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Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel Brighton
on Sunday evening 15 January 1922

MATTHEW 6 v 10

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as
it is in heaven".

Wherever a sinner prays this prayer under the leading of the Holy Spirit, he prays for the mortification of the flesh, for the destruction of his own kingdom, the kingdom of Satan and of sin in his own heart. He prays that he may not be himself, but another, even in Christ. He prays that Christ may be exalted above self, which is contrary to our own vile nature. Think of it. People may pray this prayer in so many words without the slightest apprehension of what is intended, but when one prays this prayer with a spiritual intelligence, apprehension of what is meant, that is a very great, a very unusual, a spiritual prayer. It reaches heaven, whence the kingdom comes. It reaches God's ear and an answer comes whereby the flesh is crucified with the affections and lusts, as the Apostle Paul speaks: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts". This kingdom is a spiritual kingdom; therefore its laws are different from all natural laws. They do not run in the way of natural laws at all. They do not weaken obedience to the authorities that are, the powers that be, which are of God. They do not make disloyal subjects of people, the people of God, but the spiritual allegiance which they owe to God, and which they desire to render to Him, is of another nature. It is Godward entirely. It comes into that Scripture: "Render unto Ceasar the things which are Ceasar's and unto God the things which are God's." And the things which are God's are the things which come from Him; that is to say, the heart is brought to realise that it owes everything it possesses of life, and grace, and hope and the fear of God, a tender conscience, the spirit of faith and of prayer, it owes all these things to God. and they are parts of His blessed and everlasting kingdom. This kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, as it is written: "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth for ever." So every child of God sooner or later comes to know, and say for himself:

"Although my house be not so with God, yet hath He made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation and all my desire, though He make it not to grow." What a mercy to have a religion that will live longer than these bodies live; that will carry the soul to God. A religion that brings the possessor and subject of it unto the throne of God's heavenly grace here, and ultimately to stand before the throne of His glory in eternity. What a kingdom this is. If you realise what it means to the flesh you wont lightly pray it. If it comes, you wont have a smooth, easy, flesh-pleasing path to walk in to heaven, but you will have a good God to help you through, and to bring you ultimately to that one object and end of your heart's desire and faith, namely to be with the Lord for ever and ever. O what a good thing it is to be right with God, to have a religion which is from Himself, to have a kingdom that never consents to sin. That although there is in every one born again a body of sin and death, there is that also which cries out mightily against sin. It was the possession of the grace of God, the kingdom of God in him, that made the Apostle say: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death". If you have grace, you will have trouble. Sin will give you trouble, if nothing else troubles you. Sin will be a burden if you have no other burdens. Grace is the opposite of sin; contrary in its nature, contrary in its ways, contrary in its aspirations to nature. Nature is hell-ward, looks to the earth and no higher. Every man in nature's state has a horizon that does not go higher than himself. Nothing can rise above its own nature. Everyone who has grace has an outlook higher, wider, better infinitely. God is the end of his faith. So when you have grace to pray, "Thy kingdom come", you have grace to ask for the crushing of the old man, for the exaltation of Christ. I say again, if you realise this, it will make you look very seriously and closely into this petition, and say at times, can I pray it? I do not think it is a prayer of every minute of a person's life, but it is the prayer of faith when faith is in exercise. Two kingdoms, different in their natures and in their ends, cannot exist at the same time, and each be prevailing at the same time in the same subject. You can never expect the Papist to be absolutely loyal to a sovereign when he has sworn allegiance to the Pope above all others. And if you have one kingdom in you, one reigning, you cannot have the other. Says Christ "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." You cannot serve two masters. You will

either hate the one and love the other, or despise the one and cleave to the other. They do not go together; they cannot coalesce. There is no union between sin and Christ, between self and Christ, I mean sinful, depraved, self. There is union between Christ and a sinner who, born again, is a partaker of the divine nature. This comes to be a close thing with people. "Thy kingdom come" and crush this monster within. Come and lead me in the way of righteousness; come and lead me to the throne of God's heavenly grace, lead me out of the world, lead me into truth. Away from the errors and the hardness and the prejudice and the vanity of my own old man. Let us thus come to this and ask ourselves very seriously as God helps us, whether we have been led to pray from the heart this solemn petition. "Thy kingdom come". Whether, with bared hearts, with breasts open, faces unveiled before the Lord, we have said "Thy kingdom come"

