

Sermon preached at Woodbury Community Church, Woodbury, MN on Sunday, August 7, 2011, by Rev. Brian D. Schulenburg

MATTHEW 6:13b (NASB)

13 '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.]

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: LIVING AS CITIZENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM #26
THE LORD'S PRAYER: GLORY

If you have your Bibles with you in church today and you turn to Matthew 6:13, the vast majority of you might be surprised to see that the traditional ending to the Lord's Prayer isn't found there.

Most NIV Bibles only record the following in Matthew 6:13 -

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Throughout this series we have prayed the Lord's Prayer together on several occasions. Those of you who have grown up in a church may have said the Lord's Prayer in services on hundreds of occasions, not to mention the many times that you have recited this prayer in your personal prayer life. So, it might be a little unsettling not see the great benediction that we have traditionally prayed at the end of this prayer in your Bibles.

To me, the words, "for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen," are some of the most powerful words in Scripture. So, why aren't they in many of our copies of the Bible?

Well, the reason for the omission is that the earliest manuscripts of Matthew 6 do not have these words included, which means, that the phrase that we recite so often in prayer, may not have been uttered by Jesus. Most biblical scholars believe that the phrase was added by Syrian Jewish Christians sometime in the late First or early Second Century. That said I believe that God, in His preservation of the Word, saw to it that this phrase was included as the fitting and proper way for us to conclude prayer.

It was a custom of the Jewish people to end all prayers with a brief doxology. It would have been common, even in the days of Jesus, for prayer to come to an end in such a way. To the Jew, the kingdom, the power and the glory represented God's dominion, His attributes and that which He is due. For us, living in the 21st Century, this great doxology of the faith represents the role that God must play in each and every one of our lives. It is a wonderful way to center our mind on God and his will for our lives.

Before we go into today's lesson, would you pray with me?

Dear Heavenly Father,

We have learned throughout this series that you love us more than the best Daddy on earth could ever love His child. You rule heaven and earth and everything in between. To Your name glory is ascribed. You are to be revered. Your name is holy, set apart as higher than any other. It is to your Son Jesus, that every knee will someday bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

We pray that your kingdom's rule and authority might be present in our lives on earth, in our nation, in our city, in our world, as it is in heaven. We would gladly lay down our "rights" so that Your will might be accomplished in our lives. May we, like the angels who adore You in heaven, gladly let You have your way with us.

This has been a troublesome week in our nation. People are worried about the economy. People are worried about jobs. People are worried about retirement accounts. People are worried about bills. People are worried about so many things. Help us to remember that You delight in providing for our needs on a day-to-day basis. As we ask you to provide for our needs, we ask even more that you would provide for those impacted by devastating famine in the horn of Africa. Give our brothers and sisters their daily bread. Comfort the mothers and fathers who are mourning the loss of one or more children due to unforgiving draught. May humanitarian aid that has been promised reach those who need it most.

Forgive us. Forgive us for so many things. Forgive us for our complacency, our materialism, our jealousy, our pettiness, our lack of forgiveness, our laziness, our worry, and our self-focus. Forgive us for going back to the well of heinous sin, and not going to the living spring that flows from the Living Water, Jesus Christ. Give us strength to forgive those who have sinned against us, remembering how little we deserve your grace, and how much you have lavished upon us.

Lead us not into temptation. Don't let our feet go near a trap set by our ancient adversary that will overwhelm us to the point where we can't say, "No." Help us to remember that everywhere we go, You go too. You will not allow us to be tempted beyond that which we can bear, for You are greater than He that is in the world. Deliver us from the evil one.

For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. This we pray in the matchless name of Jesus Christ, the Lover of our souls – everlasting God. Amen.

There are three things that we declare, when we pray the doxology of the early church.

1) The Kingdom belongs to God.

