

Unveiling of God no 75

Sovereignty and Prayer

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We have taken a minis series in our study of **the Unveiling of God** where brother Branham spoke to us from paragraph **100** through **103** concerning *the sovereignty of God in Revelation*. We saw how God hides His Word and reveals it to only those of His choosing. This understanding led us to examine the sovereignty of God in Revelation, The sovereignty of God in Salvation, The sovereignty of God in Reprobation, The Sovereignty of God and the Human will, the sovereignty of God and the bondage of the will, Our attitude towards God's Sovereignty, this morning we will examine God's sovereignty and prayer.

In his sermon **Who is This Melchisedec pp. 50** brother Branham said, "*God's sovereign in His choosing, did you know that? God's sovereign. Who was back yonder to tell Him a better way to make the world? Who would dare to tell Him He was running His business wrong? Even the very--the very Word Itself, very sovereign... Even the revelation is sovereign. He reveals to whom He will reveal. The very revelation itself is sovereign in God. That's how people pound at things, and jump at things, and hit at things, and not knowing what they're doing. God is sovereign in His works.*"

We found so far that the best Scripture we can hold onto concerning God's Sovereignty and anything we think or do, it can be all summarized in **Romans 9:16** "*It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*".

We also found that according to **John 8:34** *Jesus said, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"*.

And where Paul said in, **Romans 6: 7** "*For he that is dead is freed from sin*". Which means the only way you can possibly be free is that you never were under sin to begin with. You never did do it as brother Branham said, and that is what justification is all about. In fact the word Paul used here in **Romans 6:7** *For he that is dead is freed from sin., is the Greek word dikaioo* and it means to *justify*, in other words you are, *freed to be righteous, declared, pronounced to be just ,or righteous, as he ought to be, or was meant to be..*

Now, John tells us in **1 John 5:14**. "*If we ask anything according to his will he heareth us*"

Now, men today believe and teach that *prayer changes things*. Now that statement is ok if it is looked upon in the proper light of God's Sovereignty. But if it is not looked upon in light of God's sovereignty then it is completely a false statement.

Where men pervert their judgment is that they believe that their prayer will actually alter the state of affairs as God has ordained them. Thus in effect they believe, that *praying will change God's Mind*. And they believe that not only will prayer change God's mind, but in believing this they have to admit they also believe that prayer can change God's Purpose and plans at least for you.

Now, thoughts like this are either blasphemy making man's choice greater than God's choice, or else it shows a total and complete lack of knowledge concerning God and the Godhood of God.

As Brother Branham taught us our purpose in prayer is not to change God's will, but we should pray that God will change our Will to match His will.

Does God change His mind 65-0418E P:91 *God don't change His will. He don't change His mind, but He'll bless you. Sure, He blessed Balaam. And what did he do down there? He polluted the whole camp. See, you have to stay with what He said. He never changed His original plan. Now, look at the Balaam's today in the field, would you? Just look around: Prospering, speaking in tongues, sure, using God's gift to gain, everything. Sure. But it defiles the whole Church of God with their corrupt teaching.*

Christ revealed in His own Word 65-0822M P:25 *See, you take the wrong attitude. You're trying to tell God what to do. Prayer should be, "Lord, change me to fit Your Word," not change, not, "Let me change Your mind; You change my mind. (See?) You change my mind to Your will, and Your will's written here in the Book. And Lord, don't let me go till You got my mind set just like Your mind. And then when my mind is set like Your mind, then I'll believe every Word You wrote. And You said in there You'd **"make everything work together for good to them that loves You"**, and I love You, Lord. **"It's all working together for the good."***

Therefore, until you have fully embraced God's sovereignty, you'll never even know how to pray. You will always be praying that God will make everything work together the way you want it to be worked out. But that is not what God's Word teaches us, and until you embrace His sovereignty, the fact that only God is omniscient and omnipotent, and that God has all things working together for your good, then you will begin to pray as you ought to pray, and that is to seek His will in all things and to know His mind in what to do and even in what to pray for.

