

Thy Will be Done

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 June 2018

Preacher: Martin Ayers

[0 : 00] The Bible reading can be found on page 311. It's the second book of Samuel, chapter 7, verses 18 to 29.

That's page 311. David's Prayer. Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family that you have brought me thus far?

And as if this were not enough in your sight, Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant, and this decree, Sovereign Lord, is for a mere human.

What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Sovereign Lord. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. How great you are, Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you. And as we have heard with our own ears, and who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt.

[1 : 35] You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, Lord, have become their God. And now, Lord God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house.

Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever. Then people will say, The Lord Almighty is God over Israel, and the house of your servant David will be established in your sight. Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, I will build a house for you, so your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you.

Sovereign Lord, you are God. Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight, for you, Sovereign Lord, have spoken, and with your blessing, the house of your servant will be blessed forever.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Anne, for reading. If you keep your Bibles open at page 311, that would be a great help, and you can find an outline inside the notice sheet, if you want to just see where we're going as we look at this together.

[3 : 06] But more importantly, let's ask for God's help. As we turn to his word, let's pray together. Heavenly Father and Almighty God, we thank you for your word of truth, and we ask, Father God, that by your Spirit you will give us ears to hear your word proclaimed to us, heads to understand, and hearts that are willing to change and respond rightly to you.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, there are some really annoying car drivers out there, aren't there? And some of the most annoying car drivers are the people who, when the light goes green, don't do anything about it.

Especially the key culprits are when there's a filter lane, as we know, and they catch people out, don't they? So you get in lane, there's one on Park Road, and there are a few others around here in the West End, where you get into lane, and the filter arrow comes on, and the car at the front doesn't move.

I don't know how you respond to that. I respond in two different ways. One is the self-righteous beep of the horn. It's not an aggressive beep, but it's just a little toot.

Just says, come on, hurry up. But also just says, if you were as observant as I am, we'd all be on our way home by now. That's what it does. The other type of reaction is that I do nothing, because it's me at the front, just as often as it's anyone else.

[4 : 32] And I get beeped at, and have to remember that next time I'm getting annoyed with somebody else. But how frustrating to lose valuable seconds being unmoved by a green light.

In 2 Samuel chapter 7, we could ask a similar question about the promises of God. How frustrating to be unmoved by the promises of God. They should spur us into a response.

It would be weird not to be moved by God's promises. But what should our response be? Well, last week, we got to one of the most important passages of the whole Bible.

I don't know how you rank these things, but I can't think of a more important passage of the Bible than the beginning of 2 Samuel chapter 7. It was a word that God himself gave to the prophet Nathan to pass on to King David, his appointed king.

And in today's passage, David responds to that breathtaking message. A reminder of where we are, it's 1000 BC, and we've gone past Adam, we've gone past Noah, we've gone past Moses, we've gone past Joshua, and God has made a good world, and humans turning away from God, when we as the human race turned away from God, that has been the cause of everything that's gone wrong in the world.

[5 : 48] Catastrophic disaster as people turn from God. But God is resolute in his plan to put the world right, and he makes some promises to one man, Abraham. He says to Abraham, through you, I will put the world right.

All the nations will be blessed through your offspring. I will make them into a great nation. They will live in a special place where they're secure, and they'll have the blessing of relationship with me. Now, centuries later, we find those people, Abraham's descendants, living in the promised land of Canaan, under the rule of King David, God's chosen king. And last week, David was living in his magnificent palace made of cedar wood, which is precious, and it smells great, and he's in this palace in Jerusalem, and he thinks to himself, I'm in this palace, this great house, but God is represented by the Ark of the Covenant at that time, and that's just in a tent under canvas.

I should build a temple for God. And then the word comes to David, through Nathan, from God, you're not going to build me a temple. That's what prompts the speech.

And what happens is God takes those promises he made to Abraham, and he repeats them to David to explain they're going to happen through you. They're sometimes called the Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, and the Davidic Covenant, God's covenant promises.