I said this morning that there were two words that might be said about the person in whom this kingdom is. First, that there is a terrible wilderness; self is a wilderness. And second that this wilderness is made to blossom as the rose; that is a poor, barren sinner is brought to receive the atonement and to see the beauty and excellence and comeliness of the Lord Jesus, and pray this prayer. Each one says

Reign oer me as King, accomplish Thy will
And powerfully bring me forth from all ill
Till, falling before Thee, I laud Thy loved Name,
Ascribing the glory to God and the Lamb

This kingdom is to terminate, as to all the blessed ends of God, in the glorification of the church. If you are led to read carefully, and with spiritual eyes, the description of the church of God given in the Revelation, you will find that she comes from God out of heaven. The end is, she is with God in heaven. A religion that does not come from heaven never leads to heaven. Like as a prayer that does not come from heaven by the Spirit never reaches heaven and never brings answers down. The kingdom is heavenly, the kingdom comes from God and it ends in being with Him. Well, may the Lord grant us this divine kingdom in our hearts. Nothing else will take us through this life honourably, honouring God, and land us in glory with Him;

nothing else.

Well, this kingdom of God is the kingdom of grace, the covenant, and it is the kingdom wherein the gospel is, that is, wherein Christ is. What a King He is. Every kingdom has a ruler, a king. This kingdom has its Ruler, and its King who is none other than the Lord Jesus. Where do you go in trouble? To the throne of grace. Who is the throne of grace? The Lord God Himself. He is the throne of grace; He is everything to His children. All and in all. Who is your Refuge in danger? The Lord God. The Lord God indeed is the only refuge. "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe." To whom do you run in a day of battle? To the Captain of your salvation, the Ruler in this kingdom. So in everything where this kingdom is, there is Christ made known, sought unto, and everything belonging to Him is theirs.

Then the second petition: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven". "Thy will". You know what a will is. I know what a will is. Bunyan in his Mansoul speaks of My Lord Will be Will. Who does not know that, who has grace? You will do this, and you wont do that. You choose that, you reject the other. Naturally speaking there is a will in us; in some very strong. This will wont give up easily, O no; you find that as grace is in you, nature struggles against grace. When grace and nature come into collision, and they do, then that is proved that the Apostle Paul speaks of in the Galatians: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." And dear friends, that goes both ways. That is expressed by Paul in the Romans, "When I would do good evil is present with me." There was the clashing of arms. There was the desire of the flesh; there was the longing of the Spirit, and these come against each other so that, though you cannot do the good that you would, it is also true you cannot do the evil that the old man would do. You will come from the world if you have grace. You will come from practising sin, if you have grace. It will make a man disposed to lying, truthful. It will make a man disposed to any particular sin, with any particular weakness in his nature, long to be delivered from it, and struggle against it. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh". And mark these two things; if you have got grace

you have got them both, and you have the struggle.

