

The Lord's Prayer
The Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory
Matthew 6:13
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Well, this morning, we come to the end of our study of the Lord's Prayer. For the last time as we make our way through the Sermon on the Mount, I want us to read this magnificent prayer together. Matthew 6:9.

“Pray, then, in this way (our Lord says): ‘Our Father Who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’”

In this remarkable prayer, as we have seen, our Lord gave us a model that our prayers should follow. It's a simple prayer composed of three parts. There is, first of all, a preface: “Our Father who is in heaven...” That preface lays out for us the attitudes in which we are to approach God in prayer. The word ‘our’ reminds us that we come to God as a member of a family and not simply as a loner. ‘Father’ reminds us that we come as a child to his father. ‘Who is in heaven’ tempers that by reminding us that our Father is not a normal father. Our Father is the King of the universe. And therefore, we pray as a subject of a king.

The second part of this prayer is the petitions. They identify for us six categories of prayer - six kinds of requests that should come from our lips and our hearts. Jesus here teaches us to pray, first of all, for the glory of God: “Hallowed be Your name.” ‘God, may You and everything connected with You be set apart and treated as holy.’ Our second prayer is for the kingdom of God: “Your kingdom come.” We’re praying for the spiritual kingdom over which Christ rules – that more hearts would come under His rule; that others would come to faith in Christ in other words. And for those of us who are already in Christ, we’re praying that His rule would expand even in our own hearts and lives into unconquered territories of our souls. And for the physical kingdom, we’re praying that that would soon come - His kingdom on earth. The third thing we’re taught to pray for here is the will of God: “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” It’s a prayer to say: ‘God, help me to accept Your sovereign will, Your providence, what You

bring into my life, but even more so help me to obey Your revealed will as it's contained on the pages of Scripture.'

We're to pray for the needs of this life: "Give us this day our daily bread." We're to pray for everything needed to sustain life in this world. Fifthly, we're to pray for the confession of sin: "Forgive us our debts..." This is not renewed justification. As our Lord taught us, we only need one spiritual bath, one ultimate forgiveness at the courtroom of God's justice. This is forgiveness day in and day out - no longer in the courtroom of God's justice, but now in the Father's house as we sin against our Father and need the communion we enjoy with Him to be restored. And then there's the pursuit of holiness. As we've discovered, this last request really has two parts. It is a prayer for spiritual protection: "Lead us not into temptation." Don't let us be put in any circumstance in which we'll fall and give in to sin. And if we do, don't let us linger there but pull us out. And ultimately, deliver us from the evil one and all of his influences. And that is really a prayer for personal holiness.

Now today I want us to look at the third part of this prayer, the conclusion. Look at verse 13: "'For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'" Now regardless of what version of the Scriptures you have with you, you probably have that verse footnoted in some way. If you'll look in the margin of your Bible or in the center, you'll see some sort of footnote. In the New American Standard, this is what they've written: "This clause not found in the early manuscripts (or in the earliest manuscripts)." This is one of those few places in Scripture where we can't be absolutely certain if the author wrote these words or not. And by the way, let me just say you can rest in confidence because between the text of Scripture in our translations and the footnotes in the margins, you have the Word of God. Nothing is excluded. There are no questions that scholars have that are not somewhere, in the text you hold, answered or addressed. But we can't be absolutely sure if our Lord spoke these words or if Matthew recorded them here or not. The earliest manuscripts, as they say, don't include this conclusion. And Luke, who records a version of the Lord's Prayer from a few months after the Sermon on the Mount, doesn't include a conclusion at all.

On the other hand, the majority of the manuscripts we have, although they're later ones, do include this conclusion. And here's a fascinating detail. The earliest, outside of Scripture, Christian document that we possess comes from the end of the first century. It's called the Didache. So this would have been when the apostles were still living, at least the apostle John. And in the Didache you have a record of the Lord's Prayer as we have here, and it ends with a conclusion very similar to this one.