The Scriptures teach us in **1 Samuel 2:6-8** *"The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory".*

Too many People believe that when we speak of "**prayer changing things**", that we actually mean that God changes things when men pray. Almost everywhere we go today we see sign or bumper stickers that say: "**Prayer Changes Things**". As to what these words mean it can be heard from the religious radio today, "**we are to persuade God to change his purpose.**".

They challenge the people to pray for America, pray that she might repent and change. They look for a revival that we know will never come, because we have "**Thus Saith the Lord**" that she will not repent.

They quote from the **II Chronicles 7:14** *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."*

But those words were spoken by God for another people and not this people, and not for this land, at least not for this land after the prophet of God has come and his message has been rejected. Those words can not produce fruit today, because **first** of all, the people will not humble themselves, in fact they have no clue what it means to humble themselves. And **secondly** they don't even know how to pray correctly, because God promised us in **1 John 5:14**. *"If we ask anything **according to His will** He heareth us"* And *His Word is His Will*.

Thirdly, they will not seek His Face because they do not know Him, nor do they understand the Godhood of God. And **finally**, they will not turn from their wicked ways.

And what are the ways which God calls wicked? In the first place, they have turned down God's answer for them in this hour. God sent to them a Prophet bringing God's Message for the hour and they've turned down God's message, which came by *"Thus Saith the Lord"*, which means they have turned down God Himself. And God has come down and they've turned away from His Shout, His Message. And will they come back to Him? I think not. For Paul quoted God when He said,

Acts 13:41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

The ways which God calls wicked and which they will not turn from is their course of life. That's what the Word *"ways"* means. It is the Hebrew Word, *"Derek"* and it speaks of *"the course of life"* and *"the moral character they express in that course of life"*.

And as we know this is an hour where the people are bombarded with homosexual propaganda continually through the illicit and immoral media which bombards the minds of the people so often on a daily and hourly basis that after a while the people have grown indifferent towards it, and instead of immoral acts flaming the fires of righteous indignation in you, it only seems to fan the flames of indifference. You just don't seem to care. You don't want to be bothered. And that is what happened in the first church age. They became indifferent. And *Alpha must be repeated in Omega*.

From the **77-1 Ephesian Church Age - Church Age Book Chapter 3**. we read, *"The very name, **Ephesus**, has a strange compound meaning, **Aimed at**, and **Relaxed**". The high aspirations of this age that had begun with the fullness of the Spirit, **"the depth of God"**, whereby they were **aiming at the high calling of God, began to give way to a less watchful attitude. A less ardent following of Jesus Christ began to manifest itself as an omen that in the future ages the physical vehicle called the church would sink to the awfulness of the "depth of Satan". It had become relaxed and was drifting. Already the age was backsliding. It had left its first love.***

and again from the **88-2 Ephesian Church Age** - William Branham said, *"The fervent desire to please God, the passion to know His Word, the cry for reaching out in the Spirit, all begins to fade and instead of that church being on fire with the fire of God it has cooled off and become a bit formal. That is what was happening back there to the Ephesians. They were getting a bit formal. The abandonment to God was dying out and the people weren't too careful about what God thought of them as they began to be careful about what the*

*world thought of them. That second generation coming on was just like Israel. They demanded a king to be like the other nations. When they did that, they rejected God. But they did it anyway. That is the history of the church. When it thinks more of conforming to the world instead of conforming to God, it isn't long until you see them stop doing things they used to do, and start doing things they wouldn't do initially. They change their manner of dress, their attitudes and their behavior. They get lax. That is what "**Ephesus**" means: "**relaxed--drifting.**"*

Where is the righteousness among God's people today to take a stand against wrong, whether it be among your family, your child, your mother, your father, or a church member, or even a business associate. Will the people take a stand for God? I hardly see it any more.

Everything today is fake, we have fake News, Fake politicians, fake Medicine, Fake insurance policies that won't pay up, Fake school teachers who do not teach but push political agendas, fake preachers who won't preach the word but preach politics instead, Fake deacons, fake church members, everything is fake, fake, fake, today. No wonder the world is going insane.

I ask you, "**Are we at the end-time?**" Is there a people whom God will hear their prayer?

