to serve as a part-time instructor at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He previously served as the founding principal of the Netherlands Reformed Christian School in Pompton Plains, New Jersey and as an evangelist in Denver, Colorado. He is also the translator of Wilhelms à Brakel's *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, *The Christian's Only Comfort in Life and Death* by Theodorus van der Groe, and Alexander Comrie's *The Distinctive Marks of Saving Faith*. He was previously married to his late wife, Joan, with whom he has two children, David and Sarah, and seven grandchildren. He is presently married to Clarice.

www.kalamazooreformed.org



VIDEO SERMON SERIES
Sermons on the
Heidelberg Catechism
by Rev. Bartel Elshout

1. The Christian's Only Comfort in Life and Death (Lord's Day 1–1, Question 1)
2. The Pattern of Christian Experience (Lord's Day 1–2, Question 2)
3. The Law of God and Our Misery (Lord's Day 2, Questions 3–5)
4. The Total (Radical) Depravity of Man (Lord's Day 3, Questions 6–8)
5. Man's Sinnership in Light of God's Justice (Lord's Day 4-1, Questions 9–11)
6. The Doctrine of Hell (Lord's Day 4-2, Question 11)
7. Perfect Satisfaction: A Requirement for Deliverance (Lord's Day 5, Q. 12–15)
8. The One Mediator Between God and Man (Lord's Day 6, Questions 16–19)
9. True Saving Faith (Lord's Day 7, Questions 20–23)
10. The God of Salvation: A Triune God (Lord's Day 8, Questions 24–25)
11. Faith in God the Father (Lord's Day 9, Question 26)
12. The Providence of God (Lord's Day 10–1, Question 27)
13. Rich Benefits Derived from Believing God's Providence (Lord's Day 10–2, Q. 28)
14. Jesus, the Savior of Sinners (Lord's Day 11, Questions 29–30)
15. Faith in Christ (Lord's Day 12–1, Question 31)
16. The Identity of the True Christian (Lord's Day 12–2, Question 32)
17. The Unique Identity of Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 13–1, Question 33)
18. The Lordship of Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 13–2, Question 34)
19. The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 14, Questions 35–36)
20. Faith in the Suffering Son of God (Lord's Day 15, Questions 37–39)
21. Christ—A Savior Who Has Paid the Wages of Sin in Full (Lord's Day 16, Q. 40–44)




VIDEO SERMON SERIES
Sermons on the
Heidelberg Catechism
by Rev. Bartel Elshout

22. The Threefold Benefits of the Resurrection of Christ (Lord's Day 17, Q. 45)
23. The Ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 18, Questions 46–49)
24. Faith in the Exalted Christ (Lord's Day 19–1, Questions 50–51)
25. The Second Coming of Christ (Lord's Day 19–2, Question 52)
26. Faith in God the Holy Spirit (Lord's Day 20, Question 53)
27. The Holy Catholic (Universal) Church of Christ (Lord's Day 21–1, Q. 54–56)
28. The Church's Confession Regarding the Forgiveness of Sins (Lord's Day 21–2, Q. 56)
29. The Future of the Christian (Lord's Day 22, Questions 57–58)
30. Justifying Faith (Lord's Day 23, Questions 59–61)
31. The Believer and Good Works (Lord's Day 24, Questions 62–64)
32. Faith and the Sacraments (Lord's Day 25, Questions 65–68)
33. Holy Baptism and the Promise of the Gospel (Lord's Day 26, Questions 69–71)
34. The Water of Holy Baptism (Lord's Day 27–1 Questions 72–73)
35. The Baptism of Infants (Lord's Day 27–2, Question 74)
36. The Holy Supper of the Lord Jesus Christ (Lord's Day 28, Questions 75–77)
37. The Value of the Lord's Supper (Lord's Day 29, Questions 78–79)
38. The Observance of the Lord's Supper (Lord's Day 30, Questions 80–82)
39. The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Lord's Day 31, Questions 83–85)
40. The Good Works of the Christian (Lord's Day 32, Questions 86–87)
41. The True Conversion of Man (Lord's Day 33, Questions 88–91)
42. The Transcript of God's Mind (LD 34, Introductory to God's Law)