[7 : 05] A covenant is an ongoing relationship that you have with someone based upon binding promises. that you have to keep. And the New Covenant is what Christians are under today.

It's the promises God has made to us in Jesus. In fact, God gave us marriage, God invented marriage to display what his covenant promises are to his people.

That Jesus Christ, if you're a Christian today, Jesus Christ has said to you, I, Jesus, take you, church, to be my bride, to have and to hold from this day forward for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and protect till death brings us together for all eternity.

And I will love you despite your sin. I've redeemed you by dying on the cross in your place. I've conquered death for you by rising again. And I will transform you by my spirit into the church that God always meant you to be.

I hope you've grasped that if you're a Christian, that that's the covenant relationship we have with our great God. We're his bride and he has bound himself to us in these promises so that nothing can separate us from his love for us.

[8 : 22] So how do we respond to those promises? Well, David gives us a model response when we see how he responded to God's promises to him. He prays to God and he prays in three parts.

He says, Who am I? How great you are and do as you've promised. So first of all, who am I? Just look at where David goes in verse 18.

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and he said, Who am I? David had been in his palace and the Lord's presence was in the tent.

David wants to build a house for God and God has said no. It's worth just thinking back to what happened. Why did God say no? Especially if you weren't here last week. God says no. Look back at verse 6.

He says no because he is a God who identifies with his people. Verse 6, I've not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I've been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling.

[9 : 22] I've moved with all the Israelites. In other words, our great God identifies so much with his people that when he sees them in distress, he wanders with them.

He's an incarnational God. He comes to be with them so that he can save them and rescue them. And David is not to build a temple for that God. Now they're settled because of God's grace. We see that in verse 8. He says to David, look at what I've done for you in verse 8. He says, I took you from being a shepherd and made you my king. He says in verse 9, I have been with you wherever you have gone and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. And then he says, now look at what I'm going to do for you. I will make your name great like the names of the greatest men on earth. Then he promises security for his people. I'm going to plant them under his chosen king. So why does that mean that David shouldn't build a temple? It's because all around the Middle East at that time, there were pagan people in pagan nations worshipping pagan gods.

[10:27] And if you had a pagan king who worshipped a pagan god, what they did was they built a temple for their pagan god and the pagan god blessed them. That's what they believed. You can see it in ancient writings all around the Middle East.

It's vintage human religion. I offer something to God and in return he'll give me something back. If I build him a temple, he'll establish me. And in 2 Samuel 7, therefore, what God is doing to David is he's proving wrong what almost everybody in Glasgow today thinks Christianity is about. Instead of, David, build me a temple and if you do that I'll bless you, God says, David, let me remind you of everything I've done for you. And now listen to all the things I'm going to do for you. But don't build me a temple. He's a God of grace. He's the same God of grace today. Absolutely committed to blessing his people, anyone who trusts him. And in this great speech to David, we see that those great blessings to the people who trust God are going to come through a king in David's line.

So he says in verse 15 about that king, my love will never be taken from him. And then the key verse to the whole promise is verse 16. He says, your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me.

[11:48] Your throne shall be established forever. forever. Now David and Nathan must have found that breathtaking. How can you have a king, a human king who lives forever?

It's the promise made to Abraham now remade, refashioned to David. It's the only hope for our world. And from that time onwards it's centered upon the work of an eternal king who will come in David's line.

This is why when you get to Christmas time and we sing all our Christmas carols, you keep hearing about David, don't you, when we come for Christmas carol services because the people had been waiting for a thousand years for this man.

To you in David's town this day is born of David's line a saviour who is Christ the Lord. Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed. So back to David's response in verse 18 when he hears that from Nathan the next morning he walks out of his palace and he goes to the tent and he sits before the Lord.

Like any of us today might spend some time meditating on God's promises to us wherever we are reflecting on God's promises and he says to God who am I sovereign Lord and what is my family that you have brought me this far?