Elmer Towns says that this means that God has the right to answer prayer in His way.¹ It means that He is the ruler of our life. Think about the times that you pray and ask God for

¹ Elmer Towns, *Praying the Lord's Prayer for Spiritual Breakthrough*, (Ventura: CA: Regal Books, 1997), p. 199.

something in your prayer. It's easy to treat God like a genie in a bottle, expecting Him to respond to our requests in a way that suits our fancy. He is no genie in a bottle. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Praying "for Thine is the kingdom" reminds us that the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. There is a very real battle going on. But God's kingdom is an eternal kingdom. His kingdom will never end. In his prophecy of Messiah, the prophet Isaiah wrote:

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:7)

God's kingdom is a never ending kingdom and He is the only one who is capable of ruling it. We Americans struggle with the concept of a king. Sometimes we think about our own history and the battles with England in the Revolutionary War. We wanted freedom from a kingdom and formed a democracy. It's a beautiful kind of government, this side of heaven. But, God's kingdom isn't a democracy, it's a realm that is ruled by the King of Kings. He sits on a real throne. He rules as our righteous judge. And, He is the King who will never fail His subjects.

King George I of England had a problem...he could not speak English! Being born and raised in Germany, he never learned to speak English ...and he was King of England from 1714 to 1727! No, he didn't make an effort to learn...he left the running of the country to his ministers. Think of it - a representative of a country who could not speak the language. That's not our God. Our God left the throne room of heaven to live among us. He learned the language. He walked the streets. He took the abuse. He died for us.

King George I of England is less like the King of Kings and more like some Christians who cannot testify of the Lord's love, because they have never bothered to learn of it!² Our King loves us with a never ending love, and when we pray, "Thine is the Kingdom," we acknowledge His kingship in our lives.

This talk of the kingdom of God is strange to some people. Our series is entitled, "The Sermon on the Mount: Living as Citizens of God's Kingdom." Jesus told his disciples in Luke 8:10:

10 He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.'" (Luke 8:10)

He was speaking of those who refused to allow Him to be king. He was speaking of those who saw him and heard him, but refused to submit to Him. God isn't going to force you to

² <http://bradzockoll.tripod.com/youthworker/id20.html>

make Him your King. Remember, there are kingdoms in conflict – the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God. Choose wisely, for in the end, even those who refuse to recognize God's authority and dominion will bow to Him.

Isaiah 45:23 says, "23 By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear."

Philippians 2:9-11 says, "9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

2) The Power belongs to God.

When we pray, "Yours is the power," we are declaring that God can do anything! He is all powerful. It's a story told over and over again in Scripture.

Colossians 1:15-18 says, "15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

Romans 1:20 puts it this way, "20 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."

Revelation 19:6 says, "6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns."

Psalms 62:11 says, "11 One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong,"

Sometimes it's hard to believe that. Sometimes we pray, and we hope, and we plead that God will intervene in our lives, and it seems as if God is absent. And we wonder, "Is God really all powerful?"

My Somali friends are dealing with the worst famine in their region of the world in over sixty years. Every day, 5,000 refugees arrive at Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya. Dadaab was built to house no more than 90,000 refugees. Today there are over half a million refugees living within the walls of the tent city. These Somalis are hoping for a better life for their

families. Today, there are over 600,000 Somali children that are on the brink of starvation, with 30,000 children under the age of five who have perished in the last 90 days alone!³

I know there are followers of Jesus amongst the Somali community who are praying every day to their all powerful God, wondering if He will answer their prayers. What are we to believe when we pray to our all powerful God and all we hear is silence?

In his book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, Rabbi Harold Kushner suggested that God was all-loving but not all-powerful. This, he believed solved the dilemma of bad things happening to good people. If Kushner was correct, something has happened between the time the Bible was written and today. God has somehow become sick.

But, it's not. The Bible is still reliable. God is still all-powerful. Even in the days of old, bad things happened to seemingly pretty good people.

Kent Hughes gives good insight here.

Since God is omnipotent, he can do anything as easily as anything else. All his acts are done without effort. He has unlimited strength. When we pray, "Yours is . . . the power," we are declaring that he can do anything!

