

Rev. David Strain

For Yours Is the Kingdom and the Power
and the Glory Forever. Amen.
Matthew 6:5-15

September 20, 2009 – AM

When you have to make a turn on a multi lane highway, usually near the intersection there will be signs on either side of the road with critically important information on them for someone coming from the United Kingdom. It's like they are placed there just for us. How good of the U. S. government to make provision for Brits like that. I'm sure you've seen those big red signs. They have two words printed on them. Do you know what they say?

WRONG WAY!

You're in the wrong lane. You're going the wrong way. You're facing the wrong direction.

It struck me as I was preparing for this sermon that in many ways that is a central message of the Lord's Prayer. You are facing the wrong way. Don't look that way. Look this way. You need to turn around and point your face in a different direction. Stop going in the direction of self and sin and the world and empty-fleeting satisfactions and the pursuit of your private agenda and the piling up of your own comforts. That's the wrong way.

Turn around and look at the Glory.

Turn around and look at GRACE.

And if ever there was a section of the Lord's Prayer fitted to help us make that U turn in the road of our lives, it is this last section. We've come to the closing phrases of the Lord's Prayer. And isn't it wonderful that it should be a *doxology*. "Doxology" means, literally, *glory words*. We sometimes talk about "*the* doxology," referring to the song "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow", right? But that is not "*the* doxology," that is really only a doxology. A doxology is an ascription of glory and adoration and praise to God. The Bible is full of them.

And so it is wonderfully fitting that the Lord's Prayer should conclude with one of them. It *began*, you will remember, with a God-ward focus, meditating on the Fatherhood of God, presupposing as it does the mind-bending relationship between Jesus Christ, who is God, the Son made flesh, and God the Father in the eternal fellowship of the Holy Trinity. And we saw how that opening address involves the explosive, worship-

inspiring fact that Jesus, the eternal Son, teaches *sinner*s like you and me to address *His* Father as *our* Father. Those opening two words summarize the whole gospel, don't they? The entire Christian message is here in these nine letters. They say to orphaned sinners like us, the only begotten Son of God has given His life that you might become adopted sons and daughters of God. And now, at the other end of the Lord's Prayer, is another God-ward glance. "Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." Like bookends on either side of this prayer are these great reminders that all of life is to be lived for God.

But before we get into the language of this closing doxology, we need to face a problem straight away. The problem is that Jesus almost certainly did not say these words. Neither did the gospel writers pen them. If you are using a church Bible, a New King James Version, the words are included in the prayer, but if you are using any of the other modern versions, they are excluded, and you probably have a footnote explaining why. None of the Western Latin manuscripts contain this doxology, and the earliest Greek manuscripts do not contain it either. It is missing from the parallel account in Luke's gospel, and church fathers, like Tertullian in the 2nd century, Cyprian in the 3rd, and Augustine in the 4th century, were all quite unaware of any such doxology in connection with the Lord's Prayer. One ancient church document called the Didache contains a doxology, but it is different from the one that has now become traditional.

So, most scholars agree that these words, while helpful and Biblical, are not inspired words. They were probably added to the prayer by early Christians because it was customary to conclude prayer and praise in this way. The early Jewish prayer known as the 18 Benedictions concludes, "Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever, Amen." So the words of the doxology were more likely inserted at a later date by copyists who were familiar with its use in the worship of the ancient church. The doxology certainly summarizes and echoes a good deal of the content of the prayer and appropriately gives all the glory and praise to God. And its suitability, the way it seems to lend symmetry to the prayer, and its antiquity have all commended it to the use of the whole church ever since.

Though it may not have been penned by the gospel authors or given to the church by Christ, its roots are deeply Biblical. Earlier we read together 1 Chronicles 29:10-15. Here are the roots of the doxology of the Lord's Prayer. King David prayed, "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule

over all. In Your hand are power and might, and in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank You, our God, and praise Your glorious name.” Can you see the themes and language of the doxology at the close of the Lord’s Prayer here? “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty.... Yours is the Kingdom...” says *David*.

And, “Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever Amen”, *we* pray *with him*. At the conclusion of the prayer that David’s son and heir gave to this church, we rightly pick up the language of this majestic doxology, ascribing to God the glory due His name.

And even the most cursory scan over the New Testament scriptures will find them littered with doxologies.