No, If there is it will be very-very few because God will not hear the prayer of the unrepentant sinner. But what of you and I? How do we balance our understanding of a sovereign God whose mind and will and purpose and plans that can not be changed, with our need for prayer. If we can not change God's purpose and plan is there a need to pray? And the answer is definitely, YES!

When the Apostles asked Jesus how to pray, he never gave them a prayer to recite. He simply told them there are certain elements which are needed for your prayer to have any success.

Jesus teaches us how to pray in

Luke 11:1 ¶ *And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, **Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.** So you see, there is still a need today as there was back in Bible times for the people to be instructed in how to pray. **2 And He (Jesus) said unto them, "When ye pray, say, **Our Father** which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. **Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*****

Now, if we take this scripture together with the witness we see in **Matthew**, we do not have Jesus telling them what words to say in their prayer as this verse would seem to suggest, but let's look at Matthew and see what Jesus is suggesting to them as He teaches them about prayer and how to pray.

Matthew 6:9 ¶ *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

Therefore, Jesus is not putting the Words into their mouth and suggesting a prayer be repeated over and over, but He is teaching them how to pray. He says, **after this manner**, or **in this manner**, or **in this way**.... Then we notice the way He approaches prayer to God.

#1) you've got to recognize the One to whom you are addressing your prayer. He is the **Sovereign God, He is the Creator** of the universe, and yet **He is your Father**. So Jesus prays as such, "*Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name*".

Notice, **Hallowed be thy name**. The word hallowed means "**to venerate, to lift up, worthy of worship**."

First and foremost, Jesus tells us that prayer has been appointed that **we should honor God first**. God requires we should recognize that *he alone is God, He alone is our object of Worship, and that there is no other beside Him*. In presenting our prayer to God we would do well to remember the **10 commandments** and especially the first commandment,

Exodus 20:2 *I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

Exodus 34:14 *For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:* God requires that we shall proclaim his universal dominion. In petitioning God for rain, **Elijah confessed God's control over the elements**.

In praying to God to deliver a sinner from the wrath to come, we acknowledge **John 2:9** "*salvation is of the Lord*"; In coming to the Lord, we should declare his ruler-ship and sovereignty over the entire world.

Revelation 4:11 *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

Again; **God requires that we shall worship him**, and prayer, **real prayer, is an act of worship**. Prayer is an act of worship in as much as it is the prostrating of the soul before him; in as much as it is a calling upon his great and holy name; in as much as it is the recognition of His goodness, His power, His immutability, His grace, and in as much as it is the recognition of His sovereignty over all things past, present, and future and we proclaim this by our submission to His will. Even when Jesus spoke of the temple, He never called it the House of Sacrifice, but, the House of Prayer.

Again; prayer rebounds to God's glory, for in prayer we should acknowledge our dependency upon Him and Him alone.

When we humbly entreat God's Divine Presence, we should cast ourselves upon His mercy, and bow down in acknowledgement of His Great Power. In seeking blessings from God we believe that He alone is the Author and Fountain of every good and perfect gift.

James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

Thus prayer to God should be one in which we constantly give back to Him His own Words of promises to us. And in doing so our prayer brings glory to God and this can be seen in the fact that prayer calls our faith to exercise and stand upon our faith, which is the revelation of His Word of promise that He has given to us. And nothing from us is so honoring and pleasing to him as the confidence of our hearts towards His Word. For we must first believe that He is as we read in **Hebrews 11:6** *But without faith (revelation) it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

And through Faith we must confess that He is more than able to meet our needs. **II Timothy 1:12** *nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*

The next thing Jesus laid out in the pattern for prayer, after acknowledging the supremacy of God in Holiness is what we hear next in verse **10** *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.* In other words, *Thy Will and Thy Will alone will reign supreme.* Therefore, Lord *Help my will to align with your will.* He never said, my will be done, but Jesus said "*Thy will be done*" speaking to the Father.

In **Ephesians 3:11** we also find that God's Purpose is eternal... *According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:* And if God's purpose is eternal then it has always been and will always remain the same and cannot change.