If we do not believe this, we have no reason to pray. If he is not omnipotent, our prayers are exercises of pious futility. All six petitions of the Lord's Prayer require an omnipotent God. "Yours is . . . the power," truly believed, brings a profound dependence upon him. The Second Person of the Trinity tells us, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). That is profoundly true. But the converse is true as well. The French painter Emile Renouf depicted an old man dressed in fisherman's garb, seated in a boat with a little girl beside him. Both the elderly gentleman and the child have their hands on a huge oar. He is looking down fondly and admiringly upon her. Apparently he has told her that she may assist him in rowing the boat, and the child feels she is doing a great share of the task. It is easy to see, however, that it is his strong, muscular arms that are actually propelling the boat through the waves. The painting, titled "A Helping Hand," is a parable of what a soul can do when it depends upon God. God's hand propels us through life, even through storms, and accomplishes great things for his glory. "Yours is the power. All power is yours. We are dependent upon you, God." That is the reflex of a heart that knows the reality of the Lord's Prayer.⁴

Do you believe that God is all-powerful? That is what we affirm when we pray, "Yours is the power."

There is a third thing that this doxology affirms.

³ <http://blog.worldhelp.net/2011/08/road-to-dadaab/>

⁴ Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), pp. 203-204.

3) The Glory Belongs To God

This means that God gets the credit for all of the answers to our prayer. We recognize that He is the only one who is worthy of worship. More than any sports hero, more than any celebrity, more than any mentor in our life, God is worthy of praise. He is worthy of glory.

This is my daughter Breanna's last Sunday at Woodbury Community Church for a few months. On Wednesday of this week we will drive her to Ohio to begin her freshman year at Cedarville University. Earlier this week we realized that there were several items that we had yet to purchase for her freshman year. Like most fathers, I immediately thought about what these items were going to cost. For once, I put the worry aside and silently prayed, "God, you know that we need you to provide for Breanna's education. Please provide the income that we need to purchase these items."

I didn't tell Cyndi or Breanna, who were getting ready to shop, I just prayed. They hadn't been gone five minutes when the postman arrived at our mailbox. Do you know what was in the mailbox? A check from my mortgage company! Apparently we had an overage in our Escrow account this year. We had a rebate check for \$380. That check more than covered the items that we purchased for Breanna.

God deserves all glory when He answers our prayers!

But, glory is about more than just thanking God for answered prayer. Glory means that God receives honor. It means that He is the object of our worship.

The early church understood that we needed to center our prayers on the reality that God is King of Kings. He is all-powerful. He is to be worshipped. And, this worship will go on forever.

The Apostle Paul wrote of this glorious truth in 2 Corinthians 4:16-17.

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

The Lord's Prayer ends with a reminder that God's kingdom, power and glory will endure forever.

This earth is temporal. Our problems are temporal. The sooner we learn to fix our eyes on Jesus, this side of heaven, the better.

This series has encouraged us to live as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. When we hear about the massive amount of death occurring in Africa, it's easy to become overwhelmed and think that we can do nothing. Listen, you may not be able to save the lives of the

thousands of children who are dying in Africa right now, but what if you could save a few lives? What if you were part of the answer to the prayers of the Somali people? Minneapolis/St. Paul is home to the largest community of Somali people outside of the nation of Somalia and the Kenyan refugee camp. These are the younger brothers and sisters of our neighbors that are dying. They are the aunts and uncles, the mothers and fathers, the grandparents of our neighbors!

Earlier this week, CNN's Dr. Sanjay Gupta reported from Dadaab Refugee Camp. Watch this video. (Video is 2:21).

Feed My Starving Children is an organization that Woodbury Community Church has had a special relationship with over the past many years. So many of you have packed meals at the Feed My Starving Children locations across the Twin Cities. Earlier this week, Mike Neterer, the Director of Somali Adult Literacy Training sent an e-mail describing a way that Christians can make a difference in the lives of starving Somalis through the ministry of Feed My Starving Children. Did you know that \$52 provides enough money to feed 216 people a meal? \$36 feeds five children for an entire month. \$885 would fill ½ of a pallet with meals for Africa. And, texting manna to 50555 will allow you to make an immediate \$10 donation to feed starving Somalis.

Why do you think God has blessed us with so much abundance in America? Could it be that He has positioned us for such a time as this? Could we be part of God's answer for the Somali people? I hope you'll commit to making a difference in the lives of others, for that is how citizens of the Kingdom of God live.

Let's pray.