

Father! Not What I Will

by Andrew Murray

Andrew Murray's sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering our will to God, as exemplified by Christ in Gethsemane, to experience the power of prayer and obedience.

Scripture: Matthew 7:7, Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42, John 15:7, Romans 12:2, Philippians 2:8, Hebrews 5:7, James 4:3, 1 John 5:14-15

Topics: "Surrender to God's Will", "Prayer"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the profound contrast in Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane, moving from 'Father! I will' to 'Father! Not what I will.' This transition illustrates the depth of Christ's obedience and surrender to God's will, even in the face of immense suffering. Murray teaches that through this act of submission, Jesus not only fulfilled His mission but also secured the right for believers to approach God in prayer with confidence. The sermon highlights that true prayer involves yielding our will to God's, reflecting the essence of Christ's sacrifice and the power it grants us in our own prayers. Ultimately, Murray calls believers to abide in Christ, learning to pray and obey as He did.

Transcript

'And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; remove this cup from me: howbeit not what I will, but what Thou wilt.'--Mark xiv. 36.

WHAT a contrast within the space of a few hours! What a transition from the quiet elevation of that, He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, FATHER I WILL,' to that falling on the ground and crying in agony. 'My Father! Not what I will.' In the one we see the High Priest within the veil in His all-prevailing intercession; in the other, the sacrifice on the altar opening the way through the rent veil. The high-priestly 'Father! I will,' in order of time precedes the sacrificial 'Father! Not what I will;' but this was only by anticipation, to show what the intercession would be when once the sacrifice was brought. In reality it was that prayer at the altar, 'Father! Not what I will,' in which the prayer before the throne, 'Father! I will,' had its origin and its power. It is from the entire surrender of His will in Gethsemane that the High Priest on the throne has the power to ask what He will, has the right to make His people share in that power too, and ask what they will.

For all who would learn to pray in the school of Jesus, this Gethsemane lesson is one of the most sacred and precious. To a superficial scholar it may appear to take away the courage to pray in faith. If even the earnest supplication of the Son was not heard, if even the Beloved had to say, 'NOT WHAT I WILL!' how

much more do we need to speak so. And thus it appears impossible that the promises which the Lord had given only a few hours previously, 'WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK,' 'WHATSOEVER YE WILL,' could have been meant literally. A deeper insight into the meaning of Gethsemane would teach us that we have just here the sure ground and the open way to the assurance of an answer to our prayer. Let us draw nigh in reverent and adoring wonder, to gaze on this great sight--God's Son thus offering up prayer and supplications with strong crying and tears, and not obtaining what He asks. He Himself is our Teacher, and will open up to us the mystery of His holy sacrifice, as revealed in this wondrous prayer.

To understand the prayer, let us note the infinite difference between what our Lord prayed a little ago as a Royal High Priest, and what He here supplicates in His weakness. There it was for the glorifying of the Father He prayed, and the glorifying of Himself and His people as the fulfilment of distinct promises that had been given Him. He asked what He knew to be according to the word and the will of the Father; He might boldly say, 'FATHER! I WILL.' Here He prays for something in regard to which the Father's will is not yet clear to Him. As far as He knows, it is the Father's will that He should drink the cup. He had told His disciples of the cup He must drink: a little later He would again say, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' It was for this He had come to this earth. But when, in the unutterable agony of soul that burst upon him as the power of darkness came upon Him, and He began to taste the first drops of death as the wrath of God against sin, His human nature, as it shuddered in presence of the awful reality of being made a curse, gave utterance in this cry of anguish, to its desire that, if God's purpose could be accomplished without it, He might be spared the awful cup: 'Let this cup pass from me.' That desire was the evidence of the intense reality of His humanity. The 'Not as I will' kept that desire from being sinful: as He pleadingly cries, 'All things are possible with Thee,' and returns again to still more earnest prayer that the cup may be removed, it is His thrice-repeated 'NOT WHAT I WILL' that constitutes the very essence and worth of His sacrifice. He had asked for something of which He could not say: I know it is Thy will. He had pleaded God's power and love, and had then withdrawn it in His final, 'THY WILL BE DONE.' The prayer that the cup should pass away could not be answered; the prayer of submission that God's will be done was heard, and gloriously answered in His victory first over the fear, and then over the power of death.

It is in this denial of His will, this complete surrender of His will to the will of the Father, that Christ's obedience reached its highest perfection. It is from the sacrifice of the will in Gethsemane that the sacrifice of the life on Calvary derives its value. It is here, as Scripture saith, that He learned obedience, and became the author of everlasting salvation to all that obey Him. It was because He there, in that prayer, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the power to ask what He will. It was in that 'Father! Not what I will,' that He obtained the power for that other 'FATHER! I will.' It was by Christ's submittal in Gethsemane to have not His will done, that He secured for His people the right to say to them, 'Ask whatsoever ye will.'