VIDEO SERMON SERIES
**Sermons on the
Heidelberg Catechism**
by Rev. Bartel Elshout

43. The Holy Law of God (Lord's Day 34, Questions 92–95)
44. The Second Commandment (Lord's Day 35–1, Questions 96–97)
45. Preaching of God's Word and Graven Images (Lord's Day 35–2, Question 98)
46. God's Commandment Concerning His Name (Lord's Day 36, Questions 99–100)
47. God's Name and the Oath (Lord's Day 37, Questions 101–102)
48. The Fourth Commandment, part 1 (Lord's Day 38–1, Question 103)
49. The Fourth Commandment, part 2 (Lord's Day 38–2, Question 103)
50. The Threefold Requirement of the Fifth Commandment (Lord's Day 39, Q. 104)
51. The Sixth Commandment (Lord's Day 40, Questions 105–107)
52. The Seventh Commandment and Marriage (Lord's Day 41, Questions 108–109)
53. The Eighth Commandment (Lord's Day 42, Questions 110–111)
54. The Ninth Commandment (Lord's Day 43, Question 112)
55. Final Observations About the Law of God (Lord's Day 44, Questions 113–115)
56. The Prayer of the Christian (Lord's Day 45, Questions 116–119)
57. The Address of the Lord's Prayer (Lord's Day 46, Questions 120–121)
58. Hallowing of God's "Father" Name (Lord's Day 47, Question 122)
59. The Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Lord's Day 48, Question 123)
- 60. The Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer, (Lord's Day 49, Question 124)**
61. The Christian's Petition for Daily Bread (Lord's Day 50, Question 125)
62. Readiness to Forgive (Lord's Day 51, Question 126)
63. The Last Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Lord's Day 52, Questions 127–129)



VIDEO SERMON SERIES
**Sermons on the
Heidelberg Catechism**

by Rev. Bartel Elshout

Sermon #60 Lord's Day 49

**The Third Petition of
the Lord's Prayer**

Matthew 6:10

Question and Answer #124

i. Introduction

- 1. A Petition to Obey God's Will Without Murmuring**
- 2. A Petition to Obey God's Will in Our Station of Life**
- 3. A Petition to Obey God's Will as the Angels in Heaven**

Introduction

Boys and girls, what must have gone through Abraham's mind, the friend of God, when God said to him, "Abraham, I want you to take your son, Isaac, and I want you to go to the place that I will show you, and I want you to sacrifice your son." So God revealed his will to Abraham (Genesis chapter 22). And Abraham was a man whose heart had been transformed by the grace of God. And because of the grace of God, Abraham obeyed the voice of God, even though there must have been a tremendous struggle inside of him. Because what God revealed to him, what God asked him to do seemed to contradict what God has promised him, namely, that he would give them not only a son, but that through his son, all families of the earth would be blessed. He was, after all, the son of promise. And so, Abraham obeyed. He obeyed God's revealed will.

Abraham had no way of knowing what God had determined in his secret will. He had no way of knowing what the outcome would be, that Abraham could not order his steps according to God's secret will. Abraham had to order his steps according to God's revealed will. And it was only as he obeyed God's revealed will that he discovered, on Mount Moriah, what was God's secret will, namely, that He would provide a lamb for the burnt offering that would take the place of Isaac, ultimately pointing to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, no doubt, as Abraham and his servants made the journey to Mount Moriah, what a struggle there must have been between God's revealed will and his own will. If Abraham had done his own will, if Abraham could have said,

“There’s no way I will do this. There’s no way that I can sacrifice my son.” But the grace of God prevailed, and made him willing to submit to God’s will.

That’s going to be our focus this morning, as we continue the exposition of the Lord’s Prayer by way of our Heidelberg Catechism. Let’s turn to Lord’s Day 49. And there, we read in,

Question #124: *Which is the third petition?*

The Answer is: *“Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven”; that is, grant that we and all men may renounce our own will, and without murmuring obey Thy will, which is only good; that so every one may attend to and perform the duties of his station and calling as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven.*

Thus, we have the Heidelberg Catechism’s exposition of this petition.

