

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.”

So Christ has taught us to pray. He has, in these past Sundays, folded our hands for us and said, “here, my children, is how you should talk to God – as dear children ask their dear father.”

These are the things you ought to ask of God, that his name, his Word, be given honor in your lives by your words and by your actions. The world is watching, show them what your God means to you. And that his kingdom may rule in your hearts and in the hearts of others, that his law- and gospel-will may have its way in your life as it also has its way in heaven. Now also look to your father for your daily bread, for all the things you need to make it down the pilgrim path toward home. Ask your father to remind you and give to you every day the forgiveness Christ has already won for you on the cross and to pass that pardon on to others. Hold out your empty hands for help in temptation and for deliverance from every evil. This is the life of the Christian in its entirety. This is everything we are and everything we could need or want.

And now as we began this prayer with our Father, so we finish it with our Father. **“For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.”**

This doxology as it's called, this hymn of praise, echoes the words of King David from 1 Chronicles. As David prepared for his son Solomon to ascend the throne and to build the temple of the Lord, David wrapped up all the ups and downs of his own life with God in this grand doxology. We do the same as we close out the Lord's prayer.

“Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.”

And then often...too often...we finish with only a half-hearted “Amen.” Nevermind the times we fail to mean what we pray, we'll talk about that later. But we say, “God yours is entirely the kingdom and the power and the glory for all time” and then finish with “Amen”, a word that means “this is most certainly true.” “this is undeniable fact.” “this is unquestionable.” We say it, but then open our eyes, we unfold our hands, and we look around at this world and perhaps think, “yes, but everything we see in life contradicts this prayer.” God's name is slandered on every side. His kingdom and rule is resisted. His will is ignored. We seem to think that the dark powers are winning. We read the papers, watch the news, feel the winds of war. We worry about jobs, about nest eggs going up in smoke. And we watch wickedness parade across the landscape of earth and it doesn't seem that the song of the angels was accurate, that **“the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.”**

It's true that outwardly these appear to be contradictions, but that's looking with the wrong eyes. The Bible says that **“faith is being sure of what we hope for,”** trust in things that have not yet happened. And certain of things we do not yet see. We see some of these things by faith, like the kingdom, the power and the glory. These we all see by faith even though they have not yet happened. Here in this prayer, in this grand doxology, we are pointed away from the earthly, away from ourselves, past human notions of power and glory, beyond the tower of Babel, beyond our own troubled hearts and up to the glories of heaven that are yet to come.

“Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory.” This is more important than ever when things are at their worst in your life. When it seems that there is no way out, then it is most important of all to thank and praise and glorify God. To say to God, “I have no time for you now because of the problems I have to fix first,” is to go the wrong direction. Those problems aren't going to let up. Sure you may fix one, but another will take its place. The only help for both here and eternity is found in the comfort of our God. Because there we see what is important, what matters, the things that are eternal. We see what is truly great, and what is truly small, that the greatest of all is our Father who sent his Son and the smallest things of all, well, that would be you and me. And the thousand other small things from which Christ has set us free to pray, **“Our father, who art in heaven.”**

In fact, chains drop from our hearts and clatter to the floor. The dungeon doors fling open to the fresh air of freedom and the sun breaks through the clouds when we trade away one word, the word “Mine” for the word “Thine”, **“for thine is the kingdom.”** All other kingdoms collapse. The empires of history...where are they? Ghost towns. Mad tyrants whose thirst for power has gone unsatisfied and has been their undoing – theirs is not the kingdom. The tycoons and the entertainers, whose fleeting 15 minutes of fame are all used up – theirs is not the kingdom. The countless thousands who hang on to this life by their very fingernails, and only this life – theirs is not the kingdom. You and I who trust in Christ and long for a better country and a lasting city, we know that ours is not the kingdom. But we can only say this by Christ. We really are set free by Jesus when we are *able* to say, “Mine is not the kingdom.” My every achievement and ambition is a castle of cardboard. **“Thine is the kingdom,”** indestructible and unending.