1 Timothy 1:17 “To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

1 Timothy 6:15-16 “The blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.”

2 Timothy 4:18 “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Jude 1:25 “To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

Revelation 4:11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Revelation 5:13 “And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

After rehearsing those passages, Philip Ryken concludes, “Therefore whether it was spoken by Jesus or not, the traditional ending of the Lord’s Prayer is part of the Biblical pattern for prayer. When you pray, it is right and good to give God the glory for the power of His kingdom.” (Ryken, *When You Pray*, 177)

So let’s take a look at the doxology itself. I simply want to take each phrase in turn.

First, we ascribe to God the kingdom. Early on in the prayer we prayed “Your Kingdom come,” asking that God’s kingly reign might extend and advance, by means of the proclamation of the law and the gospel, through His church, to the ends of the earth. And *here*, as we conclude the prayer, we remember to confess that that kingdom, while in one sense “coming,” *already belongs to God*. He is *already* Lord and King and He *already* rules over all.

And while we are confessing our submission to His majesty, we are also disowning all claim to final authority *for ourselves*. When we pray, “Yours is the Kingdom,” we are affirming the proper order of things: self in the dust and God on the throne... self in the dust, God on the throne.

And this is worship? I thought worship was meant to be positive and joyful! Self in the dust, God on the throne? Really? It may not sound like good news at first perhaps, but if you’ve come to know what it means to pray the first two words of the Lord’s Prayer for yourself, you won’t think that way for long. When the one on the throne is Abba Father, when His love and grace have captured your affections and won your heart, nothing thrills your soul more than to say, “Self in the dust, God on the throne. Abba, Yours is the kingdom. Your rule. *Hallelujah!* My Father is the *King!*”

Then secondly, we ascribe to God “the power.” “Yours is the kingdom *and the power.*”

God is no weakling. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save.

We do not whimper out our despairing cries to the heavens in the vain hope that someone “out there” might possibly hear us and take pity on us. No, children of the Father go boldly to His throne, to obtain mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

We are able to say with Paul, in Philippians 4: 11, “I have learned in whatever circumstances to be content. I know how to be abased and I know how to abound.

Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.” How Paul? What is the secret of contentment like that? How can you suffer loss and hunger and be in need like that and keep going Paul? What is the secret? Here it is, “I have learned in every circumstance to be content, whether in plenty or in need.” How? “***I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.***”

The word “strengthens me” comes from the same root as the word “power” used in the Lord’s Prayer. Paul actually says I can do all things through Christ who empowers me.

What a universe of hope there is in the doxology of the Lord’s Prayer; therefore, when we remind ourselves in adoration of God that “Yours, Father, is the kingdom ***and the power!***” we have hope.

I cannot see where daily bread will come from. I don’t know how I will ever get victory over this besetting sin. That non-Christian friend or that college campus or that closed country or that unreached people group—they all seem so impervious to the gospel. But I do not despair, for***Yours is the power.*** God is faithful and He will do it. (1Thessalonian 5:24) I am weak. The church is weak, Father. But You are ***mighty***. I can do all things through Christ who empowers me. Yours is the kingdom ***and the power.***

What will you be afraid to pray or attempt for God if you grasp the meaning of this doxology! He is ***able***. He has ***power***. There is nothing and no one beyond His reach.

What ***security*** there is in this great truth! One of the reasons we do not risk much for Christ or suffer much for Christ is that we locate our satisfaction too much in this world. We locate our security and our peace in this world—in its stuff and in its praise. The world is so central to our psychological welfare that we cannot afford to lose this world and its pleasures. We will not risk losing all for Christ, or anything for Christ, because we do not root our identity in ***Christ***, but ***in the abundance of things***. Isn’t that so? If we lose our things, our car and clothes and computer, our iPhone and hairstyle, our boyfriend and popularity, if we lose them, because we have invested so much of our identity in them, we lose ***ourselves***, and for the most, part we are just not willing to do it.