And in **Ephesians 1:11** *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*

Therefore if we are predestinated according to the eternal purpose of Him who works all things together for his Glory, and for our good, then it would only make sense to us that we would want things to work out in our lives what he has planned for us to begin with, knowing and trusting that all these things will somehow work together for our good.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 ¶ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 ¶ What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

Now, that we have come to the place where we recognize His interest in our needs, we can continue with the pattern which Jesus set before us, as He said **Luke 11:3** *Give us day by day our daily bread..*

Now, comes forth our needs. Now, remember, Jesus told us when teaching us how to pray that the Father knew our needs even before we would ask.

Matthew 6:7 *But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

Notice, if God knows what you are going to pray even before you pray them, then why in the world would you come to him haphazardly like the heathen do.

So many times we hear people pray and each time they do they say the very same words to the Father. So the next time you pray I want you to be very conscious not to pray the same as you always do, but your prayer should be conversational. Tell him you love him. Tell him what He means to you. Show him honor, and Glory and respect as you approach him.

Take off your hat if you have one on. Be sacred, be sincere, be respectful because you are speaking to the God who created the heavens and the earth and all things therein. Bow your head, close your eyes if. Get on your knees before him as the Scripture admonishes, "*every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord*" which means he is ruler, your ruler.

So we hear Jesus say in verse **9 ¶** *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven,* (Father you are above I am below, and I look up to you.) *Hallowed be thy name.* (Holy, reverent, respected is thy name)**11** (and after you have spent some time acknowledging that you are fully aware who you are talking to then you can ask for your needs.) *Give us this day our daily bread.* (And then Jesus reminds us not to forget the most important thing, and he adds) **12** *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

Because if you come to God with ought in your heart He will not even hear your prayers. So I like to begin with that first. I like to say, Dear Father please Lord, before I even pray to you and ask your help I ask you first to help me to know if there is anything in my heart that is offensive to you in any way, I ask for you to reveal it to me that I might go make it right or commit the making of it right to you. Because you do not want to go to God with animosity in your heart towards anyone and then expect God to listen to you. That is why Jesus said if you go to God in prayer, he said first of all make your heart right before God and then go to him with your request.

Matthew 5:25 *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*

Luke 6:37 *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:*

Matthew 7:1 *Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

And then as we see in **Luke 11:4** Jesus in showing us how to pray mentions our also knowing how to forgive sins that we might also be forgiven. "*And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*" Now, I want you to notice how the Lord Jesus set the pattern for prayer, to not only ask for the physical need, but also for the spiritual blessing of forgiveness as well. Forgive us first of our sins and then help us to forgive those who are indebted to us. Forgive them as you forgive us. I think here is where we miss the boat so often. We ask forgiveness for our own sins but we are so lacking when it comes to asking the Lord to Forgive those

who have injured us in any way. Sometimes I think we have become so hardened to the plight of others, and don't realize that Jesus has set forth a pattern here for us to come to God with the opportunity to be intercessors for others. He has given us the opportunity to be mediators and intercessors, and I think we have blown the opportunity so far.

Prayer is appointed by God for our spiritual blessing, as a means for our growth in grace. When seeking to learn the design of prayer, this should ever occupy us before we regard prayer as a means for obtaining the supply of our need. **Prayer is designed by God for our humbling.** Prayer, **real prayer, is a coming into the presence of God, and a sense of his awful majesty produces a realization of our nothingness and unworthiness.**

Again; prayer is designed by God for the exercise of our faith. Faith cometh by hearing the Word as we are told in **Romans 10:17**, but it is exercised in prayer as we see in **James 5:15** *And the **prayer** of faith shall **save** the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

Notice how prayer and forgiveness go hand in hand. And then he adds, **16** *Confess your faults one to another, and **pray one for another**, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* "

Then Confession of our sin and prayer are the two things necessary for healing, whether that healing be for the Body or the soul. Whether it be for the healing of relationships or the healing of the body. Prayer and confession, confession and prayer.

Again; **prayer calls our love into action.** Concerning the hypocrite the question is asked in the book of **Job 27:10** *"Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?"*. But they that love the Lord cannot are not far from His presence. For they delight in unburdening themselves before God. And this unburdening our souls before God is like a scouring pad that gets rid of all the soil that has made our vessels to not reflect.

And not only does prayer scour you out, but it calls love into action, and through the direct answers to our prayers, our love to God is increased as David said in **Psalms 116:1** *"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications"*.

