

A Journey Through The Lord's Prayer

"For Thine is the Kingdom..."

[Matthew 6:9-13](#)

For the past several weeks, we have been studying the Lord's Prayer, and today, we come to the last phrase of this prayer Jesus taught us to pray: "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever."

As you might have noticed, this phrase is not included in either the Matthew version or the Luke version in the Bible translations we commonly use. According to a Bible commentary, 10 different endings of the Lord's Prayer have been discovered, and the oldest and most trustworthy manuscripts among them do not contain this last phrase. Scholars agree that this phrase was not part of the original prayer of Jesus, but instead was added later by the early church.

Most modern Bible translations do not include this ending in the Lord's Prayer. But, early English translations, like the King James Version, do so because translators back then were not aware of the existence of the oldest manuscripts which omitted this phrase. And, as a result, this last phrase became included in the Lord's Prayer.

So, despite the fact that this phrase was not originally part of the prayer Jesus taught his disciples, since it is the official ending of the Lord's Prayer as we have learned to pray, I felt compelled to reflect on it at the conclusion of our sermon series.

"Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever" is what is called a doxology. The dictionary defines doxology as "an expression of praise to God, especially a short hymn, sung as part of a Christian worship service." The Greek word for "doxology" is doxologia, in which two words are combined: doxa, which means "glory," "splendor," and logos, which means "word" or "saying." So, a doxology is simply a way of "glorifying" or "praising" God.

There is a number of doxologies found in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. One of them is David's doxology, which is recorded in 1 Chronicles, chapter 29. The king is praying for the gifts that people brought for building the Jerusalem Temple. Here is what he says. I am reading from the King James Version:

Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Did you notice the similarities between this doxology and the one found at the end of the Lord's Prayer? Words like "Forever," "the power," "the glory," "thine is the kingdom," appear in both. Apparently, the early church thought it was important and fitting to add an expression of praise to God at the end of the prayer of Jesus because no prayer is complete without glorifying God. And so it appears they simply bor-

rowed it from the ancient doxology of David and tacked it onto the Lord's Prayer, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

Doxologies have been an important part of the church since its beginning. The Gloria Patri, so named for the first two words of the doxology in Latin, is one that is commonly used by both Catholic and Protestant churches, and it dates back to the 3rd or 4th century.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.

This song is called the "Lesser Doxology," which is distinguished from the "Great Doxology," or Gloria in Excelsis Deo. Today, we will sing this ancient song after offerings are collected.

Here is another doxology that is mostly sung in Protestant churches. It was written by the Anglican Bishop, Thomas Ken in 1674.

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow
Praise Him, all creatures here below
Praise Him above, ye Heavenly Host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

In 1978, Gilbert Viera revised it to a more inclusive version.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise, God, all creatures here below:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Let's return to the Doxology found at the end of the Lord's Prayer: "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory."

This doxology that we say whenever we pray the Lord's Prayer helps take our attention away from ourselves and place it on God. We are not praying for our kingdom, our power, and our glory but for God's kingdom, God's power and God's glory. It's not about us but God. After all is said and done, we are placing our trust in the hands of God. As we step out in faith to face the challenges of life, we behold the power and majesty of the One in whom we live, we move, and we have our being. By saying "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory," we are acknowledging God's authority to exercise God's sovereignty over all things and placing everything in the hands of God who sustains and guides us through our challenges. With this doxology, we are professing our belief that God is in control. We are acknowledging that God is at the center of all things in life and that everything in our lives will be done not through our own power but through God's power and help.

The Bible tells us that God's people were blessed with a glimpse of God's power and might whenever their faith was challenged by momentous events in life. During their 40-year journey in the wilderness, the Israelites were guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night which God provided for them. Shortly after Jesus predicted his death to his disciples, he took Peter, James, and John to a mountaintop and allowed them to witness God's power and majesty through his transfiguration. The Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit was a demonstration of God's power and majesty for Jesus' disciples and other followers who were hiding in fear even after they were visited by the risen Christ.

Here is the good news! Even today, God blesses God's children with glimpses of God's power and majesty. And, those of us who have seen a glimpse of God's glory cannot shy away from sharing it. There is too much at stake; too many do not know anything about our mighty yet merciful God; too many are living in darkness; too many are suffering alone without hope in brokenness and pain. And in seeking to reach others with the good news which has saved us, we discover new purpose and direction in our lives as well.

Mike, one of the 18 young adults in the Bike and Build team that stayed at our church Friday night shared with me about his personal mission that he discovered soon after the special journey began: He was the only Christian on the team. For the last 2 and a half months, he made every effort to share his faith with them in words and actions. As a result, he became convinced that God is leading him to go to seminary! I noticed his eyes were welling up with tears as he was talking about his experience.

Now, as we do with other prayers, we end this prayer Jesus gave us to pray with "Amen." The great reformer, Martin Luther said this about the last word in the Lord's Prayer, "Amen" means "Yes, yes, it will be done." When we say "Amen," we are telling God, "I believe O God. I believe that You will answer our prayers. You will answer our prayers not because of who we are or what we have done, but because of who You are and what You have done." Indeed, God will answer our prayers. No matter how depressing and bleak the current reality is, it is not the end of the story. Our hope is in the future, in the fulfillment of God's kingdom and God's will. When all is said and done, our God will have the final word. That is the promise we have in the cross and the empty grave. Not even death can claim victory over God's plans for us and the rest of creation.

In the meantime, as we wait for God's kingdom and will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, we continue to pray this model prayer Jesus taught us to pray because it gives us a glimpse of how we, his followers, are to live in the world. The Lord's Prayer is a call to live a life of abundance and generosity; It's a call to live a life of forgiveness and reconciliation; It's a call to live a life of trust in God's provision and protection; It's a call to live not by the standards of our own little worlds but by the standards of God's kingdom; It's a call to seek not our will but God's will; It's a call to live not by our own power but by God's power; It's a call to live not for our own glory but for God's glory.

And when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we know that this prayer is not just our own personal prayer. This prayer is a prayer that countless Christian believers have prayed throughout the history of the church. A cloud of witnesses goes before us, testifying to God's power and might and their experience of transformation. And by joining their heavenly chorus, we too will be a pillar of cloud and fire by which those in the wilderness will be led to encounter the living God. Let us continue to pray this powerful prayer that Jesus Christ taught us to pray. Let us continue to pray the Lord's prayer twice or three times a day as we have been praying throughout this sermon series. Let us pray.
Amen.