But when you know that ***God*** has the power to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without spot or wrinkle or any other stain, when you know that you can be in plenty or suffer need because you can do all things through Christ who empowers you, when you know that God has the power, so that you are able to count it ***all joy***, my brothers and sisters, when you endure trials of many

kinds, you will *let go of the world*, with its pleasures and comforts. You will no longer locate your security and identity there. And you will begin to sing David's new song of radical self-surrender, in Psalm 73, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is *nothing* on earth that I desire *besides you*." And what is the consequence of that radical prizing of God and trust in the power of God? He is able to say *"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."*

You have the power. What can man do to me? He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day. I am *secure*. I am kept *by the power of God* unto salvation. He *keeps* me. I am able to suffer worldly loss, and present trials, and *my joy and hope and peace are unaffected* because my security and my identity are *not* rooted in my *stuff*, my *reputation*, my *popularity*, my *wealth* any more. They are rooted in God's power to keep His promises and fulfill His plans. They are rooted in the certainty that He who began a good work in me will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. They are rooted in the unshakable promise that those whom God foreknew He also called and those whom He called He also justified and those whom He justified He also glorified.

No one ever risked *anything* for Christ who did not believe that He was *everything* that really mattered and that *His power* could keep them when *the world failed, their bodies failed, their friends around them all failed*. But when you know that *He never fails*, that *His* is the power, you will begin to take risks for Him, stand up for His cause, and go with His gospel. Our lack of readiness to go for Him, speak for Him, suffer for Him *unmasks our failure to trust His power. He is able. You don't have to be. So trust Him and give your life for His praise.*

Yours in the kingdom, and the power, and finally, "Yours is the glory."

Paul's doxology in Romans 11:36 unpacks what we are really saying here. "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be the glory forever. Amen." The point and goal of all things, the motive in God for His creation in the first place, and the purpose towards which all creation moves, is the glory and exaltation of God Himself. Creation reverberates, scripture says, with the glory of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)

And not just creation, redemption, Jesus Christ, His person and work, supremely display God's glory. In 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 Paul speaks about "the light of *the gospel of*

the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts ***to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.***"

In the face of Christ, in the good news about Him, looking at Jesus, God's glory shines at its brightest.

And recognizing and delighting in that glory, the glory of God in creation and redemption, is the ***purpose of our lives***. It is, therefore, also the end we are to have in view as we pray all the other petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

Why should God's name be hallowed except that His glory might be made known and His greatness adored among His creatures? Why should His will be done and His Kingdom come, except that we might be enabled more and more to live on ***His*** terms and in conformity to ***His*** purposes, that He might have first place among us and receive all the glory? When we pray that our Father might give us our daily bread, it is not merely the hunger pangs in our bellies that move God to answer, but the great glory He receives from us when, in His mercy, He supplies our needs. When we are forgiven our sins, we cease all boasting in our own imagined goodness and instead offer humble and contrite worship to God for His sheer grace. When He leads us not into temptation and defends us from Satan, we are made to see still more clearly the greatness, love, kindness, and mercy of our God. ***We see His glory more clearly when, as we cry to Him in need, He answers. The ultimate goal of all prayer, and every one of His answers, is God's glory.***

The story is told of one of Alexander the Great's generals who was about to be married and who comes to Alexander asking for him to make an extravagant gift to pay for the wedding and the feast and so on. He asks for a simply staggering sum, and the King's advisors are scandalized and ready to send the man away. But Alexander silenced them and gave the audacious general all that he asked, explaining that by asking so much of him, his general showed that he knew that he was both rich and generous.

When we learn to ask for great things from God, we demonstrate our faith that God Himself is even greater. He is both rich and generous. He is competent to give all that we need. God is glorified when we pray great prayers.

Phillip Ryken tells the story of the Tarascan Indians of Mexico. Apparently many of the Tarascan Christians call themselves *doxistas*, from the New Testament Greek word for glory, *doxa*. They are confessing that they exist *for the glory of God*. Their lives have been devoted to God's praise and honor. They are given up to the pursuit of the exaltation of the Triune God through the salvation of sinners by faith in Jesus Christ.

When we say to God that "Yours is the glory," we are confessing that He is glorious and worthy to be adored as such. We are expressing the fundamental purpose of our existence. We are completing the goal of our redemption: that God should get the glory in all things.

It may be that you have been facing the wrong way all this time. Let the doxology teach you that you are for God, for His glory, for His praise. Let it remind you that our God reigns that you might pray and act boldly, and that the King who reigns has all the power, that you might pray and act in faith, not fearing to risk everything or anything in the service of Christ.

God is glorious. Glorify Him. He has the power. Trust in Him. And His is the Kingdom. Bow before Him.

"Forever, Amen."