First of all, it is a petition to obey God’s will, God’s revealed will *without murmuring*. Secondly, a petition to obey God’s will in our station of life; *perform the duties of his station and calling*. And thirdly, a petition to obey God’s will *as the angels in heaven*. That is a very significant addition—“Thy will be done as it is in heaven,” whereby Christ gives us the standard of that obedience. So, *The Third Petition: Thy Will Be Done; A Petition to Obey God’s Will Without Murmuring*—the manner in which we are to do it. Secondly, *A Petition to Obey God’s Will in the Station of our Life*—where we are to do it. And thirdly, *A Petition to Obey God’s Will as the Angels in Heaven*—how, the measure of our obedience.

And so, this is the third petition of what we call the first division of the Lord’s Prayer, the first division of the Lord’s Prayer, which is entirely focused on God. The first petition is to hallow the name of God, to hallow the name of the Father specifically, because that’s how Christ taught us to pray: “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.” Because, as I said before, in these petitions, congregation—it’s very significant—in these petitions, Christ defines the agenda of the Christian life. That means that first and foremost, we are to be a worshipping people. We are to be worshippers of God, worshippers of our heavenly Father. Not only here, in a formal worship service, but our entire life should be an act of worship. Our entire life should demonstrate that we desire to honor our heavenly Father which is in heaven.

Secondly, we are to be a people who endeavor to promote the coming of his kingdom. Because by the coming of his kingdom, God’s name will be supremely magnified in the world. As we saw, when we considered that petition, it is through the gospel, it is through the church, God’s covenant community, the church, the gathering of all those whom God has sovereignly called out of this world to be his people. It is through his church and the proclamation of the gospel that God’s kingdom is reestablished here on earth. That’s why Jesus, when he began his ministry, made that very clear, that the kingdom of God had now drawn near. And by grace, as we saw, by grace, the citizens of that kingdom, the people of God, by grace, have been made willing to submit themselves to the rule of the King of that heavenly kingdom—God the Father, in and through his beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. A Petition to Obey God’s Will Without Murmuring

And then, it should come as no surprise that, in the next petition, the focus is specifically on living an obedient life, a God-honoring life, a God-glorifying life, a life that befits the citizens of the kingdom of God. And so, Christ thereby defines that the Christian is a worshipper, seeks to promote the coming of God’s kingdom, and endeavors by grace to live an obedient, God-honoring, and God-glorifying life. That’s the agenda of the Christian life. And so, it’s very it’s very important for us to realize, because it’s often misunderstood, that the focus of this petition is not God’s secret will.

So, boys and girls, let me try and explain what we mean by that. What do we mean by God's secret will? By God's secret will, we mean God's eternal master plan that God has eternally purposed within himself. And the reason we call it a secret will is because that is unknown to us. The only way we discover what God's secret will is, is by reflecting on what has transpired. For instance, if we look back on this past week, we can say that everything that happened this week, in our personal lives, as a congregation, as a nation, in the world—everything that happened in this past week was the unfolding of God's secret will. The only time we do have some insight into that secret will is when God moves a man with the spirit of prophecy. Because that's what prophecy is. In prophecy, God gives us a preview of what he has eternally decreed and purposed. That's why prophecy is always fulfilled to the very letter. That's why the Bible is filled with evidences of fulfilled prophecy, which is one of the astonishing evidences of the fact that God's Word is indeed a divinely-inspired work. But the focus of this petition is not on God's secret will. Christ is not teaching us here, "Make us submissive to God's secret will." Now, we should, of course, because things unfold in our lives that we never planned on, we never expected. Things happen in our life that are obviously components of that secret will, of that which God has decreed should happen in our particular circumstances.

And of course, it is appropriate for a believer to humbly submit himself to that. By the grace of God, Job was able to do that. You know, boys and girls, you know what happened in those first chapters of Job. Suddenly, literally, his entire life fell apart. He lost his children; he lost his possessions; he lost his health. And yet he humbly submitted himself to what was happening, to this dramatic unfolding of God's secret will, of something he could have never anticipated. And yet, by the grace of God, he said, "The Lord has given; the Lord has taken; let the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21). And so, Job, by grace, humbly submitted himself to what was unfolding in his life, but that's not the focus of this petition.