Again; prayer is ordained by God to teach us the value of the blessings we have sought from him, and it causes us to rejoice the more when he has bestowed upon us that for which we entreat him.

Thirdly, prayer is appointed by God for our seeking from him the things which we are in need of. But the unbeliever doesn't hold this attitude. For he might think *"If God has foreordained, before the foundation of the world, everything which happens in time, what is the use of prayer?"*

*If it is true that what he said in **Rom. 11:36** "of him and through him and to him are all things", then why should I need to pray?*

And that is like the parents who say I won't make my child go to church, because if they are elect they will want to come and if they don't want to come they are not elect so why fuss? And to me that is one the weakest examples of a parents love that I have heard of.

If you love your children you will try them and scourge them to make them and mold them just like your heavenly father so loves you he tries you and scourges you. Because it is up to you to mold them into the image of what you want them to be, and if you don't care then you really do not want that image for yourself either. And that makes you just a religious person without the Holy Ghost. Because the Bible says, *The Holy Ghost, the love of God constraineth us.*

Why some people can't keep victory 57-0324 P:70 *And I think today, brother, when it taken one thing, not an intellectual being, but it taken the love of God to send Christ to the cross and to die there in disgrace and shame. And you mean to tell me that the Pentecostal church or any other church will turn down the real love of God. "I'm not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It's the power of God to salvation." If you're rather say, "Holy-roller." Let us act like that as long as the love of God's down in my heart. Certainly, doesn't matter. Oh, brother, God gave the Holy Spirit, God's Love to control the church, not smart, educated, but love. Gifts goes in the church, but it don't control the church. Love controls the church. "God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son." His love constrained Him to do it. And when a love is constrained, then sovereign grace projects its object. May I say that again: When Divine love is projected, grace produces its object. And God loved the world so much till sovereign grace projected a Saviour to the world. Yes, indeed. And when you love God so much, sovereign grace will project to you the baptism of the Holy Ghost to make you live, and love, and to be a real Christian.*

So if you do not constrain your children to be as best a Christian they can be by the grace of God, then you haven't the love of God in you.

Divine love 57-0305 P:43 *What caused you, mister or misses, to come to the meeting tonight? It was the same God that stopped the animals in the field. It's the same One Who led the old mother opossum, Who's done all the things that's love. God so loves you, that He's led you to a place where you could accept Him. Will you do it, upon the basis of the shed Blood of His beloved Son? That God could not do nothing else, but it's... His great love constrained Him in such a way, that He could not do nothing else. Grace had to send you a Saviour.*

The unbeliever will ask, *What is the use of me coming to God and telling him what he already knows? What's the use of me speaking to him of my needs, seeing he is already fully aware of them? What is the use of praying for anything when everything has been ordained beforehand by God? What is the use of compelling my children to attend church to hear the Gospel if they are already ordained one way or the other?*

Prayer is not for the purpose of informing God, as if He the omniscient one were ignorant, because Jesus made very clear while teaching the Apostle to pray in **Matthew 6:8**, He said, *"for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him"*, Therefore our praying is to acknowledge that we know that He does know what we are in need of.

Because Jesus goes on to tell us what the worth of prayer is in a little parable.

Luke 11:5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, "Friend, lend me three loaves; **6** For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?" **7** And **he from within shall answer and say**, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. **8** I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his **importunity** he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. **9** And I say unto you, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you". **10** **For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.** **11** If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? **12** Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? **13** If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Therefore, Prayer is not for the furnishing of God with the knowledge of what we need, but it is designed as **a confession to him** of our sense of the need.

As in everything else, God's thoughts are not as our thoughts are. God requires that his gifts should be sought for. He designs to be honored by our asking, just as he is to be thanked by us after he has bestowed his blessing.

However, the question still remains. If God is the predestinator of everything that comes to pass, and the regulator of every event, then is not prayer not a vain exercise?