[13:03] Who am I that I would be given all these good things from you? Who am I? David is overwhelmed. He's exhilarated. He's incredulous because he's humble.

He knows he deserves none of this. just as for us today most of us would love to be more joyful and more thankful than we are. Wouldn't we like that for ourselves?

If someone offered you I could make you more joyful as a person and more thankful as a person. We'd take that wouldn't we? We want that for ourselves and key to that is a deeper conviction of our own sin of our own unworthiness so that we can grasp how amazing God's grace is.

We need to have a deeper realization of how awful our situation is without Jesus. Sin enslaves us so that you can't stop sinning.

It looks like freedom and then you can't stop just living for your own desires. Sin blinds us so that when you're living in sin away from God you don't even see that you've got a problem with God and you don't even see that your sin matters.

[14:12] You can't see God. Sin alienates us. It cuts us off from other people in the world because instead of being in good fellowship with people we're living in secrecy and shame about what we're really like.

Someone said to me recently about being criticized. They said, you know when people criticize you don't hate them for it because the truth is you're actually much worse than they think you are. It's true, isn't it?

And of course worst of all sin condemns us. It leaves us under the wrath of God. Deserving hell from him. That's where we were and we were utterly helpless to do anything about it.

We were without hope and God sees all of that. He sees what we're going to be like and before he even made the world he chose to set his love on us and the son stepped into the muck of our world and in agony he carried a wooden cross up a hill at Calvary to die to bear the penalty for the sin that we have committed against him.

And then he's raised and he ascends to the Father so that he can send the Spirit to open our eyes and move us to respond rightly to him so that we are reconciled to God and reconciled to each other.

[15:28] And even today this week if you know that and you trust that even today you will carry on sinning. living as though Jesus never did anything for you and Jesus knows that about you and he stands before the Father and he intercedes for you and he says you knew what he was like when we chose him.

Take my sacrifice of myself and forgive him for what he's doing today. Let the blood of my sacrifice wash her clean. He's happy to do that because he loves us.

Who are we that God would do that for us? Who am I? If we can recover a deeper conviction of our unworthiness of God's blessing we'd be more joyful and thankful and like David we'd sit before the Lord saying who am I?

Like John Newton what made grace so amazing to John Newton that it saved a wretch like me? He was aware of his own sin or the song you might know the contemporary Christian song Who Am I by Casting Crowns where they say who am I that the eyes that see my sin would look on me with love and watch me rise again?

Who am I? And our story isn't just one of looking back it's one of looking forward as well isn't it? And David knows that in verse 19 if you just have a look and as if this were not enough in your sight sovereign Lord you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant and this decree sovereign Lord is for a mere human he's speechless in verse 20 he says what more can David say to you?

[17:07] For you know your servant sovereign Lord and then he tells us why God has made those promises it's because he wants to he's chosen to and also he does it by promise and then fulfillment so that we see that his word is trustworthy so he says for the sake of your word and according to your will you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant what is the great thing that David's describing?

It's this great thing that great David's greatest son King Jesus is going to reign over a renewed creation Christian hope is not just a privatized notion that if I keep trusting God and hang on to that privately when I die my soul will go off to be with God in heaven forever I hope I never get to heaven heaven is just the waiting room this is about the kingdom of God coming down out of heaven into our world as Jesus restores everything here and reigns forever who am I that God would let me be a citizen of that new creation it is grace that brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home and now David's focus moves on from what God has promised to do for him and saying who am I through to what God is like our second point this morning he says to God how great you are and his focus is on the God who is doing that redeeming twice he mentions they're being redeemed it's what you do with a slave you redeem them you buy them you buy their freedom for them and David tells the story of the people that so far verse 23 and who is like your people

