

Teach Us To Pray: Yours Is The Kingdom

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Well, as we conclude our study of the Lord's Prayer, it's important to clarify that this doxology was almost certainly not originally taught to the disciples by Jesus. And, there are a number of reasons why I say that.

- **First**, the earliest and best New Testament manuscripts don't include it. Rather, it "appears not to have been added before the late second century."¹
- **Second**, you can't find it "in the earliest Christian writers either."²
- **Finally**, it seems altogether likely that it was a later insertion by Christians coming from a Jewish background since it was the common tradition there to end all prayers with a statement of doxology.³

I tell you all this because it's important that we know (as Protestant Christians, as those who believe that the Bible is the authoritative word of God) what is inspired and what isn't inspired—what is and isn't Scripture. Thus, know that this doxology wasn't originally part of Matthew or Luke's record of Christ's teaching about prayer. Friends, it is a human addition to the prayer.

This is where you likely get ornery and ask me why we've recited this together for the last five weeks. And, it's right to ask that. We should ask ourselves whether or not this doxology should be recited at all. Here are two reasons that I believe we *should* include it and even study it today.

First, making statements of praise, like this one, is a thoroughly biblical thing for Christians to do. Doxological statements show-up all over the pages of Scripture, even if one doesn't appear here. Praising God, because he is great, is a good thing. We should do it often, more than we naturally do.

¹ D. A. Carson, *Jesus's Sermon on the Mount and His Confrontation with the World*, 93.

² Kent Hughes, "Lord's Prayer: For Thine Is The Kingdom", preached November 18, 1984.

³ N. T. Wright, *The Lord and His Prayer*, 81.

And **second**, when we consider how Jesus just taught us to pray and the gospel which is revealed in this model prayer, we should spontaneously break into praise. It's the right response. It's what the prayer should produce in us.

Thus, this morning, we're going to study this extrabiblical doxology together and see what it has to teach us about the kingdom, power, and glory of God.

Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from the evil one.

[For, yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]

As we dig in here, we will find two faces when it comes to God's kingdom and God's power and God's glory. (1st) We'll find **the face we expect** when we think about kingdoms and power and glory; we'll find the face of a ruler, the face of a lion. However, (2nd) We'll find **the face we don't expect** when it comes to such things; we'll find the face of a martyr, the face of a lamb.

And, friends, what we're going to see is that the gospel of Jesus Christ always keeps these faces together. Therefore, as his followers, we must not separate the two. We lose the gospel if we separate them. We lose the reason for praise and celebration when we separate them. The Lion and the Lamb must always go together.

Let's look at each to see why.

1. The face we expect, the Lion.

With a doxology like this one, we immediately tend to think of Christ coming in power as the judge of all things. And, we should think of it. The Bible is very clear about the power of God at the second advent of Christ Jesus. A day is approaching when God's heavenly kingdom will invade the earth and when all people will bow before the Lord Jesus.

- **Philippians 2:9-11**—*Therefore God exalted [Christ Jesus] to the highest place / and gave him the name that is above every name, / that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, / in heaven and on earth and under the earth, / and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, / to the glory of God the Father. (A glorious ruler!)*
- **Romans 14:10-12**—*We will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." Each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. (A powerful judge!)*

This is what we expect, whenever we talk of kingdoms and power and glory. It's natural for us to think in these kinds of ways. It's human to think like this.

Right now we're in the middle of the runup to another presidential election. (Have you noticed? Probably not.) Anyway, it's in such seasons that our perceptions about power and what makes for a good leader are on full display. It's at these times that our natural human views about power and glory go on parade.

Just think about it. Just think about how the various political candidates speak about their leadership or about the leadership of others. Here are three passages taken from three separate campaign websites. Listen to how they fashion their leadership in terms of power and success and glory.

(Honestly, outside of a few details, it's almost impossible to tell one candidate from another when you avoid using names and gender pronouns.)

- **Candidate One**—“[has] conducted groundbreaking research...[and] is widely credited for [displaying] original thinking, political courage, and relentless persistence.”
- **Candidate Two**—“is the very definition of the American success story, setting the standard of excellence...has always dreamed big and pushed the boundaries of what is possible.”
- **Candidate Three**—“will be a president ready to pick up the pieces of our divided nation, gather up an American majority that is hungry for change, and act to ensure that our future is better than our past.”

Groundbreaking, original, relentless! Success, excellence, boundary pushing! Healing, consensus building, history changing! This is what they say of themselves *because* this is what we expect and want to hear. *Isn't it?!*

The *Netflix* series *The Crown* follows the reign of England's Queen Elizabeth from her earliest days to the present. And, it paints a fascinating portrait.