The focus of this petition, and the language that Christ uses, makes it very clear. He says, "Thy will be done"—by us. We are called to be doers of his will. So, as one author said, God abides by his secret will. He will never deviate from that secret will. He will accomplish it. Nothing in the world can stop him from accomplishing his secret will. But we are called to abide by his revealed will. That's why we have the classic passage of Deuteronomy 29:29. Open your Bibles; let's read that passage—29:29, easy to remember. And there, Moses says, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever"—and here comes the key phrase here—"that we may do all the words of this law." There, that defines, that defines what Christ is talking about. Give me grace to be a doer of thy revealed will. Give me grace to be a doer of thy precepts. Give me grace to honor what thou hast revealed to us as thy sovereign will and purpose.

And Christ, in Matthew 7, remarkably and profoundly defines that for us, because of course, we are inclined to think God is asking us to obey his law. And that's true, because, in his law, God gives us his revealed will. In his law, God reveals to us the purpose for which he made us—to live in a love relationship with him, and a love relationship with our neighbor. That's his revealed will unpacked for us all through the Word of God. And Christ very uniquely defines it for us in Matthew 7, verse 21, where he says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven"—and here comes the phrase—"but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." So, Christ is saying, my true disciples, my true followers will be doers of my Father's will. So what is the Father's will? This is the first time that he actually refers to that Father relationship, here, in Matthew. What does it mean to be a doer of his Father's will? Well, what is the Father's delight? The Father's delight is that his Son be honored. The Father's will is

that his Son be glorified. And what is God's will revealed to us in the Scriptures regarding his only begotten Son?—twofold: we are to believe in him, and we are to obey him. We are to walk in his ways. That's God's revealed will.

And congregation, that's what, by nature, we are not inclined to do. Because, by nature, we come into the world with wills that are radically opposed to God. So what is our will? God created us with a will. That makes us distinctly different from all other creatures. Animals, they act by instinct. God gave us a will. And a will is that faculty that enables us to make decisions, and to engage in actions based on what we know and treasure, and value. Because, as you know God created us with three faculties: our mind; our affections—our emotional life; and a will. And before we fell, those three faculties, they functioned in perfect harmony. And so, Adam and Eve, with their mind they were able to know God; with their affections they were able to love God; and with their will they were able to obey the God they knew and they loved. That's how God made us. But as a result of the fall, all of that has changed. Our mind has darkened; our affections have become corrupt; and consequently, our will functions directly contrary to the purpose for which God made it.

Because, as I stated before, what Adam and Eve really did, when they listened to Satan's lie, they declared their own sovereignty. And ever since the fall, fallen man thinks that he is the sovereign of his life. The inclination of the fallen man is to do his will. That's why we read in Romans 8, verse 7, that the carnal mind, the ungodly mind, the mind that is estranged from God, the mind that is hostile to God, the carnal mind is enmity towards God, and is not subject to his law, neither will be.

So, as fallen sinners, we are born with a will that is radically opposed to God's will. We are born with a corrupt will that wants to do what pleases us rather than what pleases God. That's why our world is a world that lives in rebellion towards its Maker, in all of the wretched consequences of that rebellion. And the miracle, therefore, is that the Holy Spirit makes us a new creature when he cuts us off from Adam, and he grafts us into Christ; when he gives us a new heart; and when he takes away that heart of stone, that unrepentant and rebellious heart and replaces it with a heart of flesh; when he makes us willing in the day of his power. Because that's what happens in regeneration. Then those faculties are renewed. Our mind is renewed. Our affections are renewed. Our will is renewed. And from that day forward, that new creature, that new creation is again inclined towards God. The desire of that new creation, of that new life, is to be obedient to the revealed will of God as it is expressed in his Word. So, in regeneration, in the new birth, the Holy Spirit transforms us from lawbreakers into law-keepers; from rebels, we again, by grace, become doers of the will of God.