Israel the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself and to make a name for himself and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people whom you redeemed from Egypt you have established your people Israel as your very own forever and you Lord have become their God so that verse 22 he's saying how great you are God it's exactly like in the hymn isn't it when I think that God his son not sparing sent him to die I scarce can take it in that on the cross my burden gladly bearing he bled and died to take away my sin then sings my soul my saviour God to thee how great thou art just that David uses more modern language how great you are if you can find any reason you see if you can't find any reason in yourself why God would redeem you then your redemption points you to him and how amazing he is and the church is the supreme example of that it's like when you look at a

masterpiece painting

I spent a summer working at Buckingham Palace in London and the Queen's Picture Gallery is there and I was in the room as a warden some days and people often ask when all these pictures the Queen owns what's the most valuable picture in the room that's a natural thing to ask and it was a painting I've got a picture of it on the screen a painting by Vermeer of a woman the woman at the Virginals and you can see her reflection in the mirror which makes it particularly valuable as a painting but no one knows anything about the woman and we don't need to know anything about the woman because you look at the painting and you think about the artist it's like when you go to St. Paul's Cathedral and designed by Sir Christopher Wren still today much of the landscape of London the skyline influenced by Sir Christopher Wren you walk into the cathedral and it says if you seek a monument look around you the building speaks of the artist behind it and we do that about God as we look at the church not the physical buildings but the people you and me ordinary people and what

God is doing here at St. Silas and across Glasgow and across the nations of the world how great you are God we all have our own exodus story a story of having been in slavery to sin hopeless and God redeeming us from that and preserving us day by day as we wander through the wilderness of life today and promising us of a promised land of the new creation that's coming in Psalm 96 famous Psalm it talks about that new creation that's coming under Jesus reign and it says the fields will be jubilant and everything in them the trees of the forest will sing for joy all creation rejoices before the Lord when he comes just imagine that imagine the trees singing for joy because they've been freed imagine what we will be like on that day if the trees can sing for joy if the fields can clap their hands what are we going to be like as

[21 : 53] Jesus restores us this is our great hope as Christians and the world doesn't know about it in a week when celebrity fashion designer Kate Spade and celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain both took their own lives the news was full of that this week people are asking what is wrong with the world the news reporter on CNN was crying what is wrong with the world that people like this would take their own lives we have living hope as people today that God has promised the night will pass and the dawn will come and King Jesus will establish his universal reign and he will wipe every tear from every eye then sings our soul how great you are that's our response so David's astonished who am I then the praise how great you are God and finally David turns to asking God for things that's the third part of the prayer thirdly do as you've promised and I don't know about you but I think there's a great surprise in this prayer a great surprise and it comes at the end of verse 27 just have a look with me at that line verse 27 halfway through that he says so your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you why would it take courage to pray a prayer and the mystery deepens when you look at the prayer because basically it's just the

Lord's prayer it's a previous incarnation of the Lord's prayer we pray your kingdom come to God here we have the Lord promising his kingdom will come and David says verse 25 do as you've promised your kingdom come we pray hallowed be thy name and David says verse 26 do as you've promised verse 26 so that your name will be great forever hallowed be your name we pray thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven David has heard what God wants to do in his promise and in verse 25 he says now Lord God keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant his house he's saying thy will be done it's the Lord's prayer so what's so hard about praying the Lord's prayer we say it week by week here at St Silas maybe it's because David has thought about it that the Lord's prayer is a huge revolution instead of coming to God and asking him to do what I want I come to

God and ask him to do what he wants and we remember what it cost Jesus to pray that prayer in the garden when the sweat was pouring off him like drops of blood as he looked in anguish at the cup he would have to drink the next day forsaken by God and he said take this cup from me yet not my will but yours be done isn't it that what we really mean when we pray the Lord's prayer hallowed be your name your kingdom come and not my will be done but your will be done and even when my will for my life is very different God from your will for my life father let it be done according to your will not mine it's a very frightening prayer isn't it it's a profound prayer and knowing that can radically affect the whole course of your life I was thinking of a friend in ministry it's just an example of someone that happens to be in ministry but a guy who got to the end of his training for ministry was looking for his first charge and he was asked to go and look at a job and it was on a deprived housing estate in a very deprived town in England

