**For Thine is the Kingdom**

Matthew 6:13 & 1 Chronicles 29: 10-13

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Years ago there was a preacher who had a unique way of selecting the passage of Scripture upon which he was going to preach his sermon. Not only that, he would select the passage of Scripture right in front of the congregation, just before he was going to deliver the message. He would flip open his Bible without looking where he had turned and then put his finger on the verse or verses that had been selected. This would become the text upon which he would base his sermon. This methodology worked for a while. In fact, the congregation was so intrigued that some of the members began trying to guess which passage of Scripture the preacher would select and what he would say about it. Then one Sunday tragedy struck. The preacher opened his Bible, closed his eyes and put his finger on this verse of Scripture, 1 Chronicles, chapter 6, verse 8, “And Ahitub begat Zadok and Zadok begat Ahimaaz.” The preacher had landed in the “begats.” It was a short sermon.

Examining this last portion of the Lord’s Prayer and researching what others have said about it, I came to a similar conclusion. I had landed in the “begats.” This was going to be a short sermon. Here’s why I came to this conclusion. The words, “for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen,” are not found in Luke’s rendition of the Lord’s Prayer. It ends with “and le ad us not into temptation.” Furthermore, in most modern translations of the Bible, it is also deleted from the Lord’s Prayer in the gospel of Matthew. At best it’s included as a footnote stating that this ending for the Lord’s Prayer is found in some, but not all of the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. Furthermore, when I began researching what a number of Biblical scholars had to say about this part of the Lord’s Prayer, they didn’t have much to say. In fact, one of them didn’t say anything at all. They skipped right over it. Yes, I felt like I had landed smack dab in the middle of the “begats.” It was going to be a short sermon. Then I did some more digging and came up with a number of things that were quite interesting. Perhaps there was more to this last portion of the Lord’s Prayer than I had realized. So let’s see what they are.

This part of the Lord’s Prayer—*for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,* *forever*—is not found in any of the earliest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Neither is it found in the writings of some of the church’s earliest theologians who wrote about it in their commentaries. However, it does show up in a little book that dates all the way back to the first century. It’s called the *Didache*, a book of instructions for new Christians. This book, a catechism, taught new believers what they should believe and how they should worship. Guess what? Included in the *Didache* is the Lord’s Prayer, all of it even the last portion which we are examining this morning. It appears that this ending, very similar to the one we use today, was added to help new Christians memorize the Lord’s Prayer and recite it when they gathered together for worship. And to be perfectly honest that makes a lot of sense. Ending the Lord’s Prayer with “lead us not into temptation is rather abrupt.” It feels like something needs to be added, something to sum up and celebrate what has already been stated. Gradually, I suspect this addition, wherever it came from, was accepted as a part of the original and then added to later editions of the New Testament manuscripts.

So, should we accept this ending to the Lord’s Prayer and continue to use it, or should we cast it aside? And if we decide to keep it, are there some things in this portion of the Lord’s Prayer which are true to the Scriptures and which can even inspire us when we address our heavenly Father? I think there are and I would like to share them with you. First of all, after the preposition “for,” the word “thine” is used. Most of the time it is not capitalized, but perhaps it should be because this antiquated word is actually referring to God. The Lord’s Prayer begins by addressing the Lord and it ends the same way. Not only that, this ending further amplifies that part of the Lord’s Prayer where Jesus tells us to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.” In other words we are to honor and reverence the Lord when we speak to Him. This is precisely what is taking place when we pray this last portion of the Lord’s Prayer. We are honoring Him in three distinctly different ways.

First, “*for thine is the kingdom*.” Remember during that second sermon on the Lord’s Prayer when we were encouraged to pray, “Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth even as it is in heaven?” When we say, “for thine is the kingdom,” we’re actually praying that same prayer and moreover we’re acknowledging that God is indeed the ruler of His kingdom, both in heaven and on earth. In the ancient world, gods tended to rule over smaller domains. They were regional deities. They might be in charge of a country like Babylon or Egypt, but not over all the earth. They had boundaries and they were supposed to live within them. The Jewish people were among the first to discover that the Lord governs the entire universe. Psalm 24:1 declares, “The earth is the LORD’S and fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.”

