

Thy Will Be Done

Week 4: God's Will And My Worldview

“And for three days [Saul] was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.” Acts 9:9

Opening Hymn

Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed his blood for me;
Died that I might live on high, lived that I might never die,
As the branch is to the vine, I am his, and he is mine.

Oh, the height of Jesus' love! Higher than the heav'ns above,
Deeper than the depths of sea, lasting as eternity.
Love that found me—wondrous thought! Found me when I sought him not.

Jesus only can impart balm to heal the wounded heart;
Peace that flows from sin forgiv'n, joy that lifts the soul to heav'n;
Faith and hope to walk with God in the way that Enoch trod.

Chief of sinners though I be, Christ is all in all to me;
All my wants to him are known, all my sorrows are his own.
Safe with him from earthly strife, he sustains the hidden life.

Invocation

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

P: Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law,

C: so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

P: Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law;

C: rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. (Romans 3:19-20)

P: We know that the law is spiritual;

C: but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

P: I do not understand what I do.

C: For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. (Romans 7:14-15)

P: So I find this law at work:

C: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

P: I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

C: What a wretched person I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? (Romans 7:21, 23-24)

(silence for personal reflection and confession)

P: At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

C: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

P: For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.

C: Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 5:6, 8:1-3)

P: What, then, shall we say in response to these things?

C: If God is for us, who can be against us?

P: It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns?

C: No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

P: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

C: No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

(Romans 8:31, 33-37)

Hymn of Response

O my Savior, help afford by thy Spirit and thy Word!
When my wayward heart would stray, keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply while I live and when I die.

Prayer of the Day

First Reading ... Acts 7:54-58; 8:1-3

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he [Stephen], full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Hymn of Response

Praise for the first of martyrs who saw you ready stand
To help in time of torment, to plead at God's right hand.
Like you, our suffering Savior, his enemies he blessed,
And "Lord receive my spirit," his faith, by death, confessed.

Second Reading ... Acts 9 (selected verses)

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

Hymn of Response

Praise for the light from heaven and for the voice of awe;
Praise for the glorious vision the persecutor saw.
O Lord, for Paul's conversion, we bless your name today,
Come shine within our darkness, and guide us on our way.

Sermon

Offering

Prayers

Each petition ends with the following response:

P: O Christ, who came to save the world, **C let us see the world through your eyes.**

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

P: Through Christ Jesus, the law of the Spirit who gives life

C: has set you free from the law of sin and death.

P: And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies

C: because of his Spirit who lives in you.

P: Now may the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you his peace.

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn

What is the world to me with all its vaunted pleasure
When you, and you alone, Lord Jesus, are my treasure.
You only, dearest Lord, my soul's delight shall be;
You are my peace and rest. What is the world to me!

The world seeks to be praised and honored by the mighty,
Yet never once reflects that they are frail and flighty.
But what I truly prize above all things is he,
My Jesus, he alone. What is the world to me!

The world seeks after wealth and all that mammon offers,
Yet never is content though gold should fill its coffers.
I have a higher good, content with it I'll be:
My Jesus is my wealth. What is the world to me!

What is the world to me! My Jesus is my treasure,
My life, my health, my wealth, my friend, my love, my pleasure,
What is the world to me!

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