

KNOWING GOD'S WILL

DOING WHAT'S BEST

Reading the book entitled *Power Praying* has inspired this series of sermons.
The book focuses intently on what we call "The Lord's Prayer".

I'm sure most of us can recite all or at least part of that prayer.

But its familiarity can have a weakening impact on us.

We can recite it without truly praying it.

Tragically it has become just words.

Something dawned on me this week that startled me.

This prayer probably means more to Satan than it does to us.

We are unmoved as we string the phrases together almost mindlessly.

Satan trembles at the words.

The words of this prayer roll off our tongues with little impact.

The same words torment and crush Satan.

It's like the heel of humanity lands a death blow to Satan's head.

And we don't even know it.

We are bored with this prayer.

Satan is bombarded with the power of this prayer.

Why do you think the US government removed this prayer from its schools in 1962?

Every day, hundreds of thousands of people were calling on God.

That would be intolerable to Satan.

He put an end to it through a few disgruntled parents.

These were parents who should have known better.

In 1988 legislation forced the Lord's Prayer out of Ontario public schools.

The following year BC made a similar ruling.

Why so much controversy over an innocuous prayer?

Because this prayer is not harmless to Satan.

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray He was declaring war on Satan.

Father, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Father, make life on earth like it is in heaven!

There is no room for Satan's presence in a place like that.

Father, we rebuke Satan's presence, pleasures, and plans.

Father we want nothing to do with the enemy and thief of our souls.

Have those thoughts ever entered your mind as you have prayed?

Satan counter-attacked with ferocity to silence this prayer.

He said, it's my world and here my will is god.

He poured his poisonous attack at children who couldn't defend themselves.

Those children in the US back in 1962 are now adults my age.

Many are prayer-less politicians and policy makers of the nation.

His deceit leached its way into my children's schools.

My children's generation is now our teachers and executives.

That generation now directs media and technology.

We don't know what we lost because we pray the prayer on auto-pilot.

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Schools in Alberta have been protected from this by a technicality.

Alberta joined Confederation in 1905.

Alberta and Saskatchewan were granted a Constitutional exemption.

That exemption protected the right to prayer in schools.

But that is being challenged.

Oct. 14, 2011 the National Post zeroed in on St. Albert, Alberta.
Luke Fevin challenged the Sturgeon Heights School administration.
He was fighting for the removal of the Lord's Prayer.

This is what he claimed happened to his children.

"The fact that the school actually forces prayer means I now have a five and seven-year-old who believe in God, believe that God is Christian, they believe that he listens to prayers and answers prayers," he said. "My public school had no right to teach my children that this is the truth of the universe."

This secularist father wanted his children to make up their own mind about God.
It looks like they have; in a non-religious school.

And now he is upset.

But Satan is the mastermind behind this battle.

He knows his stolen kingdom is at stake.

"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is intolerable to Satan!

He is diametrically opposed to God's will.

He wants nothing to do with God's will.

Demons asked Jesus, what have you to do with us?

They knew what Jesus' will was for demons.

James 2:19 says the demons believe there is one God - and shudder.

Jesus' will was the will of His Father.

God the Father planned for the salvation, the redemption of humanity.

In the Message Jesus prayer is worded like this.

"Do what's best - as above so below".

And that is the scenario that our Scripture this morning presents to us.

It is amazing how seldom God's best is desired in our world.

In fact there is a lot of resistance against God's best.

We are constantly tempted to settle for something less than God's best.

But we see Jesus' refusal to settle.

He stands against the pressures that resisted God's best.

Jesus and Satan are squaring off with each other.

Jesus just did something very unsavory.

He called a tax collector to be a disciple.

That decision would plague Jesus for the rest of His life.

But so would every decision Jesus made as He chose God's best.

Go back to Matthew 8.

Two demon possessed men had terrorized an entire region.

They were so fierce no one would go near them.

But when these men saw Jesus they knew His power over them.

"Have you come to torment us?" they cried out.

Can you see those demons shuddering in the presence of Jesus?

Jesus about to do the Father's will cast them into the pigs.

Surprisingly the whole city came out and begged Jesus to leave.

No popularity points there.

"Do what's best - as above so below."

The calling of Matthew the tax collector, or scum, was just as unpopular.

What made matters worse is that Jesus went to Matthew's house.

The house quickly filled up with some distasteful people.

Tax collectors and sinners joined Jesus and His disciples at the table.

Why does Jesus hang out with tax collectors and sinners?

Jesus answered with three comments.

Every comment made the same point - **do what's best, as above so below.**

It is the sick who need a doctor not those who are well.

I desire mercy not sacrifice, learn what that means.

I did not come to call the righteous, but the sinner.

"Do what's best - as above so below."

We need to go back to James 2.

"My dear friends, don't let public opinion influence how you live out our

glorious, Christ-originated faith." (V. 1 TM)

"Do what's best - as above so below."

"Listen, dear friends. Isn't it clear by now that God operates quite differently? He chose the world's down-and-out as the kingdom's first citizens, with full rights and privileges. This kingdom is promised to anyone who loves God. And here you are abusing these same citizens!" (Vs. 5-6)

"Do what's best - as above so below."

"You do well when you complete the Royal Rule of the Scriptures: "Love others as you love yourself." But if you play up to these so-called important people, you go against the Rule and stand convicted by it." (Vs. 8-9)

"Do what's best - as above so below."

"Kind mercy wins over harsh judgment every time." (Vs. 13)

"Do what's best - as above so below."

"Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense?" (V.17)

"Do what's best - as above so below."

"You can no more show me your works apart from your faith than I can show you my faith apart from my works. Faith and works, works and faith, fit together hand in glove." (v.18)

"Do what's best - as above so below."

This is God's will for our lives.

Doing what's best.

That is the power of the prayer that Jesus taught His disciple.

What demons will be put to flight when we show mercy rather than sacrifice?

What spiritual darkness will be defeated as we live by faith and works?

Who will be made well when we do God's will, the best?

I journaled these words as I reflected on the Lord's Prayer this week.

"Our greatest work is to lay down our life for our friends-both those who are saved and unsaved. We often think that when Jesus said 'greater works than these we will do,' that those works are about healings, defeating demons, walking on water and other spectacular miracles. Might the greater work be that I, fully human - only human, can by faith and the Spirit's power, be a person of God's perfect love by word, thought, and deed?"

Instead of living in fear of what others think be bold in God's Spirit.

Do what's best not just what is convenient or expected.

It's now time to test ourselves on this.

What dominated your activity this past week?

Was it acts of convenience, activity that others expected, were your priorities pleasure, popularity, preservation, God's best?

Look for opportunities this week to speak of your faith, to do an act of kindness, to pray a blessing, to learn a new principle, to do the unexpected, to live God's way.

Song All the Way My Savior Leads Me