But our answer comes from the fact that God commands us to pray. He commanded us in **1 Thessalonians 5:17**, "*Pray without ceasing*". And again Jesus said in **Luke 18:1**, "*men ought always to pray*". And again in **James 5:15-16** we read "*the prayer of faith shall save the sick*", and, "*the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*";

The Lord Jesus Christ, our older brother and the perfect example in all things was a true example of "a Man of Prayer". Then, it is evident, that prayer is neither meaningless nor valueless. But still this does not remove the difficulty nor answer the question with which we started out. What then is the relationship between God's sovereignty and Christian prayer?

First of all, we would say with emphasis, that **our prayer should never be intended to change God's purpose**, or create new ones just for us. **God has decreed that certain events shall come to pass**, but he has also decreed that these events shall come to pass through the means he has appointed for their accomplishment. **God has elected certain ones to be saved**, but he has also decreed that these ones shall be saved **through the preaching of the Gospel**. **The Gospel, then, is one of the appointed means for the working out of the eternal purpose of the Lord; and prayer is another.** **God has decreed the means as well as the end, and among the means is prayer.** Even the prayers of his people are included in his eternal decrees. Therefore, **instead of prayer being in vain, it is among the means through which God exercises his purposes.** If all things happened by mere chance, then prayer could be of no moral use; but since our prayers are directed and regulated by the direction of Divine wisdom, prayer has a place in the order of events.

I remember one morning at 7 am in 1998, praying to God and asking him for 50 laptops so I could fill them with all of William Branham's sermons and give them out to poor churches around the world. I went to work and arrived for a 9 am meeting with the regional Marketing manager for Smith Kline Beecham to negotiate a contract for 220 physicians. When I met the regional Marketing manager the first words out of his mouth were, Before we get started, I was just informed this morning from headquarters at 7 am that we have two weeks to give away all our old laptops to non-profit organizations or they will be thrown into a dumpster and destroyed. He went on to say, "we had donated them to a national charity last week, and on Friday they decided they did not want them, so I've been instructed to ask you if you know of any non-profit organizations who could use these laptops.

I told him that at 7 am that morning I had a conference call with my head quarters as well, it was my Father in Heaven, and I asked him to make a way for me to get 50 laptops so we could send them out to missionaries all around the world.

So he said, "50? If you want 300 just let me know? I said, well I asked for 50 so I don't want to be greedy. But if you want to throw some in for spare parts that would be ok. So we made arrangements for me to pick them up at their headquarters in Pennsylvania.

I learned a great lesson that morning, that it was not God responding to my prayer for the laptops but my prayer was directed by the purpose of God, and therefore, by tapping into His Divine Will, our prayers become part of the Divine working of His will. A Sort of tapping into the Eternal Wellspring of God's Purpose and plan.

Two weeks later my wife and I drove out to Pennsylvania and returned with 80 laptops. Those laptops were a gift God gave us that opened the door for me to travel the world bringing not only laptops but to introduce the brethren to the Message Doctrine and that was no different than what God did for William Branham giving him a gift of healing to bring Christ to the world in this hour.

We can see then that prayer becomes part of the execution of the very things that God declared and therefore are not meaningless. This is clearly taught in the Scriptures.

In **James 5:17-18** we see that Elijah knew that God was about to give rain, but that did not prevent him from praying to God for it. **17 *Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*** **18 *And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.***

In **Dan. 9:2-3** we see that Daniel "***understood***" by the writings of the prophets that the captivity was to last but seventy years, yet when these seventy years were almost ended, we are told that he "***set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes***".

Again in Scripture we see God telling the prophet Jeremiah in **Jeremiah 29:12** "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end*"; but instead of adding, there is, therefore, no need for you to supplicate me for these things, he said, "*Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you*".

In **Ezekiel 36:1-38** we read of the explicit, positive, and unconditional promises which God has made concerning the future restoration of Israel, yet in **Ezekiel 36:37** in this same chapter we are told, "*Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them*"! So God knows before hand what we will pray for.

Therefore this is the design of prayer: **not that God's will may be altered**, but **that it may be accomplished in his own good time and way**. It is because God has promised certain things, that we can ask for them with the full assurance of faith knowing that we shall receive them.

It is God's purpose that his will shall be brought about by his own appointed means and that he may do his people good upon his own terms, and that is, by the "*means*" and "*terms*" of entreaty and supplication.