Now I'm not gonna lead you through all of the textual arguments and evidence. Let me just summarize it this way. When you weigh the evidence, it is not likely that these words

were in the original document Matthew wrote. Instead, I think this conclusion was probably added very early and was actually used in the first century churches. That's because they were initially, many of them, Jewish churches. And the Jews ended their prayers with some sort of doxology, some sort of conclusion. They would not have wanted to end this prayer: "Deliver us from evil." And so they would have, in the public worship of God's people, added some sort of a conclusion or doxology.

Now, all of that said, I still think it is legitimate for us to study this conclusion and even for us to use it in our prayers for several reasons. First of all, because it may be original – we just don't know for sure. Secondly, it is biblical for our prayers to have a conclusion, and many of the biblical prayers do. And thirdly, although the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer here may not be original in this place, the words, the concepts and the ideas do occur at other places in Scripture, and therefore are inspired concepts.

I'll give you several examples as we go along. Let me give you one as we begin. This is from Revelation 5:13-14. Listen carefully. There's no question about whether or not these words are in the inspired text of the New Testament:

And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them (so all of intelligent creation), I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

So the content, the ideas, the concepts in the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 clearly do appear in other places in the Scripture, and therefore are a legitimate way for us to end this prayer and our prayers.

Now what can we learn from the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer? Well, first of all, it reminds us that praise is a crucial part of our prayers. This is a doxology. That simply means words of glory or words of exultation. It is a way to give praise to God for who He is and what He has accomplished, and that is an important part of our prayers as well. We are everywhere told to praise God.

This conclusion also reinforces our prayers with arguments. Notice how the conclusion begins in verse 13, the little word 'for.' It's the Greek word 'because.' So with these words, we are saying, "God, we want You to do what we've asked You to do for these reasons." Here are arguments to give to God as to why we have asked Him to do what we've asked Him and why we expect that He will. It's not because of our own worthiness. It's not because we deserve to be heard. The basis for our arguments is found only in God, in His character, in what is true about Him.

There's another benefit to this conclusion, and that is it encourages us to pray. What most encourages us to pray? Well, I think believing that God is willing to hear and answer our prayers encourages us to pray, and that is encouraged in the preface. We know God is willing to hear our prayers because He is our Father. But the other thing that encourages us to pray is believing not only that God is willing, but believing that God is able to hear and answer our prayers, and that is encouraged in the conclusion.

Now look again at verse 13. "For Yours is..." That expression speaks of possession. It is an affirmation that these things inherently belong to God and to God alone. We are saying, "God, to You belongs these things. They are Yours by right." The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer provides us with three arguments for God to hear and to answer our prayers, and those arguments are based solely on things that belong to God. Let's look at those arguments together. Here's why God should hear and does hear and answer our prayers. First of all, God alone has the sovereign right to rule. "For Yours is the kingdom..." To God and to God alone belongs the sovereign right to decide whatever happens. The word 'kingdom' can refer to the sphere or the realm over which a king rules. We speak of the kingdom of Jordan or the kingdom of Narnia. But here and in other places, the word 'kingdom' doesn't refer to the realm or the sphere of a king's rule, but to the reality of his rule, to his kingship or his lordship. It refers to the authority or the right to rule. So "Yours is the kingdom" then is a joyful affirmation of God's absolute sovereignty. Yours is the right to rule.

This is a note that is sounded throughout the Scripture. Psalm 103:19, "The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all." Psalm 115:3, "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." Nebuchadnezzar, in those famous words at the end of Daniel 4, puts it this way: "[God] does according to His will in the host of heaven (that is, among the armies of heaven) and (He does according to His will) among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" A.W. Pink, commenting on the reality that God's sovereign rule cannot be threatened, writes this. Listen carefully to Pink: "Were all the denizens of heaven and all the inhabitants of earth to combine in open revolt against Him..." Stop there and think for a moment. Pink is saying if, in a moment's time, all of the angels, Satan and his demons, and every human being on this planet along with all who have ever lived or ever will live – if in one moment of time, they all combined together to rebel against God, listen to what Pink writes: "...it would cause God no uneasiness. It would have less effect upon His eternal, unassailable throne than the spray of the Mediterranean's waves has upon the towering rocks of Gibraltar." As Paul puts it in Ephesians 1:11, "God works all things after the counsel of His own will..."

