

The Lord's Prayer

Kingdom, Power, and Glory

Part 12 - February 1, 2009

Now we end the Lord's Prayer the way we began it ... with worship! I know you think we're finishing the Lord's Prayer *today*. But not true. We actually finished it last week! Let me explain; today we will be examining the last line:

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever"

These three short statements piled one upon the other act as a final shout of praise, an expression of trust in God, to give us what we need, to give it when we need it, and to give it the way we need it.

But here's the thing: the Lord's Prayer is *only* recorded in two Gospels: Matthew and Luke. And this last line is *only* found in Matthew ... *and it's not* found in the earliest copies of Matthew. So, most scholars believe that Jesus' original prayer ended (last week) with: "Deliver us from evil" and that these words were *added* (by His followers) at a later date. In fact, if you have a *newer* Bible it's either simply *not* included, or it might be included with a notation.

Q: So, do we consider this part of the "inspired Word of God"?



In Judaism, prayers were often concluded with a "seal" [not *that* kind of seal], but a sentence of praise *freely formulated* by the one praying. And in Palestinian practice it would have been unthinkable to end a prayer with the word, *evil*.

So, the same scholars who believe these words were added also believe that Jesus expected and intended for the one praying to end with a "seal" (those spontaneous words of praise).



As the early church¹ began to form and this prayer began to be used as a *corporate* prayer (spoken in unison), it became necessary to establish a *fixed* expression (rather than a *personal* expression), so that everyone could say it together.

This phrase may not be from the lips of Jesus, but it certainly reflects His heart and mind. The concepts are *thoroughly* Biblical, and they don't add in any way to what scripture teaches us about God.

¹ The photo shows the remains of an early church in the ancient city of Sabratha.

So, I think we should accept this verse for what it is – *not* the words of Jesus to *us*, but the words of early believers to God in response to the Lord’s Prayer. These are declarative statements of praise.

1. Yours is the **kingdom**. When all is said and done, Yours is the ultimate *authority*: The absolute *right* to rule and reign.
2. Yours is the **power**. When all is said and done, Yours is the ultimate *capacity*: The absolute *ability* to rule and reign.
3. Yours is the **glory**. When all is said and done, Yours is the ultimate *beauty*: The absolute *splendor* of Your rule and reign.

You may have noticed that there are two references to God’s kingdom in the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy kingdom come” and “Thine is the kingdom”. Any idea what the differences is between these two statements?

The first refers to His redemptive relationship to individuals through Jesus Christ. This kingdom “comes” and “spreads” as people choose to embrace Him as Savior and Lord. The second refers to His sovereign authority over *everything*.

The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. -
Psalm 103:19 NIV

To pray: “*thine is the kingdom*” is to believe (and to act on the belief) that God rules over all nature and history and humanity. But mostly it means that I recognize His rule and reign over *my* life. *His* agenda becomes my agenda; *His* guidelines become my guidelines; His goodness and truth and grace become my ambition. This praise statement renews our *humility*.



To pray: “thine is the kingdom” is to say, “I surrender all of my *rival kingdoms* and turn the rule *completely* over to you.” But keep in mind that kingdoms rarely give up power without a fight. So, don’t be discouraged when the battle rages. The Christian life is a necessarily painful, and sometimes brutal, but ultimately joyful process of being dethroned.

It’s impossible for two diametrically opposed kingdoms to exist together. One will always *eventually* overwhelm the other. The problem is that we tend to bow to *lesser* authorities. Do you know one of the big reasons why? It’s because we fear *lesser powers*.



Don’t give lesser powers higher priority.

When we focus on inferior powers, we shift from eternal to temporal, from highest good to immediate good, and from glorification to gratification.

This praise statement renews our *courage*.



To pray: “[Thine is] the power” is to recognize that *all* other powers pale in contrast to the mighty hand of God. When I fear God, I fear nothing else. And when I don’t fear God I fear *everything* else! Are you more concerned with the acceptance of friends or God? Whose condemnation do you dread most: your family’s or God’s?

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his **eternal power** and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. - *Romans 1:20 NIV*

Whether we gaze through a telescope or peer through a microscope we see a well-organized, systematic exhibition of His power. And notice that Paul says: “so that men are without excuse”.

On judgment day no one will say: “I didn’t know!” But many will say: “I didn’t bow!” “I saw Your power, but I didn’t fear it!”

And then we come to the third declaration: “and [Thine is] the glory”. Do you know what God’s “glory” is? It is the infinite beauty of His goodness and truth.

This praise statement renews our assignment.

The ultimate purpose of this universe is to glorify God. It is the reason for everything that exists ... including us.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may **glorify** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. - *Romans 15:5-6 NIV*



Do you know what it means to “glorify” God? I mean, we can’t *add* anything to His glory. So what does it mean to *glorify* Him?

Specifically, it means to **behold** His glory, to **acknowledge** His glory, to **treasure** His glory, and to **reflect** His glory.

We’re here on assignment, and we’ve been given our orders. The Lord’s Prayer teaches us how to live a life that glorifies God:

- A. If you haven’t received Christ, you can’t pray: “Our Father”
- B. If you treat Him *only* as a good buddy, you can’t pray: “Who art in Heaven”
- C. If you’re careless with how you represent Him, you can’t pray: “Hallowed be Thy name”

- D. If you're unconcerned for the redemption of others, you can't pray: "Thy kingdom come"
- E. If you refuse to submit to *His* righteousness, you can't pray: "Thy will be done"
- F. If you live only for the here and now, you can't pray: "On earth as it is in Heaven"
- G. If you're self-sufficient, you can't pray: "Give us this day our daily bread"
- H. If you won't forgive others, you can't pray: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"
- I. If you reject His merciful warnings, you can't pray: "Lead us not into temptation"
- J. If you're too in love with your sin to let go, you can't pray: "Deliver us from evil"
- K. If you've declared yourself the final authority, you can't pray: "For thine is the kingdom"
- L. If you place the fear of others first, you can't pray: "And [Thine is] the power"
- M. If you're unwilling to work on *all* these things, you can't pray: "And [Thine is] the glory"

If you're a believer operating outside the kingdom boundaries, you'll find it impossible to appreciate God's glory.



It's a lot like stained-glass windows in a church.

From the outside they appear only dark and gray. You can't tell if they're works of art or just dirty windows that need to be cleaned.



But when you enter the church, the radiance of those vibrant colors shine and sparkle before you.

The brilliance and beauty of God's glory is only perceived from *within* His kingdom under His power.

His principles will never change; His power will never diminish. They are "for ever". Not just from this point forward, but also from this point backward. It has always been this way and it will always be this way. In Revelation, we're told that in Heaven ...

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for **the glory of God gives it light** ... - Revelation 21:23a NIV

Unless you're *seeking* His kingdom, and *depending on* His power, you'll never perceive the brilliance and beauty of His glory, either in this world, or the world to come.