Boys and girls, when God struck Saul of Tarsus down on the way to Damascus, and when Jesus had said, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" What's the first thing he said? "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:4–6). Here, this proud, arrogant Pharisee, who thought so highly of himself; this proud Pharisee, in one moment, was transformed by the power of the resurrected Christ. He was made willing in the day of God's power. And his cry is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Congregation, that still happens. One of the most important fruits of regeneration, of the receipt of a new heart, is that we become desirous to be doers of God's will. Because in regeneration, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. And yet, God's people, true believers, need to pray this prayer every day. Because, actually, and I agree with one commentator who said, "Actually, this petition is an indictment against us." Because nothing should be more natural to us, or at least to a believer transformed by the power of God's Spirit, nothing should be more natural than that we would be willing and desirous to do God's will, to surrender ourselves unconditionally to the Word

of God. That, sadly, is not the case, because God's children still continue to struggle with that old man. The Spirit goes against the flesh, and the flesh lusts against the Spirit (Galatians 5:17). The spirit is willing. And so, there's this tug of war going on inside the heart of the believer. The new man is desirous to obey God's revealed will. The new man is desirous to unconditionally surrender to what God's Word requires of us; but the old man—we need to remember, congregation—the old man in the believer is old man. The flesh of the believer, that which remains in the believer is as vile and as ugly as the flesh of an unregenerate man. And our flesh, our old man, is drawn to sin, drawn to sin. And every believer struggles with that reality.

And if we are honest, if we are brutally honest with ourselves, we have a tendency, we all do, is that somehow we rationalize about what we desire. And even though God's children have a tendency to talk themselves into believing what they want to believe, we are still inclined, that we would like God's will to be in line with our will; that we would like God to endorse our agenda, rather than us endorsing his agenda. And what a struggle that is. That's the struggle of Romans 7. There, the Apostle, this great man of God, he describes that intense battle within him, "That which I desire to do, that I do not do," he says, "and I hate it." That's so important, congregation. In other words, Paul admitted, "I still sin. I'm still guilty of doing my will rather than God's will, but I hate it."

Do you understand that? Is that true for you? Does that resonate with you? Can you say, "Lord, I so grieve over the fact, Lord thou knowest that I hate it"? That's why Paul concluded that, according to the inner man, he fully subscribed to the law of God, but that old man, that old man that is always trying to regain its lost territory, that old man is always tempting us to do our will rather than God's will. That's why also God's children at times have to experience bitterly what we read in Psalm 68, verse 6, namely that "The rebellious dwell in a dry land." When we go our own way rather than God's way we lose God's favor. And what a blessing it is when every believer ultimately submits, and when God will bring us to the recognition that I yielded unto my will rather than his will and again bring us back to himself.

That's why it says here so insightfully, *That we and all men*. Now this is a very interesting addition, congregation, because what the Catechism understands correctly is that ultimately the desire of the Christian is that all men would submit themselves to God's revealed will. That God's will would be done throughout the world, of course, beginning with us, to *renounce our own will*. That means, very simply, to say "No" to yourself, and to say "Yes" to God. Very simply, to say "No" to yourself, and to say "Yes" to God, to *renounce* your own will. That's why Jesus said, in Matthew 16:24, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

And, it says here, *Without murmuring obey Thy will*. Without murmuring—congregation, who of us have never murmured? Who of us have never murmured, especially when God's revealed will in his Word, spelled out in his Word, compelled us to follow a pathway that was contrary to our flesh and blood; when we had to dispense our agenda in favor of God's agenda? But of course, when you use the word "murmuring," we cannot help but think of the history of the people of Israel. How often did they not murmur during that forty-year journey? How often they murmured against a God who so magnificently cared for them. No sooner had God miraculously led them to the Red Sea, and they started murmuring, and they murmured, and they murmured again, and again. Forty years—the Lord says, "This people have caused me grief." Oh, what an ugly thing is murmuring! It's understandable when the ungodly murmur, when the ungodly become angry, when the ungodly lose it when things don't go their way. That's because they have a heart that is hostile to God. But for God's people to murmur, what a wretched thing. We need to confess that. And sometimes that murmuring will not yet come across our lips, but God knows my heart, and he

knows your heart, and the secrets within. He knows what happens inside, when things don't quite go our way, that wretched tendency to murmur.