Didn't Jesus the Son of God know of a certainty that after his death and resurrection he would be exalted by the Father? Sure He did. Yet we find him asking for this very thing in **John 17:5** "*Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was*"

Didn't he know that none of his people could perish? Yet in **John 17:11** he petitioned the *Father to "keep" them which He has given to him!*

Finally; it should be said that **God's will is immutable**, and cannot be altered by our crying.

When the mind of God is not toward a people to do them good, it cannot be turned to them by the most fervent and persistent prayers of those who have the greatest interest in him as we see in **Jeremiah 15:1** "*Then said the Lord unto me, 'Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth*".

The prayers of Moses to enter the promised land is also another example of this same thing.

Our views respecting prayer need to be revised and brought into harmony with the teaching of Scripture on the subject. The prevailing idea seems to be, that I come to God and ask him for something that I want, and that I expect him to give me that which I have asked. But this is a most dishonoring and degrading conception. The popular belief reduces God to a servant, our servant: doing our bidding, performing our pleasure, granting our desires.

But prayer rather, is our coming to God, telling him our need, committing our way unto the Lord, and leaving him to deal with it as seems best to him. This makes our will subject to his will, instead of, seeking to bring his will into subjection to our own. No prayer is pleasing to God unless the spirit motivating it is, "*not my will, but thine be done*".

When God bestows blessings on a praying people, it is not for the sake of their prayers, as if he was inclined and turned by them; but it is for his own sake.

God answers our prayers for His own sovereign will and pleasure. Should someone ask you, What purpose then is prayer? We should answer, '**Prayer is the way and means God has appointed, for the communication of the blessing of his goodness to his people.**' For though he has purposed, provided, and promised them, yet he must be sought first, in order to give them, and therefore it is a duty and privilege for us to ask. When we are blessed with a spirit of prayer, it is good because it is then that God intends to bestow the good things asked, **which should be asked always with submission to the will of God**, saying, '*Not my will but thine be done*'"

Perhaps the one thing that bothers Christians more than anything else is unanswered prayer. We ask God for something: so far as we are able to judge, we have asked in faith believing we will receive that for which we have asked the Lord: and we know we have asked earnestly and repeatedly, but the answer does not seem to come. The result is, in many cases, our faith in the efficacy of prayer seems to weaken, until hope gives way to despair and the closet is altogether neglected.

But every real prayer of faith that has ever been offered to God has been answered? He promised. Real prayer is a coming to God, telling him our need, committing our way unto the Lord, and then leaving him to deal with the case as seems best to him. This allows God to answer the prayer in whatever way he sees fit, and often, his answer may be the very opposite of what would be most acceptable to our own mind; yet, if we have really left our need in his hands, it will be his answer, nevertheless.

Let me show you two examples of this in Scripture.

In **John 11:1-44** Lazarus was sick unto death. The Lord "*loved*" him, but he was absent from Bethany. The sisters sent a messenger unto the Lord acquainting him of their brother's condition. And note particularly how their appeal was worded, "*Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.*" **That was all.** They did not ask him to heal Lazarus. They did not request him to hasten at once to Bethany. **They simply spread their need before him, committed the case into his hands, and left him to act as he deemed best!** And what was His reply? Did he respond to their appeal and answer their request? Certainly he did, though not, perhaps, in the way they had hoped. He answered according to **John 11:6** by abiding "*two days still in the same place where he was*", and allowing Lazarus to die! But in this instance, that was not all. Later, he journeyed to Bethany and **raised Lazarus from the dead.** But this is used here only to illustrate the proper attitude for the believer to take before God in the hour of need. The next example will emphasize, rather, God's method of responding to his needy children.

In **2 Corinthians 12:1-21.** The apostle Paul had been given an unheard of privilege. He had been transported into Paradise. His ears have listened to and his eyes have gazed upon that which no other mortal had heard or seen this side of death. The wondrous revelation was more than the apostle could endure. He was in danger of becoming "*puffed up*" by his extraordinary experience. Therefore, a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, was sent to buffet him lest he be exalted above measure. And the apostle spreads his need before the

Lord; on three occasions he asks God to remove his thorn in the flesh. Was his prayer answered? Yes it was, though not in the manner he had desired. The "*thorn*" was not removed, but grace was given to bear it. The burden was not lifted, but strength was given to carry it.