Now the will of God is different from our will. Let me say a word or two about God's will. It is the eternal will of Jehovah. It is customary to speak of the positive, the decreeing will of God, and the permissive will of God. I do not like these terms myself. God has not two wills; He has only one will, and that one will of God works in different ways. It works positively everything that is good. God wills to permit everything that is evil. It is one will in God acting differently, in different subjects. Everything that is good in us, if there is anything good; every thought that is gracious, every prayer that is pleasing to God, every motion of faith that we have, God actively has willed that we should have from eternity. But every ungodly thought, and ungodly deed that we may ever have done, God has willed to permit. He brings no force upon the will of a creature with regard to sin, but He permits the creature to sin. Now the will of God is a great will and I trust the Lord may give us proper thoughts about it, right apprehension of it. Here the prayer is that it may be done. "Who hath resisted His will?" Who hath resisted that divine will that is in God? A man may say he will do this and he wont do that, but all the time he is really acting according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and we will look at one or two instances which the Scriptures give us of men doing the will of God, ungodly men. You take the case where the Lord said, "Who will go and deceive Ahab for us?" God would have it that an evil influence and wrong spirit should move Ahab, and He said, who will go and do it? A lying spirit came forth and said he would go, and the Lord said go and deceive Ahab. It was God's will in permitting so much evil. You take the case of Balaam who would fain have cursed the people of God, and the Lord said you are not to go. There was no change in the will of God when He permitted Balaam to go and make the attempt, but it was a permission of God for Balaam to go and attempt to curse the saints of the Most High, that the goodness, and the wisdom, and the purpose of God to Israel might be brought forth from the mouth of that wicked false prophet. O how many saints have been benefited by those blessed utterances of Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. You take the greatest of all sins that ever was committed, the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. What was it that led these men to do it? Nothing less than the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of

God. Every step toward the crucifixion of Christ and the crucifixion itself was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. It is this will, great, universal, all-controlling will of God, that here the saints pray to have done. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven".

There is a will of God in salvation. Let me mention it as the Lord Jesus expresses it. "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son and believeth on Him should have everlasting life, and I will raise Him up at the last day." That embraces a poor, coming sinner. That casts its chains of divine purpose and immutable purpose around a sinner who, in his weakness and fear and guilt and trouble, ventures near to the throne of God's heavenly grace. That glorious will secures a sinner. The Lord Jesus said every one given to Me by My Father shall come to Me, "and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Do you see this, poor sinner, that God's will is cast around you, and that when you come with humble desires, and fervent petitions to Christ for mercy, for salvation, for help, for deliverance, for guidance, for teaching; when you come to Christ, then the will of God is concerned in you; that it is as a mighty power in you, a chain of divine purpose cast around you to draw you from the sea of this world where death reigns; to draw you to Him who is life. That is God's will. Do you pray for that to be done, that you might come, continually come, from sin to God; from the world to Christ. It is a great thing to say in that particular: "Thy will be done" in my case, yes, in my case. Every one born of God longs for that salvation, longs, that is to say, to come and belong to Christ and be saved by Christ. The will of God therefore is in salvation. It respects every poor sinner given by the Father to the Son, born again in due time and brought in the teaching of the blessed Spirit to Christ. Where are your eyes, poor sinner? Where is your heart? If you speak as you feel at times, you will say, my eyes would fain be on the Person of Christ, the atonement of Christ, and I would be at His heavenly footstool. I would be the recipient of mercy, the subject of God's grace. I would be a vessel to be filled out of Christ's fullness. The will of God is concerned in all these motions and desires and pantings. They never would have been in you if the will of God had not been done thus far. Which were born not of the will of man, not of flesh, nor of blood. Then how? Of

God. And those who were born of God said this: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth". So whenever the eyes of a sinner look to Jesus Christ and get, by His Spirit, a view of the glory of Christ, there is one who is born of the will of God. Born of God. Not of the will of men, nor of the flesh, nor of blood, but of God. When a sinner is willing, willing to be saved by grace, that is by the will of God. If you have a will to get to heaven, how came you to have it? By the holy, immutable, unchangeable will of God. If your heart is set on Christ, the will of God is in that matter. If your will is set on holiness, the will of God has done it. "This is the will of Him who has called you, even your sanctification." Can you pray, with that before your mind, "Thy will be done"