That's why it says remarkably about Job later on, after he made that wonderful confession, "And he sinned not with his lips." In other words, it didn't come across his lips. And so, the obedience that Christ is saying what we are to pray for, "Thy will be done," thy revealed will, the revealed will for our life, the revealed will of God spelled out in his Word—we are to submit to it without murmuring. And that emphasizes, congregation, that for the believer, true obedience comes from within. True obedience begins within, with a heart that surrenders to God and his will.

And so the obedience of the Christian, rather than murmuring, the obedience of the Christian should be a childlike obedience. Because, remember, that's the connection—"Our Father which art in heaven." That immediately, we have this childlike disposition, because of the precious name, "Our Father which art in heaven, Thy will be done." And boys and girls, you have to show that you love your dads and your moms by honoring what they ask you to do. That's the duty of a child. The duty of a child is to demonstrate your love for your father and mother by obeying them, by honoring what they ask you to do. That's what Christ is talking about here—the obedience of a child of God, the obedience of a Christian who is a recipient of the grace of God.

And so, our daily need is to pray for grace to unconditionally obey God's revealed will. That's what Abraham had to do. It was God's revealed will. God spoke it. He had to go by what God said, not by how he felt. He had to go by what God said. And he obeyed what God said. Now, whether he did it without murmuring, we don't know what all happened in those three days when he walked there with his son. You can imagine the battle that raged inside the heart of that man. And yet, the grace of God prevailed. And he obeyed God's revealed will.

2. A Petition to Obey God's Will in the Station of our Life

That brings us to our second point, namely, *That so every one may attend to and perform the duties of his station and calling.* That's a very significant addition, because that really sharpens our understanding of what Christ means here. Sometimes we talk about the life of the Christian and the obedience of the Christian in generic terms. No, the Catechism is very explicit, because what the Catechism is saying is that God has placed us in a very unique context, in a very unique setting, and that unique context, that unique setting, that station in life, is according to the determinate counsel of God. That means, congregation, where you and I are today is exactly according to God's secret will. Your and my life is an unfolding of the secret will of God. And according to God's secret will, you and I are precisely where we are today, and our circumstances are precisely according to God's determinate counsel.

And now, we are commanded, Christ is saying, we are to be doers of God's will precisely in that unique context. That means that we have to prove ourselves as Christians; we have to prove ourselves as men and women, boys and girls, who honor the Word of God exactly in that station, in those circumstances in which we find ourselves. Ephesians 2, verse 10; open your Bibles and read that passage with me—a very insightful passage regarding this: "For," the Apostle says, after he has spoken of the amazing grace of God in the life of the Ephesians, then he says this, "For we are his workmanship"—in the Greek, it says, we are his poem—"we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works"—and here comes the key phrase—"which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Do you know what Paul is saying? God has eternally mapped out the pathway of your and my life. God has eternally purposed what circumstances he would place you in, in which you would have to prove yourself to be a child of the living God, the context in which you need to honor God's revealed will. And that appointment, that station in

life, is God's sovereign and wise appointment. That's why I've said so often that true Christianity begins at home—at home; our family, your family, your marriage, your extended family, your work environment. All of that is part of your station and calling in your life, all of that. In other words the fact that you are married to your spouse is according to the determinate counsel of God. And God's will, God's revealed will for you is to prove yourself as a godly spouse in your marriage, married to your spouse. That goes for both husbands and wives. It begins at home.

That means that I have to prove myself as a parent. My obligation is to obey God's revealed will about parenting, revealed in his Word. My calling is to be a doer of God's will in the way I govern my family as a father, in my role as the spiritual leader of my family. And today is Mother's Day.¹ God has sovereignly purposed that you are the mother of your family, you are the mother of your children, and of your grandchildren. And you as a mother, God's revealed will for you, as a Christian mother, is to be a godly mother, to behave yourself as a godly mother to your children. That's our calling. It's a call to be godly spouses, a call to be godly parents, a call to be godly children. Boys and girls, I so hope and pray that you fear the Lord as well. And your duty, if you claim to love God, if you claim to love Christ, God's revealed will for you is that you would honor your father and mother, that you would obey them. That's God's revealed will. That means, if you are an employer, your calling is to be a godly employer. You have to prove yourself in that environment. You should conduct yourself in such a way as an employer that your employees can see in you the reflection of Christ; that your employees can see in you that you are a man or a woman that fears God and that honors his Word. That's the kind of employer Boaz was. When you read the Book of Ruth, what a godly man he was. His conduct towards his employees was remarkable, including Ruth, the stranger. But also, if you are an employee—if you are an employee, your specific calling is to be a godly employee. You will have to prove your Christianity every day you go to work. That's where that counts, congregation. That's where that counts. As I've said here before, it's not original with me, but the Christian has to bloom where God has planted him. And you are today exactly where God has planted you. Your circumstances, however challenging they may be, however difficult they may be, your circumstances are exactly according to the determinate counsel of God. That's your and my station in life. And that's where I have to prove myself. It really brings it very much close to home.