God has, as it were, given us a blank check and invited us to fill it in? He never told us the promises of God are all inclusive, and that we may ask God for what *we will*? We must never lose track of the fact that it is necessary to compare scripture with scripture if we are to learn the full mind of God on any subject, and as this is done we discover God has qualified the promises given to praying souls by saying in **1 John 5:14** "*If we ask anything according to his will he heareth us*".

Therefore, **real prayer is communion with God**, so that there will be common thoughts between his mind and ours. What is needed is for **him to fill our hearts with his thoughts**, and **then his desires will become our desires** flowing back to him.

This then is the meeting place between God's sovereignty and Christian prayer: *If we ask anything according to his will he heareth us*, and if we do not so ask, he does not hear us; as saith the apostle James said in **James 4:3**, "*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye might consume it upon your lusts*" or desires.

But didn't Jesus Christ tell his disciples in **John 16:23**, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you***"? Yes, he certainly did. but this promise does not give praying souls carte blanche. These words of our Lord are in perfect accord with those of the apostle John, "*If we ask anything according to his will he heareth us.*" What is it to ask "*in the name of Christ*"?

Surely it is much more than a prayer formula, the mere concluding of our supplications with the words "*in the name of Christ.*" To apply to God for anything in the name of Christ, it must needs be in keeping with who and what Christ is! To ask God in the name of Christ is as though Christ himself were the suppliant.

To ask in His Name is to ask God for what Christ himself would ask for. To ask in the name of Christ, is therefore, to **set aside our own wills, accepting God's!** And to ask outside of God's Word is to ask what God can not give. He is the Word.

Let us now amplify our new definition of prayer. What is prayer? **Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude, an attitude of dependency, a dependency upon God.**

Prayer is a confession of our weakness, and our helplessness. Prayer is the acknowledgment of our need and the spreading of it before God. We do not say that this is all there is in prayer, it is not: but it is the primary element in prayer. **Prayer is both an attitude and an act**, a human act, and yet there is the divine element in it too. **Prayer is fundamentally an attitude of dependency upon God.** His Sovereign will to be done in our life. Therefore, prayer is the very opposite of dictating to God.

Prayer is an attitude of dependency, the one who really prays is submissive to the divine will; and submission to the divine will means, that we're content for the Lord to supply our need according to the dictates of **his own sovereign pleasure**. And hence it is that we say, every prayer that is offered to God in this spirit is sure of meeting with an answer or response from him.

Prayer is not the requesting of God to alter his purpose or for him to form a new one. **Prayer is the taking of an attitude of dependency upon God, the spreading of our need before him, then asking for those things which are in accordance with his will,** and therefore there is nothing whatever inconsistent between divine sovereignty and Christian prayer.

In **Jeremiah 10:23** we are told "*It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*". We also see this is **Proverbs 16:9**; and yet in many of his prayers, man presumes to direct the Lord as to his way, and as to what God ought to do: even implying that if only he had the direction of the affairs of the world and of the church, he would soon have things very different from what they are.

We can't deny this. Anyone with any spiritual discernment at all could not fail to detect this spirit in many of our modern prayer meetings where the flesh holds sway. How slow we all are to learn the lesson that we as God's children need to be brought to our knees and humbled before our heavenly Father. And this is where the very act of prayer is intended to put us. But man (in his usual perversity) turns the footstool into a throne, from where he might be able to direct the Omniscient, Omnipotent Sovereign God to what do what he wants in his human mind for God to do.

And if you think of the insanity of such thinking. We pray because we cannot do, yet expect God to do what we want him to do. Now, if He is omniscient and omnipotent, then why would we as mere mortal try to instruct God as to what we need and how we need it.

Such is the arrogance of the human spirit even in a child of God. Our main purpose in prayer then is for **submitting our wills to God's will**. But it must also be added, that prayer is much more than a pious exercise, and far otherwise than a mechanical performance. Prayer is, indeed, **a divinely appointed means whereby we may obtain from God the things we ask, providing we ask for those things which are in accord with his will.**

Let us pray.