Second, “*for thine is the kingdom and the power*.” When I was in seminary they taught us three great big theological words, “omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent.” Each of them referred to God. He was “omnipresent,” always in touch with His creation. He was “omniscient,” knowing everything that was going on. He was “omnipotent,” He was all powerful. We serve a God who possesses an unlimited ability to do whatever He wishes. After all, He created the universe and that was no small undertaking. As Psalm 19:1 reminds us, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handwork.” This concluding part of the Lord’s Prayer reminds us of God’s strength and power.

 Third, “*for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory*.” Yes, God is glorious. Literally the word “glory” means “weight.” In the ancient world it referred to the idea that a king’s esteem and prestige could be determined by how much treasure he possessed. If he possessed tons and tons of gold, for example, he was considered to be very glorious. Solomon was that kind of a king. He even sat on an ivory throne overlaid with gold. Because gold reflects light, it probably had a certain glow about it. Both the throne and the king were glorious, but even more so is our Lord, our heavenly Father. He too sits on a throne, a heavenly throne and both He and it are far more glorious that anything we might imagine. If you don’t believe me, read chapter 4 in the book of Revelation. It depicts a glorious heavenly Father ruling and reigning over His kingdom with power and with glory, just as we are instructed to pray in this final portion of the Lord’s Prayer.

There are also those two last words, “forever” and “amen.” Our God is eternal. In the book of Revelation He is described as the alpha and the omega. He has no beginning and no end. We don’t have to worry about a God whose kingdom, power and glory are limited. We can depend upon Him and because of that we can say “Amen,” let it be so. That’s what the word “amen” means, “Let it be so because we are total agreement with what has just said.”

Well, it looks like we have escaped the “begats.” There’s a lot more in this final sentence of the Lord’s Prayer that most of us would probably ever imagine. It is truly a fitting conclusion to the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. But is there anything else, some Biblical source from which this final declaration of praise could have been derived? There is! It’s the same passage of Scripture that was read earlier in the service. It is a prayer that King David prayed, a prayer of thanksgiving. The people of Israel had been generous. They had given all of the building materials that would be needed for the construction of the temple in Jerusalem, the temple that Solomon, David’s son, would build. David was in a celebrative mood and it’s reflected in his prayer. In verse 13 he said, “Now our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.” He also said something else in verse 11 about God that may sound somewhat familiar, “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is Yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; You are exalted as head over all.”

I can’t help but wonder if those who inserted these final words in the Lord’s Prayer were not inspired by this passage of Scripture in the Old Testament as well as perhaps a gentle nudge from the Holy Spirit. For you see, God has inspired the Bible, filling it with His presence, perhaps including every now and then a word or phrase that needed to be added. In any case, how could we ever repeat the Lord’s Prayer without saying, “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.”

Looking for an illustration that would properly sum up this series of sermons on the Lord’s Prayer, I began taking a second look through all of my books on prayer. Finally I came across Elmer Towns’ book, *Praying the Lord’s Prayer for Spiritual Breakthrough.* Opening it up, I read about a meeting that took place in Seoul, South Korea. Dr. Towns was having breakfast with Dr. Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world’s largest Christian congregation. During that meeting, Dr. Towns asked, “How would you advise me to be more effective in prayer?” This is what Dr. Cho said, “Each day I pray the rounds. Like a runner who jogs around and around a race track to get physically fit, I pray the rounds several times each day.” Now you may not know the spiritual significance of what it means to “pray the rounds,” but Dr. Towns did. Pastor Cho was talking about praying the Lord’s Prayer each morning and more than once, several times over in fact, so that different parts of the prayer could be emphasized each time. Then Dr. Cho added, “I believe when a person sincerely prays the Lord’s Prayer each day, that person has covered the basic ways to worship God, and the basic ways to grow and protect his or her spiritual life.” He went on to say that the Lord’s Prayer covers every kind of petition that we should offer unto the Lord. He added that it also serves the as the beginning point for our own personal prayer lives, a prayer life that for Dr. Cho, that was two hours in length each day. Personally, I think that’s pretty good advice for each and every one of us.

For six weeks we have been examining the Lord’s Prayer, the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray, the prayer that was to serve as a model for our own prayers, the prayer that has been prayed by God’s people for nearly two thousand years. Hopefully each of us has gained a greater understanding and a greater appreciation for the way in which Jesus taught us to pray. Hopefully our lives have also been enriched and strengthened spiritually as we incorporate this prayer into our own personal prayer lives. May it become the kind of prayer that ushers us into the presence of the Lord as we joyously declare, “For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.” With all of that in mind, I think the time has come for us to stand and pray this prayer together.