The will of God also has respect to providence. The will of God has designed a rough path to heaven. Christ has promised many things, good things, to His children. He has promised also tribulation. "In the world ye shall have tribulation". It must come. God's will will never be frustrated. He who has cast up the narrow way to heaven will never permit a poor sinner to climb to that blessed abode of peace and holiness by any other way. By-path leads to evil. The right way is upward and rough and painful to flesh and blood. You see, we care a good deal for ourselves; we are very solicitous for our own comfort; anxious not to have too much trouble; none at all if we might avoid it. Therefore when God has cast up this way and brings a sinner into it, well there is trouble. For instance it was God's holy will that you should come into some particular difficulty. Your flesh rebelled, could not do other. Your nature repined, you wished to be out of that into which God had brought you. There was a principle in you, is a principle in you, that wanted God's will to be done. Here there came about a conflict; the flesh disliking the way, faith approving it well. The flesh saying, I will not have it; if I can get out of it I will do so, at any cost. Faith saying, this is the right way, this is God's way, this is God's doing. Faith taking you to your knees, to the throne of grace, and teaching you to say, Lord do not let me have my own way. What a great conflict this is. Now the word of Christ comes in, that if a man take not up his cross and follow Christ he is none of His, and faith says, O but to be separated from Christ,

how dreadful. Faith cries mightily here to have a straight path made for the feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. Faith says, Lord, let it rather be healed; bless me. "Thy will be done" That comes out sooner or later. "Thy will be done". Blessed sinner who is able to say it. The Lord will overcome if you belong to Him, and He will make you willing in the day of His power that His will should be done. Once He told me to do something which was abhorrent to my flesh, and I said I wont do it. May you not do so; the Lord keep you from sinning like that, but I did sin like that. I said, I wont do it. I lived a day that I shall never forget. And how did the Lord deal with me? Did He say, you shall go your own way? No, mercifully He put the strong fear into my heart that He would not let me do it, and that brought out a strong cry that He would enable me to do it, and He did. If you have got a strong nature, and God comes against it, it will say, I wont, but God is stronger. O Lord, said one, Thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed. I have been a wretch, like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and Thou hast chastened and Thou hast brought me down, and now what I want is that Thy will should be accomplished in me. Accomplish Thy will in me in affliction. "Thy will be done". We sing sometimes, some very solemn will

O crucify this self, that I
No more, but Christ in me may live

Why if you are led to analyse these words, you will very seriously tremble at the consideration that will come into your mind. Can I pray that prayer?

O crucify this self, that I
No more, but Christ in me may live

That was where Paul was brought. "I live", said he, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2 v 20). You may have a companion; he does not fear God; you love him. I knew this struggle; more than 50 years ago I had it, and I said I would not give him up. Well, I had to do, and was glad to do it. God will bring you to things where your will clashes with His, and you will find, when that is the case, He is stronger than you. A

wise father says to his son, do this, and the son says, I would rather not. The father says, it is best and you must do it. The wise father insists on it; the son has to submit. God will be insistent. Blessed be His Name, He is insistent, and O He has such a beautiful way of winning His poor people, such a beautiful way of overcoming them. Do not - I hope you do not - think that in any of my poor words I represent God as being hard or harsh; He is not. His way is so wonderful. You say, I wont, and He puts a fear into your heart of His blessed Name, and majesty, and you feel that to offend Him is a grief of heart to you, and you then fly, by the faith that He gives you, you fly, to the throne of grace and pour out there your wishes, and ask the Lord to forgive your sin and to give you grace to follow Him in the heavenly direction that He has set before you. It is beautiful. Love touches the people of God, touches the spring of spiritual life in them, touches the holy nature that God has implanted in them, touches their faith and their faith goes out after Him and says, Lord do bring me to this. We cannot bring ourselves to it, yet our rebellion is sin, but He does bring us to it in affliction. Were you ever willing to walk a rough and thorny path? Were you ever willing to give up some dear object? Were you ever willing to have the flesh crucified, with the affections and lusts thereof? This is God's will that His people should so walk; therefore He comes to them. Peter said: "What shall this man do?" pointing to John. It was no business of Peter's. You may say, Lord what about this? It is no business of thine. What then? "Follow Thou Me." O, but it is difficult. But the Lord gives power. He said to Peter: "When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst wither thou wouldest". Some of us know that. He said to him: "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee wither thou wouldest not". What then? Why Peter was willing; he said the Lord had shown him that he must shortly put of this, his tabernacle. He was willing; it was a day of power in him. So you will find that, that the way to heaven is a very rough way, but a very beautiful way - a shining way, a glorious way - only faith alone can see it; nature cannot submit to this difficult walking. Nature rebels constantly.