I'm not going to say what the town was because it sounds like I'm slagging it off right but it was somewhere he would never ever in his life have chosen to live but he was asked to go and have a look at the church so he goes and there's not really a church there's just a few people praying he arrives with his wife they get out the car and his wife bursts into tears straight away of the idea they might live there okay they're looking around this place and there's very little hope but the place doesn't have Christ and the lady who's showing him around the old lady says at the end I hope you'll decide to come he says well you don't know anything about me she says well why don't you tell me something about you what do you mean he says well I'm a Bible guy I teach the Bible if I come here I'll teach the Bible I think that's how God works it's how people are saved it's how they grow she said I love that's what we need I want you to come and teach us the Bible that's what we're asking for so they decided to go in the first week that he's there right a guy gets shot outside the church dead and it's a case of mistaken identity can you imagine how scary that was okay his kids don't know any

Christians and what has happened since he lived there has been extraordinary one of my friends who follows his prayer letters with me said it's the closest he has seen to a revival in our last 10 years as we've been looking at what people are doing loads of people are becoming Christians in this housing estate but if you'd asked that guy what he'd been praying before he went there if he'd been praying my will be done not yours done God he would never have gone there he never wanted to live there but God is there establishing his kingdom blessing that family blessing the area people are coming to faith they're being safe forever it's amazing but you know what when he prayed not my will be done but yours be done and came under a conviction that's where God wants me and went none of that might have happened God's will might have been that that people were under judgment and wouldn't respond but he wanted his servant to spend his life there it wouldn't have mattered because we trust God and we ask him to do his will it's just one example there are of course many hard examples in our own congregation of times when surrender to God's will is a painful thing and I've been praying this week knowing that some of you here at St Silas know yourselves that praying to God your will be done has left you with disappointment and pain I know that's difficult but we can learn from David because he knows doesn't he he identifies with us it takes courage to say to

[28 : 04] God thy will be done but what he discovers is that he can find that courage when he sees how marvelous God's promises are God's revealed will for our world and his blessing for us in Jesus are so breathtakingly wonderful we can hand control over to him to do that we remind ourselves of God's grace to us in the gospel his grace in the past and his grace to us in the future and the promises promises he's given us I think of a time in my life a few years ago when I was I was really stressed out I was really upset about situations going on and I was talking to some Christian friend about it and what I thought he would say to me was I thought he'd give me some advice that would help me change the situation I was in because I was so stressed and he said to me Martin you need to give thanks more you need to write down all the things you need to thank God for and you need to give some thank you prayers to God the next week he saw me said how are the thank you prayers going and I was feeling much better because those thank you prayers leave us asking who am I that you would do this for me God how great you are to have this plan for the world and to have me swept up into it by your grace and then we ask your will be done that's enough your will be done when you look at God's promises all that matters really in my life is that he keeps his promises and if you've never made God's promises personal for you you've never just put your trust in them by asking Jesus to be your savior and king you could do that today today will be a great day to do that to make those promises your own for all of us what will our lives be like if we pray like David did every day if we spend time at the start of each day dwelling on God's great promises to us in Jesus and just praying like David did who am

I that you would have been so good to me in the past and would have brought me in to this great hope for the world in the future how great you are that you would act like this God in history and in the future to mend our broken world do what you've promised would your kingdom come and your will be done we're gonna have a moment of quiet now let's have some time of quiet to do business with God and then we're gonna say together the Lord's Prayer it will come on the screen and as with what we've done before I'll say the words in we'll all say together the words in bold so a moment of quiet for reflection our father in heaven hallowed be your name your kingdom come your will be done on earth as in heaven give us today our daily bread forgive us our sins as we forgive

those who sin against us our hearts our chest our hearts as we just as we sat in therico our