

Devotions with Matt

June 2, 2020

HIS WILL OVER OUR WILL

We once traveled from Kansas to California in a van with some friends of ours. We were trying to make it in one shot so we didn't have to pay for a motel along the way. We took turns driving. My turn came after midnight sometime. It wasn't long until everyone else in the van was sound asleep. It had been a long day and a long drive so far. Everyone was really tired. So, when I saw a gas station coming up in a few miles, I looked at the gas tank and figured we could pass this one and make it to the next. After all, once we stopped everyone would have to wake up and I thought it was best for them to sleep.

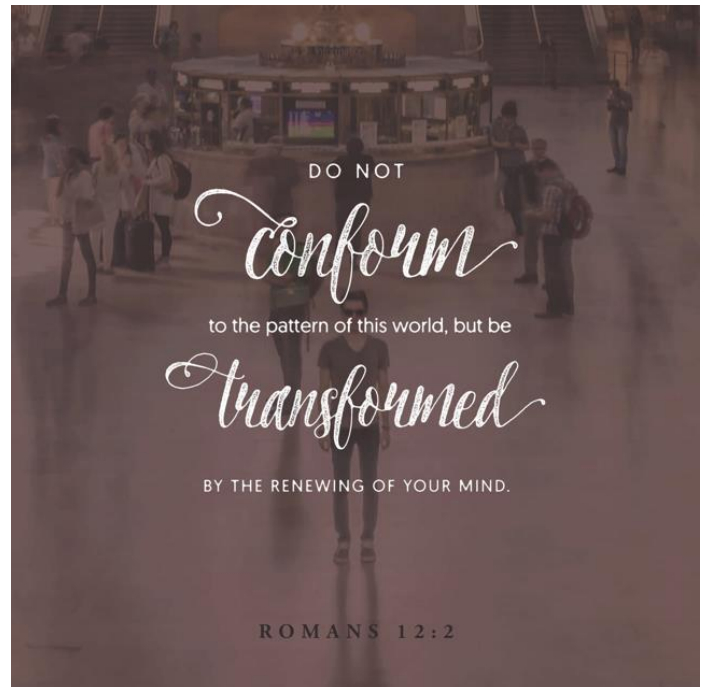
About 30 miles after the last gas station I was getting a little nervous. There were no signs saying the next gas will be in so many miles. The gas gauge was now getting dangerously close to the empty line. I slowed our speed to 55 to save gas, but the rolling hills didn't help. It looked like we were not going to make the next gas station and be stuck in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the night. After the next bend in the road, there it was- a beautiful highway sign that said that a gas station was ten miles ahead. I breathed a sigh of relief, and just as I did, we ran out of gas. There we were stuck on the side of the road. Everyone woke up and wondered what happened. Do you know how embarrassing it is to tell a van full of family and friends that you let the van run out of gas?

So, in my super-spirituality I told them that I would start walking to go get gas and maybe a good natured soul would pick me up along the way. I told them that maybe God had ordained this time in order to meet someone along the road so I could witness to them. It just so happened a trucker picked me up, I did share Christ with him, but he rebuffed my efforts. Never-the-less, I felt vindicated for my poor judgment and poor decision in regards to not stopping for gas. After all, if God had ordained the opportunity to share Christ with someone, who was I to get in the way of His will?

It wasn't until a few months later that I realized that I really had put everyone, including myself, in danger with my poor decision. God did not tell me to run out of gas. It was not His will for us to do so.

Jesus continues teaching us about prayer in Matthew 6. He says we should pray that God's will be done here on earth as it is done in heaven. Wouldn't that be nice! But does simply praying that prayer mean we are absolved of all of our choices? Does it mean that we can simply pray that prayer and get out of God's way? While God can certainly do His will without us, He chooses to involve us in making heaven on earth.

To pray for God's will to be done means that we desire to align our hearts and our desires with God's heart and God's desire. But to simply say we agree with God's will, but do nothing to follow His leading in bringing about His will on earth, we are being disobedient to our calling. We like to talk about salvation in terms of belief. "I believe in Jesus, therefore I am going to heaven" is what we so often say. But the Bible paints a slightly different picture in regards to faith. Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." And James tells us that



“faith without works is dead”. To pray “Thy will be done” means that we trust God, we trust His will, and we are willing to join Him in His work of salvation and redemption here on earth as He calls us to do.

The greatest example we have of honestly praying this prayer in the spirit in which we should pray it is Jesus. He was about to be arrested, beaten and crucified. He knew it. He withdrew to the Garden of Gethsemane shortly before it happened to draw strength from His Father. And He prayed this prayer, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” He meant what He prayed. He then let Himself be led to the Cross like a lamb to the slaughter. He sacrificed all, in the will of His Father, for the good of all of us “down here”. Jesus, doing the will of His Father, brought heaven to earth.

To pray this prayer means we must do the same. Are we willing to sacrifice our wills for His will, no matter the cost? If not, our heart’s posture is not for His will to be done, but rather for our wills to be done. If our wills are done over God’s will then there is no desire to join God in bringing heaven to earth.

“Father, use me in bringing heaven to earth” is what the prayer is all about. Are we willing to honestly pray that prayer?

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

In Christ,

Matt