“Thine is the power.” The generals and the politicians, theirs is not the power. The playground bullies and the town gossips, theirs is not the power. Here, dear father, you let me see and understand how powerless I truly am, that it takes only one accident, one illness, one failure, one embarrassing sin to show me how weak and powerless I am. As the old rhyme goes: “Myself I cannot save, myself I cannot keep. But strength in thee I surely have, Whose eyelids never sleep.” **“Thine is the power.”**

And **“Thine is the glory.”** The innovators and inventors whose paths still lead only to the grave, theirs is not the glory. The Oscar winners and the celebrities – theirs is not the glory. The self-righteous who think that they can please God with their feeble actions and earn their own salvation – theirs is not the glory. Instead, the glory belongs to the only one who has done anything worth celebrating, the only thing truly selfless and lasting.

The only way to peace and contentment and eternal rest is not where mine is the glory, but **“it is by grace that you and I have been saved through faith, and this is not from ourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. Therefore God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of Jesus Christ my Savior.”** **“Thine is the glory.”**

“Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory.” Some days it’s hard to believe in heaven, isn’t it? Some days the kingdom and the power and the glory all seem so distant. That’s why in closing this prayer we firmly declare this doxology – like an exclamation point – for all the promises that God has made to us. St. Paul said that all of God’s promises are one big “Yes” in Christ, and that the God-given faith that we have in him is our loud “Amen” to those promises of God. And so we end the Lord’s Prayer with a firm period, not a question mark, with the word “Amen.” Never let that word slide by you, and never forget what you’re saying when you declare, “Amen,” with confidence.

Genesis, chapter 15, says Abram believed God, the first time the word believe is ever used in the Bible, **“Abram believed God and God credited it to him as righteousness.”** That word for believe in the original Hebrew is a form of the word **“Amen.”** It has been taken over into just about every language you can think of almost exactly it stands. We end our creeds and sermons and prayers and hymns with this Hebrew word, **“Amen.”** As I said, it means to be firm, sure, certain. Abram believed the LORD. He was absolutely sure and certain that the promises God made of a coming Savior would come to pass. He believed the Lord, and the Lord credited it to him as righteousness.

So this Amen at the close of the prayer, this faith on our part, “Lord, your promises are sure and certain. I believe them to be firm and certain.” That is the Amen that God chalks up so that Christ’s life is credited as your life, his death as your death, his payment as your payment, his victory over death as your victory over death. And when we pray, **“Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever,”** we only see this to be true by the eyes of a God-given faith. We walk by this “Amen” of faith, not by sight, says the Bible.

It’s like the beautiful stained glass windows in some of world’s great cathedrals. People come from around the world to admire them. Visitors photograph them. Yet, if you walk around the outside of the building on a sunny day, those same windows look dull, grey, monochrome. Unless you know all about stained glass, you wouldn’t know whether those are sooty, dirty panes of glass, or works of art. You don’t see any glory or beauty to them. That’s because you’re looking at them from the wrong side, from the wrong perspective. But when you walk into the sanctuary on a bright sunny day, then all of the blues and greens and yellows and reds blaze forth with the story of our salvation, of Jesus plucking Peter from the deep waters, of Christ Jesus taking upon himself the sin of the world in agony in Gethsemane, of the Good Shepherd cradling to his heart you and me as his helpless lambs. We see it because we now are in it. It’s the same with the kingdom, the power, and the glory. You only get to see it if you’re *in* it. This is why Pontius Pilate simply couldn’t get a handle on a kingdom that is not of this world, **“because the natural man,”** says the Bible, **“does not accept the things of God. They are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**

What you and I by faith understand so easily, how we can trust God for our daily welfare, how we can have a God who loved us enough to die for us, how we can put God first in a life that seems to be filled with nothing but trouble from him, these are all things the world cannot see, but we by faith can.

And by faith we can see the kingdom, the power, and the glory, to see that the kingdom is wherever Jesus is, and that Jesus is wherever his Word and Sacraments are, and that Jesus has said that those who believe this, well, **“behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”** Here this prayer closes and we take it on faith that our heavenly Father has commanded us to pray this way. He has promised to hear us. And it is our joy to believe that all of this is so and to say a hearty Amen.