Now it is hard for us living in a republic to appreciate sovereignty. John Locke's idea that government is founded on a social contract gave birth to the American idea of the consent

of the governed. In other words, we the people are the real rulers, and we agree to surrender some of our rights to the government in order to have certain benefits like law and order. That's why our founding documents speak of a government "of the people, by the people and for the people." And that's wonderful for us and the freedoms we enjoy, but that's not what God's rule is like. He doesn't rule by the consent of the governed. As R.C. Sproul puts it, "His reign extends over me whether I voted for Him or not." He has absolute, unquestioned sovereignty over everything.

Now why would we say this at the end of a prayer? It's because there is a great encouragement to pray in this expression. There is absolutely nothing in this universe that God doesn't have the complete and comprehensive right to rule. And that means that there is nothing that you can bring before God in prayer that isn't under His authority, under His right to rule, under His sovereignty, under His control. So there's nothing you can't ask Him about because in the end, it's His. It belongs to Him. He has control of it and He can decide how it should work out. And so we come to God then, saying, "Yours is the kingdom..." "Yours is the sovereign right to rule. So do what pleases You in regard to what I have asked."

There's a second argument for God to answer our prayers in this conclusion. God alone has the unlimited power to act. "For Yours is the power..." To God and to God alone belongs the inherent power to do whatever He decides to do. Psalm 62:11 says, "Once God has spoken; twice I have heard Him say this: that power belongs to God." It's His. Power is solely God's possession. Stephen Charnock, who wrote the wonderful book on 'The Existence and Attributes of God', says this, "As God's essence is immense not to be confined in place, as it is eternal not to be measured in time, so it is almighty not to be limited in regard of action." Do you understand that God has the power to do everything that He determined to do? Psalm 115:3, "But our God is in the heavens; and He does whatever He pleases." When God decides to do something, there is nothing that can stand in His way of accomplishing it.

But God not only has the power to do everything He's determined to do, God has the power to do everything. Jeremiah 32:26. And you understand when I say He has the power to do everything, I mean within the boundaries of His own nature. God's not going to do something contrary to His nature. But if it fits His nature, He has the power to do all things. Jeremiah 32:26-27.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, (listen to this) saying,
(here's God talking) "Behold, I am [Yahweh], the God of all flesh; is
anything too difficult for Me?"

You know, I feel sorry for those folks who even profess to be Christians and they worry and struggle with some of the miracles in the Bible. You know, it's like, "Well, I don't

know, six days...and resurrection..." Listen, if there is a God and if He's the God of all flesh, then there is nothing too difficult for Him. You settle the issue of whether or not God exists and you've settled everything else.

God has the power to do everything He determines to do. God has the power to do all things. Here's one. God has the power to do what He chooses not to do. I love what John the Baptist says in Matthew 3:9. He says, "And do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father;' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham." God didn't choose to do that, but the point is God can do even what He chooses not to do. If it's in keeping with His nature, God and God alone has the power to act.

Do you understand that your power and my power, to whatever extent we have any, is derived from God? The fact that you can move your arm, that you can move your head, that you will get up and walk out of here at some point – that power is ultimately borrowed from God. Paul said to the Athenians in Acts chapter 17, "For in God we live and move and have our being..." Again, Pink writes, "Not a creature in the entire universe has an atom of power except what God delegates. But God's power is different – it is not acquired nor does it depend upon any recognition by any other authority. It belongs to Him inherently. To God belongs the power."

You see, only God can cause His name to be hallowed. Only He can ensure that His kingdom comes and that His will is done. Only God can give us our daily bread, forgive our sins, protect us spiritually from harm and cause us to grow in holiness. That's why we ask Him. That's why we pray these things – because "Yours is the power" and not mine.