One of the things I find most fascinating is how Elizabeth is constantly forced to be a symbol for the English people. She cannot just be a woman or wife or mother. She must be queen above all. She is forced to project stability in times of instability. She is to represent English power in times of danger. She is to exude England's glory in public ceremony. She can never just be herself. *It's really very sad!*

We expect a lion of a leader. We want a powerful champion to represent us—to go before us. Don't we? It seems we want someone who is essentially invincible. We don't want flaws. We don't want a hint of weakness. We demand great strength and intelligence and courage in our leaders. Otherwise, we crucify them.

And in one sense, we should expect such traits, just not in a *mere* human being. To expect this from a president or king or spouse would be to place a great weight upon him or her, a weight they cannot possibly bear. Only God can carry the weight of such expectations. Only Jesus can build a kingdom and lead with

flawless power and deliver such glory. *Only God can be the Lion we expect and want!*

I love the Old Testament history of Gideon. He was raised-up to lead Israel during one of its darkest periods. And, he wasn't a particularly powerful hero-leader. In fact, he constantly needs reassurance from God that he's going to be successful and victorious. And so, it's really easy to get annoyed with Gideon during the course of the narrative because of his weaknesses.

But, you see, that's kind of the whole point. God raises up the weakest leaders, like Gideon, to save his people. The Lord God always chooses flawed people to lead for two reasons—(1st) because there's no other kind and (2nd) to focus sole attention on his saving power. God is the only one who has the ability to save. That's the point of Gideon's story. If it were left up to Gideon, Israel would be in tremendous trouble. *But it's not.* God rescues Israel thru Gideon's weakness. You see, it's his kingdom; it's his power; and, it's his glory. After the Israelites are free, they have no one else to thank and praise and honor but God alone.

This is where we find ourselves when we come to the end of the Lord's Prayer; isn't it?! We recognize that the kingdom is God's; that the power to deliver is God's; and, that the glory is God's. We realize that the Lord alone deserves to be praised, and, therefore, we realize how right it is to sing-out:

Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever!

It's the right response when we approach God as ruler, when we approach him as the lion that he is. In fact, it's the required response when confronted with royalty; it's the demanded response when approaching a sovereign ruler.

In the ancient world, you had to approach the ruler with very specific gestures of respect and use very specific titles showing reverence. This is still true in our time to a lesser extent; but, in ancient times, to disrespect or insult a king could land you in prison or on the executioner's block. You'd be safer petting a ferocious lioness than disrespecting an ancient emperor.

In their power, they demanded respect and honor and reverence!

And, this is the very reason that in other religions you bring worship and honor to their gods—because they demand it, because if you don't then you'll find yourself on the wrong side of their power.

And, this brings us to our second point and the difference between those gods and the God we find in Jesus Christ. It brings us to...

2. The face we don't expect, the Lamb.

Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus taught, practiced, and revealed a new and radical power. Rather than coming like most Jews expected the Messiah to come (as a powerful king who would defeat Israel's enemies), Jesus came as a meek rabbi who used his power to feed the hungry, to heal the sick, and to love the unlovable. This was a radical and new show of power. *And friends—make no mistake about it—it was and still is God's preferred show of power.*

Think about it for a second. Think about something as simple as his command that we would turn the other cheek. In the wisdom of the world, this is the epitome of weakness. This is the epitome of powerlessness...*or is it?*

Perhaps, it points us to a power greater than any earthly power. Just maybe, it points to the very power of God in us. The power of the Lamb in us!

While talking about the power of non-violence, about turning the other cheek, Martin Luther King Jr. rightly grounded its power in the person and work of Jesus—in the ἀγάπη love of Christ. Here's what Dr. King said.

The Greek language comes...with another word and it is agape. Agape is understanding, creative, redemptive good will for all men. Biblical theologians would say it is the love of God working in the minds of men. It is an overflowing love, which seeks nothing in return. And when you come to love on this level you begin to love men not because they are likable, not because they do things that attract us, but because God loves them....⁴

This is the very power of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ—seen most clearly on the cross of Calvary. The cross was our Triune God's ultimate show of his power, of his ἀγάπη love. It was the proverbial other cheek turned. That's where

⁴ Martin Luther King Jr., *The Power of Nonviolence*, 2. You can read it in its entirety [here](#).

God's love defeated the power of death and the devil—not with military might and great armies but with a love offering, with an ἀγάπη sacrifice.

This is the very power which transformed you, if you're a follower of Christ, from God's enemy into God's friend. And, you're even more than a friend of God; you're his beloved child.

And, this changes the doxology at the end of this prayer. Doesn't it?

- We no longer say it in fear of God's power.

- We no longer recite it as some obligation.

- We no longer approach the Lord God with any uncertainty about whether or not we'll find acceptance or love. No! No! No!

Because of the power of God's love in Jesus Christ, we can sing this doxology knowing that “through faith in [Jesus] we may enter God's presence with boldness and confidence” (Ephesians 3:12) and may “exult in the hope of the glory of God” because we're heirs in his kingdom (Romans 5:2).

Friends, praise the Lord for the power of the love of the Lamb—Jesus Christ. For, his perfect love has conquered and driven out all fear (1 John 4:18).