

The Marks of a True Believer
Message Ten
“For Thine is the Kingdom”
Matt 6:5-15

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- 5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
- 7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
- 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
- 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
- 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
- 11 Give us this day our daily bread.
- 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
- 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
- 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:
- 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. KJV

Introduction:

Today we come to the closing portion of the Model Prayer, a piece which some call ‘the benediction.’ If you have looked at any of the other translations of the Bible on this section you may have noticed that most of them leave off the words, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever,” while they all retain the “Amen.”

You may or may not know that there were many hand-written copies of the Greek New Testament that were made in the early years of Christianity. In fact, up until the printing press was invented sometime between 1440 and 1450, most books were printed by people making hand copies of them and there were others printed by a much cruder type of press. The result was thousands of hand-written copies of the Greek text of the New Testament. Because they were hand-written, small errors and differences can be found in many of them, the vast majority of them very minor and some of them, like this one, obvious enough to cause questions.

If you have ever looked at Luke’s version of this prayer you have noticed that he did not include the benediction.

Luke 11:2-4

- 2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.
- 3 Give us day by day our daily bread.
- 4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. KJV

You will also notice that the wording of Luke's record is slightly different. But, if you notice closely, Luke's version happened at a different time and under different circumstances. Does this mean that one of them is wrong and one is correct or that the Lord Jesus included the benediction on one occasion and not on another?

First of all, you should know that the discussion and debate over which Greek manuscripts we should use is a huge one and very technical. Some very good scholars come down on different sides of the debate. And none of the differences between the copies are of the kind which change the theology that is taught by the Bible. The gospel, the call to repentance, faith and holiness, is the same in every version. This difference does not change in any substantial way the content of the prayer. Luke's version covers the same territory as Matthew's.

At the same time, there are some important reasons for us to keep the benediction as it is recorded in our translation of Matthew's gospel.

1. Many of the ancient manuscripts include it.
2. We know that Matthew's form was used in worship in the very ancient churches.
3. We know that these very words were fixed in the minds of the Jews from OT passages.

1 Chron 29:10-11

- 10 Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.
- 11 Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. KJV

Neh 9:5-6

- 5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, Stand up and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.
- 6 Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. KJV

And, in the minds of believers from NT passages.

2 Tim 4:18

18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. KJV

Rev 1:4-6

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. KJV

It could be argued that the benediction in our copy of Matthew's record mirrors the thinking and the sentiment of praying Jews of both OT and NT times.

4. And, some of the earliest documents of the Christian faith, even from the early 2nd century, contain these words when referencing this prayer.

One of the scholarly commentators said this concerning the passage. "It would be difficult, indeed, to frame or devise are more fitting close." (Hendriksen) And then he asked this question, "Is it not entirely appropriate that we, the supplicants, having concluded our humble *petitions*, as it were turn our eyes upward again (as in the beginning of the prayer) in adoration, and concentrate heart and mind on God's majesty and love, which constitute the basis of our confidence that the prayer will be heard?" His conclusion is that the words of this doxology are in thorough harmony with the rest of the Bible, constituting an eminently suitable conclusion of this prayer.

What is my opinion? I determined long ago that the resolution of this debate over which ancient Greek text to use is far above my pay grade and abilities. Therefore, I have resolved that I have no problems with the Received Text, which was used to translated the Geneva and the King James Bibles, there being no portion of them subject to harming either my faith or the faith of those who read them. Additionally, some of the greatest scholars the world has ever known and the Christian Church has ever produced have been loyal subscribers to the scriptures as contained in this version. I happily receive the words of Matthew 6:13 as holy scripture.

Additionally, I have discussed with you that these words were not given as some kind of magical formula to be uttered exactly with some associated special blessing associated with getting the words exactly right or of repeating them some set number of times. Jesus said, "when you pray, pray after this manner." In other words, we are to style our prayers, at least partially, along these lines of thought. These are important issues which our Savior and Lord knew would be helpful to us if we would daily remember them and present our needs associated with those principles to

the Father. He did not say, “repeat these words exactly” but “use these words as your guide.” We certainly find the apostle Paul praying for matters that Jesus did not mention and we do not fault him for that. So, let us not be bothered by the controversies that some follow as we meditate on the thoughts associated with Jesus’ close to His Own prayer.