Sometimes we ask God for hard things, things that seem to us to be almost impossible to be accomplished – things like the salvation of someone that we know and love but who seems cold and hard-hearted and rebellious, the provision of a job in terrible financial times, the provision for a spouse when it doesn't seem likely, or the strength to overcome a habit or a temptation. We pray those things but, frankly, sometimes it seems like they're impossible. Understand this. There is no limit to God's power. He can do everything He decides to do. Sometimes it's hard for us to see how God can cause His name to be honored in certain situations. It seems unlikely to us that in the lives of some people His will will ever be done. Sometimes we find ourselves in desperate situations where we wonder if He can really meet our physical needs. Or perhaps we've sinned so horribly that we wonder if even God can forgive us. Or maybe we feel spiritually vulnerable, exposed and weak, and we wonder if we'll ever really be able to stand, if we'll ever really be truly holy. Listen. When we pray "Yours is the power," we are reminding ourselves and we are reminding God that to Him alone belongs the inherent power to do

anything He chooses to do. “Is there anything (God says) too difficult for Me?” Yours is the power.

The third argument for God’s answering our prayers is that God alone is the ultimate reason to live. “For Yours is the glory...” To God and to God alone belongs the sole reason to exist for everything that is. Romans 11:36 says, “For from Him (that is, God made or created all things) and through Him (that is, God sustains all things that He made) and to Him (that is, God is the end or the goal or the purpose for which all things exist)...To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” God’s glory is the ultimate end of everything.

The word ‘glory’ refers to a couple of things in Scripture. It refers to the inherent, internal weightiness or majesty or character of God. God is weighty. The word ‘glory’ actually means heavy. God has a weighty character. He is inherently full of glory. But ‘glory’ is also used to describe the honor and the praise that intelligent beings ascribe to God in light of who He is. This is what we mean when we speak of giving God glory or bringing glory to God or glorifying God. We’re not adding something to God. We’re simply acknowledging and extolling and praising what is already true about the weighty character of God.

In this conclusion, we are acknowledging that only God deserves glory; that is, to be praised and extolled. And we are asking God to answer our prayers not for our sake, but for the sake of His own name and His own glory. If you’ve never read or you don’t remember reading in recent times Daniel chapter 9, I encourage you to read it at some point. It’s a magnificent prayer of Daniel, but listen to how he ends it. Daniel 9:19, “O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! (Now why? On what basis is Daniel arguing for this? Here’s why.) Listen and take action! For (because) Your own [name]sake, O my God (is on the line. Do it because of Your glory, for Your own namesake), do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” We ask God to answer our prayers for the sake of His own glory. And we ask God to answer our prayers in such a way that He alone receives the glory.

When the great composer Johann Sebastian Bach completed each of his works, he took and wrote at the bottom of each page three initials: ‘SDG’. It stood for the Latin phrase ‘soli Deo gloria’ (glory to God alone). It was a reminder to him and to us that we don’t exist to promote our own glory. We exist to promote God’s glory. And every time we pray these words “Yours is the glory,” this is what we’re saying, “Father, You alone deserve all the glory because You are glorious in Your person. So however You may choose to answer my prayers, please answer them in such a way as to bring Yourself the greatest possible glory.” So we end where we began. We began with “Hallowed be Your name” and we end with “To You alone, God, be the glory.”

Now notice verse 13 again. “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.” God’s kingdom, His rule and His power and His glory are not temporary. Literally, they are ‘into the ages.’ God deserves to have these things that belong to Him recognized and praised generation after generation and age after age into eternity. And then the prayer ends with a familiar word ‘amen’ or ‘amen’ if you’re more high church. I grew up in Southern Baptist churches where if the pastor said something you liked, you said ‘amen.’ I never really understood why, and frankly I don’t think most of the men who said ‘amen’ understood either. But ‘amen’ is actually the Hebrew word ‘amen.’ By the way, the word occurs in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. It actually occurs more frequently in the New Testament than it does the Old. It’s a Hebrew word that’s just brought over into Greek, and now we’ve brought it over into English. The word was primarily the congregation’s affirmation that what had just been said was certain and true. So in Scripture, it often comes at the end of prayers. For example, 1Chronicles 16:36, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting. Then all the people said, ‘Amen...’” It expresses both affirmation, what he just prayed is true or I want it to be true (let it be so), or it expresses assurance, what he just prayed or what I have just prayed is possible because of the God we serve. God is able to do what I have just asked Him to do. And so it’s, “Let it be so. And if God wills, it will be so.” So when we or someone else reaches the end of their prayer, we follow both the Old Testament and the New Testament model in saying ‘Amen.’ Let it be so. And if God wills it to be so, it will be so.