And so, the calling of the Christian is to be a Christian at all times, and under all circumstances, not just on the Lord's Day. Here, we all come, and we see each other. But you see, the reason why it's so difficult to be a faithful and consistent Christian at home is because at home, everybody knows each other. There's no pretense. There's no pretense. But that's where it matters. That's where it matters. And that means that a lot of true Christianity happens in a rather private setting. That's how it ought to be, that our public piety should be an expression of our private piety. It's our private piety, the piety we exercise at home, that should fuel our public piety. And so, God forbid that it would be said of any of us, "He is a saint in church, but he is a devil at home." God forbid that that would be true for any of us. And so, we are called to be Christians twenty-four/seven.² Titus 2, verse 12: "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts"—that's saying "No" to sin—"we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

That so every one may attend to and perform the duties of his station and calling. We are called to be God's servants. Again, an author said, and, of course, that comes from Lord's Day 12, we are called to be office-bearers as believers. That means we are to be communicators of God's truth; we are to be intercessors as priests; and we are to govern our lives according to God's revealed

¹ Mother's Day is an American civil day set aside once a year for the honoring of the mother of the family.

² Twenty-four/seven is an American slang term referring to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

will. That's why, in the Old Testament, God's people are designated as "God's servants." So, when you read about God's servants in the Old Testament, that's the Old Testament equivalent of the New Testament term, "Christian." And a very insightful designation, congregation, that's true Christianity, is that we become servants of God, that we order our life according to his will; that the prayer of Saul is our daily prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—How may I honor his name? Lord, give me grace to be faithful precisely where I am. Give me grace to be true to thy Word, to walk in thy ways. And you find this all through Psalm 119. Let me just give you a sampling. It so beautifully expresses the yearning of a godly man to be a doer of God's will.

Psalm 119, verse 124: "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes." Teach me thy revealed will. Verse 125: "I am thy servant: give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies." That I may know and understand thy revealed will, and be a doer of it. Verse 135: "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes." See that connection? Being a servant of God, and desirous to be taught by God; and desirous to know thy will? That's the desire of a servant. A true servant wants to please his master. "Teach me thy statutes." And verse 140: "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it." That means, when we pray this prayer, "Thy will be done," Lord give me grace for my life to be wholly surrendered to thee, even if it would cost me my life. Because that's what the world recognizes. I've said here before, the world has no problem with nominal Christians, but those who genuinely serve God, who manifest genuine godliness.

3. A Petition to Obey God's Will as the Angel's in Heaven

And very quickly, of course then, Christ adds, and I think that we've woven this all the way through, but he says, "in earth as it is in heaven." So, he's saying that earth must resemble heaven. Earth must resemble heaven. And how do the angels, how do they obey? That's actually very humbling and very convicting. Because otherwise, we would be inclined to be rather pleased with myself. And Christ is saying, "Well, let me make clear to you what I mean by this. You are to be a doer of God's will as the angels in heaven." And how do they obey? Well, they obey very willingly. They are the ministering servants of God, doing the will of God from the heart. They obey faithfully. They know precisely what God commands them to do. They know their place. They do his bidding. Psalm 103, verse 20, "Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." And if we go through Scripture, there are many other adverbs that describe the way the angels obey. They obey God *cheerfully*. They obey God *instantly*. They obey God *constantly*. They obey God *unconditionally*. They obey God *sincerely*. They obey God *perfectly*. They obey God *zealously*. They obey God *reverently*. That's the standard. That's the standard. And who of us can even come close to that, and yet, you see again the divine content of this petition, where Christ clearly teaches us that God's standard is nonnegotiable.

