

## SUBMISSION | *The Gethsemane Prayer*

The biographies of Jesus contained in the Bible describe the events of the evening before Jesus was crucified. That night, after having dinner with his friends, they all went for a walk to a local garden called “Gethsemane”, where Jesus went off by himself to pray. This was Jesus’ way of preparing Himself for all that he knew was about to happen to him. In just moments, soldiers with torches would arrive to drag him away to be brutally beaten and executed. Jesus, steadying himself for what lay ahead, in a moment of raw honesty, prays that he won’t have to go through with it after all. The Gospel of Luke records that prayer:

***“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”***

Luke 22:42

In this moment, Jesus experiences such anguish that Luke says *“his sweat became like drops of blood.”* It wasn’t easy! Even so, Jesus submits to God’s way, rejecting his own instincts and surrendering control of his life into the hands of God.

Can you imagine how counter-intuitive that attitude is in today’s world? A world where “follow your heart” has given way to “never let anyone else ever tell you what to do, think, or believe.” We don’t submit to anything or anyone, unless we agree with them – which, if you think about it, isn’t really submission at all. It’s is a cultural sin to lay down your rights, surrender your autonomy, or sacrifice your independence. But, in Jesus, we hear a voice that cuts against the grain of our self-serving instincts. *Not my will, but yours be done.* This is the Gethsemane prayer. And it’s what we’re going to practice right now.

If you’re willing, I invite you to hold your dominant hand out in front of you, palm up. I’m going to guide you to think about different areas of life where we’re all tempted to want things our way, maybe even tempted to pray that God would orchestrate things according to our ambitions, hopes, and plans, wanting our will to be done. But instead, we’re going to practice praying Jesus’ Gethsemane prayer - *not my will, but yours be done.*

Let’s start with our **ambitions** – the goals and drives that push us forward in life. Who are you aspiring to become, in your own eyes and in the eyes of others? What are you working so hard to achieve and accomplish? What, at the end of the day, does success look like to you? Imagine you had it all, right in the palm of your hands.

Now, to the degree that these ambitions are not fully realized, I invite you to consider them through the lens of Jesus’ Gethsemane prayer. What would it look like to let these ambitions go, and pray, *“Not my will, but yours be done”*? If you’re willing to go the way of Jesus, I invite you to turn your hand upside down, as if you’re letting it all go, and silently pray those words, ***“Not my will, but yours be done.”***

### **REFRAIN**

***Not my will, but Yours be done***

***Not my strength, but Yours alone  
Nothing else but You, O Lord  
I find everything in You***

Next, as you turn your hand back to the palm-up position, consider the *relational hopes* and longings you have. Where are you tempted to want to control the people around you? It could be a close friend, a coworker, or love interest, maybe your spouse, or your sibling, a child or a parent. Frankly, it could even be someone you dislike – any enemy or a competitor. If there’s someone who represents a constant source of disappointment or discouragement, imagine that you’re holding that relationship, that person, in your hands right now.

Now, imagine yourself there in the garden with Jesus, kneeling in the dark, praying to be let off the hook. And in this moment, turn your hand upside down, and open your fist, like you’re letting them go. Letting go of your desire to control them, or to have that relationship go as you would hope. As you do this, silently pray to God, ***“Not my will, but yours be done.”***

**REFRAIN**

***Not my will, but Yours be done  
Not my strength, but Yours alone  
Nothing else but You, O Lord  
I find everything in You***

Finally, turn your hands palm-up one more time, and consider your *plans* for the future. Imagine finally achieving financial security, accomplishing all your career aspirations, and reaching your retirement goals. Maybe it’s a dream home, a full bank account, extended vacations or other lifestyle fantasies. What are the big ticket items on the list of your life’s accomplishments. Imagine, for a moment, that they all came true.

Now, what would it take to turn that hand over, let them go, and join Jesus in praying, “Not my will, but yours be done”? If you’re willing, do that now.

**REFRAIN**

***Not my will, but Yours be done  
Not my strength, but Yours alone  
Nothing else but You, O Lord  
I find everything in You***

***I surrender  
I surrender  
I surrender all to You (2X)***

[SONG | Jesus, All For Jesus]