Let me look at them again, the deep mysteries that Gethsemane offers to my view. There is the first: the Father offers His Well-beloved the cup, the cup of wrath. The second: the Son, always so obedient, shrinks back, and implores that He may not have to drink it. The third: the Father does not grant the Son His request, but still gives the cup. And then the last: the Son yields His will, is content that His will be not done, and goes out to Calvary to drink the cup. O Gethsemane! in thee I see how my Lord could give me such unlimited assurance of an answer to my prayers. As my surety He won it for me, by His consent to have His petition unanswered.

This is in harmony with the whole scheme of redemption. Our Lord always wins for us the opposite of what He suffered. He was bound that we might go free. He was made sin that we might become the righteousness of God. He died that we might live. He bore God's curse that God's blessing might be ours. He endured the not answering of His prayer, that our prayers might find an answer. Yea, He spake, 'Not as I will,' that He might say to us, 'If ye abide in me, ask what ye will; it shall be done unto you.'

Yes, 'If ye abide in me;' here in Gethsemane the word acquires new force and depth. Christ is our Head, who as surety stands in our place, and bears what we must for ever have borne. We had deserved that God should turn a deaf ear to us, and never listen to our cry. Christ comes, and suffers this too for us: He suffers what we had merited; for our sins He suffers beneath the burden of that unanswered prayer. But now His suffering this avails for me: what He has borne is taken away for me; His merit has won for me the answer to every prayer, if I abide in Him.

Yes, in Him, as He bows there in Gethsemane, I must abide. As my Head, He not only once suffered for me, but ever lives in me, breathing and working His own disposition in me too. The Eternal Spirit, through which He offered Himself unto God, is the Spirit that dwells in me too, and makes me partaker of the very same obedience, and the sacrifice of the will unto God. That Spirit teaches me to yield my will entirely to the will of the Father, to give it up even unto the death, in Christ to be dead to it. Whatever is my own mind and thought and will, even though it be not directly sinful, He teaches me to fear and flee. He opens my ear to wait in great gentleness and teachableness of soul for what the Father has day by day to speak and to teach. He discovers to me how union with God's will in the love of it is union with God Himself; how entire surrender to God's will is the Father's claim, the Son's example, and the true blessedness of the soul. He leads my will into the fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection, my will dies in Him, in Him to be made alive again. He breathes into it, as a renewed and quickened will, a holy insight into God's perfect will, a holy joy in yielding itself to be an instrument of that will, a holy liberty and power to lay hold of God's will to answer prayer. With my whole will I learn to live for the interests of God and His kingdom, to exercise the power of that will--crucified but risen again--in nature and in prayer, on earth and in heaven, with men and with God. The more deeply I enter into the 'FATHER! NOT WHAT I WILL' of Gethsemane, and into Him who spake it, to abide in Him, the fuller is my spiritual access into the power of His 'FATHER! I WILL. And the soul experiences that it is the will, which has become nothing that God's will may be all, which now becomes inspired with a Divine strength to really will what God wills, and to claim what has been promised it in the name of Christ.

O let us listen to Christ in Gethsemane, as He calls, 'If ye abide in me, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Being of one mind and spirit with Him in His giving up everything to God's will, living like Him in obedience and surrender to the Father; this is abiding in Him; this is the secret of power in prayer.

'LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.'

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Blessed Lord Jesus! Gethsemane was Thy school, where Thou didst learn to pray and to obey. It is still Thy school, where Thou leadest all Thy disciples who would fain learn to obey and to pray even as Thou. Lord! teach me there to pray, in the faith that Thou has atoned for and conquered our self-will, and canst indeed give us grace to pray like Thee.

O Lamb of God! I would follow Thee to Gethsemane, there to become one with Thee, and to abide in Thee as Thou dost unto the very death yield Thy will unto the Father. With Thee, through Thee, in Thee, I do yield my will in absolute and entire surrender to the will of the Father. Conscious of my own weakness, and the secret power with which self-will would assert itself and again take its place on the throne, I claim in faith the power of Thy victory. Thou didst triumph over it and deliver me from it. In Thy death I would daily live; in Thy life I would daily die. Abiding in Thee, let my will, through the power of Thine eternal Spirit, only be the tuned instrument which yields to every touch of the will of my God. With my whole soul do I say with Thee and in Thee, 'Father! Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

And then, Blessed Lord! Open my heart and that of all Thy people, to take in fully the glory of the truth, that a will given up to God is a will accepted of God to be used in his service, to desire, and purpose, and determine, and will what is according to God's will. A will which, in the power of the Holy Spirit the indwelling God, is to exercise its royal prerogative in prayer, to loose and to bind in heaven and upon earth, to ask whatsoever it will, and to say it shall be done.

O Lord Jesus! teach me to pray. Amen.

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