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What We Wish for Churches of Christ in 2015

Phil Sanders

For some months I've been praying that the Lord's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus taught us to pray this (Mt. 6:10). Prayer to God not only reaches His ears but also reflects our hearts. If we sincerely, fervently pray the Lord's will be done on earth, we will strive to make this come about in our own lives. If I live for the will of the Lord, perhaps others will too. I cannot make them, but I can influence them by standing firmly for His cause, His way, and His teaching.

We are a fractured body. Jesus prayed for His followers, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). Many have set aside God's truth in order to "get along and not make anyone feel bad." But in setting aside God's truth, they have put the love of people before the love of God (Jn. 12:42-43). We cannot be a "sanctified, set apart" body for God if we are unwilling to be set apart for the truth God teaches. Many have become content to go beyond the truths found in Scripture to embrace the ways of other religious groups. This departure fractures the body. Jesus prayed for His people who are sanctified in the truth to be one. He never envisioned a unity built upon pluralism, mutually accepted contradictory teachings. Truth doesn't contradict itself, and truth was the basis of their being set apart to begin with. God expects His followers to be one (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Eph. 4:1-6). Our faith in God's will is the basis for our unity. Unity can only come when we die to ourselves, our opinions, and our interpretations, and listen to the Lord Jesus.

I fear we sometimes speak past each other and do not listen. Error is error, and we must speak against it. But our opposition to error must be done with kindness and love. Should we not strive to recover the deceived and the fallen (James 5:19-20)? With kindness, let's let God speak first and foremost and always. Let's look to ourselves as people who may be tempted as others are (Gal. 6:1).

God wishes to see hearts aflame for the gospel and for souls, reaching out to win them to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us not forget our first and prime task is to evangelize and bring people to the Lord (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). Who do you know that needs the Lord? How can we bring more souls to Jesus?

God created us in Christ Jesus for good works (Eph. 2:10), that we should walk in them. Our Savior Jesus Christ "gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works" (Tit. 2:14). Let us resist evil and follow good, avoid lawlessness and purify our hearts for service to Him.

In short, we wish God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

NOTE: Phil Sanders is on "*In Search of the Lord's Way*" – Channel 5 - Sunday AM at 8:00.