That's why we want to end by focusing on Christ. That's why for us, with our inconsistent obedience, our fickle obedience, our intermittent obedience, our compromised obedience, our only hope is in him, the Lord Jesus Christ, who obeyed his Father's will perfectly. And he did that on our behalf, dear believer. By his active obedience, by actively living in perfect harmony to his Father's revealed will, he merited that obedience on behalf of us. Jesus was conscious of the fact that this was his obligation. He says, in John 6:38, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." And that meant that in the garden of Gethsemane, he had to surrender, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). And he's talking about God's revealed will. He knew God's

secret will, but he also knew God's revealed will regarding what he had to do. And he surrenders himself.

And therein lies our hope, congregation. Because if God would mark our iniquities, also as believers, if he would mark our faulty and inconsistent obedience, if he would mark our murmuring, when we murmur against his will, who can stand before him? But thanks be to God that Christ has accomplished what we fail to accomplish; that God views his children in Christ. He views them in Christ, in that perfect obedience. And so, that defines for us too, and that brings us to where I started, the will of the Father is to believe in his Son, and to honor his Son, to obey his Son.

So, when we pray this petition, "Thy will be done," we're saying, "Lord, give me grace to be Christlike in my obedience. Christlike—that's the definition of holiness, to be Christlike; to follow in his footsteps. He perfectly exemplifies for us what it means to be a doer of God's will. And that's why, congregation, we need to abide in Christ. And I promise you, I will soon do a series in John 15. But we need to abide in Christ. That's the secret, to be a doer of God's will. That means we need to live as close to him as we can. We need to walk with him daily. We need to be in his Word. We need to feed upon that Word, that Word which reveals to us God's will. And the more we abide in Christ, the more sensitive we will become to that Word, the more that Word will abide in us. So Jesus says, in verse 7, "If ye abide in me"—John 15—"and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Christ is saying, when you abide in my Word, you will think according to my Word, and you will pray in harmony with my Word. That's what he means. He's saying, the more biblically you think, the more biblically you will pray. John 15, verse 10, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." And in Matthew 11, verses 29 to 30, he says so lovingly, "Take my yoke upon you"—the yoke of my Word—"and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Actually, it's a contradiction. He's saying, my yoke is not a yoke, and my burden is not a burden. "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

And so, let me conclude. It is this habitual, Christlike obedience; it's habitual, Christlike obedience, which is evidence of the indwelling ministry of the Spirit of Christ. That's why John writes in 1 John 2, if you claim to know Christ, if you claim to know him, and you're not a doer of his will, you're a liar, and the truth is not in you (verse 4). That's why Jesus said, "If you love me, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. If you love me, you will be a doer of my will. And then, the encouragement is, Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And then, Paul could say boldly, by faith, Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things"—I can submit myself wholly to God's revealed will—"through Christ which strengtheneth me," who makes his strength perfect in our weakness, until that day comes, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, a place where God's will shall be done forever, perfectly in heaven and on earth.

And so, my dear beloved, is this the petition of your life? Is this your daily petition? "Lord, enable me to honor thee today; enable me to be a doer of thy will; enable me to honor thee in my marriage, to honor thee in my family, to honor thee in the workplace, to honor thee wherever the station of my life will bring me." That's our sacred calling. That's what we are called to do. Or, are you still a rebel, resisting God's revealed will, that only those that believe in his Son will not perish but have eternal life? Oh, then, seek this God, who has revealed in this Word that he makes sinners willing in the day of his power. Cast yourself at the feet of this Savior, who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

And so, may our prayer be, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, thy

kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Amen.

Let’s pray.

Our faithful God, we have to confess with shame that we come so short as the doers of thy will, our sacred obligation towards thee. But we give thee thanks for thy beloved Son who has done a complete work for us, also by his active obedience, surrendering himself to thy revealed will so completely, that he willingly surrendered himself to be nailed to the accursed cross, so that lawbreakers could be reconciled with thee, and be restored into thy favor, and by thy grace, become law-keepers again. Dismiss us now with thy blessing. Bless the instruction to be given to our young people and children that are with us tonight. We ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.