The will of God may be in a matter that particularly touches you, when He will take something away that you would like to retain, and give you something which you would wish not to have. Or, in other

words, He may put a bitter into your cup and keep away a sweet that you fain would have it sweetened with. Now what about His blessed will? You say, I cannot take this cup. But then you will have to follow your Master. He said "Follow Me". What did He do? He said, in the garden, to His Father: "If it be possible let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt". "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18 v 11) And He drank it; yea the very dregs He took, that there should be no curse to His children, but only a blessing. Now they are brought at times in that particular to say, "Thy will be done."

The will of God concerning us is this, separation from the world. Now there may be a certain worldliness in us which we would like to indulge. Grace never irradicates all sin till death. Some sins you may find God, as it were, uprooted. He completely uprooted one sin in me, and by His mercy I have been enabled to say, I have never wanted to do it since the day He stopped me. But that is only one out of million if one may speak so. But still the word of God is this, "Come out from among them". I was carried to the theatre as soon as I might go anywhere. I grew up to love it intensely. I was not half in it; wbolly, everything. When the Lord met with me, He most mercifully stopped that, and I have never, never wanted to go since, but there are plenty of things that I have wanted and do want; plenty. If you have got an intensely worldly mind, as I have, you will understand me. The Word of God comes very much against some things. Probably the majority of you know nothing about the world as I knew it, openly, but you have got it in your heart. The world is set in the hearts of the sons of men and their heart is fully set in them to do evil and against them comes the Word of God. "Be ye separate". "Come out from among them". "Touch not the unclean thing". "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." Oh, it is a close word my friends, and if you fear God it will come right up against some sin in you, something that you indulge, and you must say: "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" How shall I do it? Then one says, I was brought down and I had no will. Well, that was what you felt, but there is a will, and it pleases God to bring that will into unison with His will. The faculty remains, but its position, its disposition, God controls; that you can say, now Lord my will is brought into unison with Thy will. Mary's was; she chose that good,

that better part, the good thing, the one thing that was needful, and the Lord confirmed her in it. You will find the world and God's holy truth will clash and you wont be able to go into it. If you fear God you will be separated from it. "Come out", says the Lord. "My kingdom is not of this world", says Christ. The nature of it is different from the world. I am the Ruler of it and "I am not of this world". And the whole of what I am trying to say to you, you will find in the 17 John, in that important Scripture. "They are not of this world even as I am not of this world." Then if you are not of this world, the will of God is being done in you. "Thy will be done".

One word more and I close. "Thy will be done" in the end of my journey, in the finishing of my course. What is the will of God concerning His people? That everyone which seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life, and Christ will raise him up at the last day. Now could not some of us say before Almighty God that we want to be like His dear Son, Jesus Christ. Examine yourselves; could you not appeal to the Lord and say, that as far as you know your own hearts, you do feel to be able to say your wish is to be like the Lord Jesus. How will that be? Says John in his epistle, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God". "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." It is the will of God. "Thy will be done". Bring me to a good end. Bring me to that blessed place where my heart is at times.

Bring me where I my heaven may find
The heaven of loving Thee alone (1016)

While here control by Thine. Order my footsteps by Thy word; let no corrupt design or covetous desire move this heart of mine and eventually bring me to be with Thyself.

This prayer then is good; although it is against nature, it is a blessed prayer. "Thy will be done in earth" - even while we are here - "as it is in heaven". In heaven it is done unquestioningly. May it be done so by us, for He giveth not any account of His matters. What a

wonder it is to have a will brought into such unison with God's will as to say, "Thy will be done". In affliction, "Thy will be done". In prosperity, when it comes, the will of God be done. In adversity, and trouble, and sorrow; in weakness, the will of God be done. When it is, the heart's desire is fulfilled, and God is glorified. May He grant it to us.

AMEN.