Now I want you to turn with me to 1Chronicles chapter 29, because here’s where this conclusion that we’ve just studied together ultimately comes from. In 1 Chronicles 29 in response to David’s request, the people brought their offerings for the construction of the temple. You remember that David would not be allowed to construct, that Solomon would, but they brought their offerings while David was still living. And when the offerings had been collected, David didn’t thank the people for their generosity; instead, he thanks God. First Chronicles 29, look at verse 10.

So David blessed Yahweh in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, “Blessed are You, O Yahweh God of Israel our Father, forever and ever. (Now watch this.) Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion (or the kingdom), O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone. Now therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name.”

That's the background for what we have just studied together. And when we finish our prayers with anything similar to what we have studied in the conclusion of Matthew 6, this is what we're expressing, "To You and to You alone, O God, belongs the sovereign right to rule. To You and to You alone, O God, belongs the power to act, the unlimited power to do whatever You choose to do. And to You and to You alone, O God, belongs the reason that I and everything else exists. And what I'm asking from You now, ultimately I want You to do for Your sake."

Now I want to finish our time together this morning by giving you some practical steps in light of the last couple of months' study of the Lord's Prayer. Let me give you some very practical things I would urge you to do. We don't want to just be hearers of the word. We want to be doers of the word. So what can you do? Here are some practical suggestions. Number one: schedule deliberate times each day to pray. Let me just guarantee you something. If you don't schedule time to pray, you won't. Schedule deliberate times each day to pray. We began this series by looking at the fact that this has historically been true of both saints in the Scripture and saints throughout history. Maybe you follow John Calvin's suggestion in *The Institutes*. "Pray within an hour of waking. Pray when you begin your work day or your school day. Pray before each meal. And then pray before bed." Whatever it is, schedule deliberate time to pray.

Number two: at least one of those times each day, follow the pattern of the Lord's Prayer, flowing through each of the six categories we've studied together. Our Lord said: "Pray, then, in this way..." so we ought to practice praying in this way. I would encourage you to one time each day flow through the Lord's Prayer – not just repeating the words, but rehearsing what you've learned from each of these petitions.

Number three: schedule at least once a week to pray with other Christians. Remember, this prayer is plural. "Our Father...give us...forgive us...lead us..." So I encourage you at least once a week to pray with other Christians. Maybe it's your roommate or your spouse or your family or your ministry partner, whatever; but schedule time at least once a week to pray with another Christian.

Number four: commit to praying faithfully for the people in your family and in your church family. We're supposed to lift our eyes in prayer beyond ourselves – that's one of the great lessons of the Lord's Prayer – to God and to others. So pray for others. You can pick up one of the prayer request lists that are out there each week and pray through those needs. However you do it, commit to praying for others.

Let me encourage you. Our Lord said: "Pray, then, in this way..." So don't leave here today without having made some deliberate plans to incorporate what we've studied into your life this week and in coming weeks. Don't be merely a hearer of the word and not a doer of the word. Let's pray together.

Our Father, we are so grateful that You were willing to offer Your Son, and that He was willing to offer Himself as a guilt offering in our place. We were the ones who deserved the stroke, but He's the One who received it. Father, we thank You that it pleased You to crush Him so that You could render Him as a guilt offering for us. We thank You and we bless You, O God, for what You have done in Christ. We thank You for who You are, even as we've been reminded today. Lord, as we pray, remind us that "Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever." And we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.