In general we notice that these words are an acknowledgment of God as God. “Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.” Why, we might ask, pray to anyone who is not God, who does not possess unlimited power, who is not in control of all things? The needs that we have for Divine Power to operate in our lives in specific ways cannot ever be met by any entity with limited resources. As Paul said, “we wrestle...against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Who beside the One Who possess Omnipotent and Eternal Power is worthy of our appeals for help? Rightly did old Elijah shout to the Israelites at Mt. Carmel, “If Baal is God, then follow him.” It is a waste of time, as the prophets of Baal demonstrated for all time, to pray to an impotent and non-existent deity. Let us seek our help from the One Who can actually help.

The “kingdom” belongs to Him. What kingdom? If we acknowledge Him as King, then all that He rules over is His ‘kingdom.’ So, what does He rule over?

David said:

Ps 145:13

13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. KJV

Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed:

Dan 4:3

3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation. KJV

And, Gabriel revealed to Daniel

Dan 7:27

27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. KJV

He has one kingdom, which engulfs and includes all ‘dominions.’ He is the Lord of All, the One Who rules over heaven and earth. There is not one grain of dust in this entire universe that lies outside of His rulership. Therefore, we can be hopeful that when we cry to Him, “deliver me from evil” that He is the One Who can indeed answer our prayers, the Only One.

We remember that one of the last images that we are given as our scriptures are drawn down to a close is the image of the “throne” of God and of the Lamb.

Rev 22:1-3

- 1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.
- 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
- 3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: KJV

In fact, the word “throne” is one of the most used words in the entire book of Revelation, as if the Lord, through John, was impressing His people with the picture of His rulership over all things.

Such a king, in every other construction that we might imagine, would be too busy to entertain the requests of individuals, it would simply not be possible. But this is no ordinary king, He is like no other and His subjects have privileges that have never been possible with human rulers.

Heb 4:15-16

- 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.
- 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. KJV

This throne, though it be the throne upon which the Supreme Ruler of the Universe sits, is also ‘the throne of grace’ the place where every individual who comes in repentance and faith may find individual and personal help, actual *enablement* sufficient for whatever need he/she might have.

It was from this throne that help came to feed Elijah during the famine of judgment upon Israel and it was from this throne that the widow of Nain found help to restore her dead son to life.

This Great King cares for His people. He loves them and He moves to help them. Should we not, then, acknowledge when we pray that the kingdom is His, “thine is the Kingdom”? And, associated with the authority to rule over absolutely everything is the power to make His authority work. Suppose you were given the presidency of the United States today. Somebody called and said, “at the stroke of midnight, Jan 8, 2017, the entire responsibility of the Presidency will be yours. However, you will have no Secret Service agents to protect you, no Air Force One in which to fly, no one will do what you say, the Congress and the Supreme Court will resist everything you do... Oh, and the Armed Forces will not take orders from you.” What good would that authority be? You will not have the power to carry out your responsibilities.

But God, praise His name, does not have that problem. All power in heaven and earth is His. Whatever He needs to do or desires to do, He can cause to happen. By definition He is Omnipotent. Any need we have He has the power to provide the help. And, all of the help He gives comes out of that resource of unlimited power

To Abraham, He said:

Gen 18:14

14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. KJV

And, Jeremiah worshiped His Omnipotence.

Jer 32:17-19

17 Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:

18 Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name,

19 Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings: KJV

His Omnipotence is vitally linked to His Lovingkindness. Give anyone other than Him unlimited power and it would either be used ignorantly or wickedly. Power corrupts, men say, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This is true concerning creatures but it is not true concerning God. Out of His Love for His People He did the impossible, He reconciled His Fierce Wrath and Judgment with His Mercy and His Love by a Work which Only He could do and that only by the most absolute test of His Power that has ever been, the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Certainly such Authority, wielded by such Power, is a Glorious thing. When men have been allowed to pierce as closely as humans can be allowed to the very Presence of the Living God, they have been met with such a sight of glory that even the cherubim cover their faces before Him.

We have a hope of sharing in that glory one day, if He will hear our petitions and answer them. If He will grant us the capacity to be loyal to Him, labor for His kingdom, repent of our sins in a true way, and be delivered from the power of evil, we will see His Glory and be granted participation in it.

1 John 3:1-3

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. KJV

That which Moses could not see, that Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel could only see in visions, we will see face to face. "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

That brilliant Glory He is going to share with sinners such as you and me.

There was a religion that appeared in the world about the same time as Christianity, called ***Gnosticism***. The Gnostics believed that God is so High and Holy, so Pure and altogether different than us that He could have no contact with us because that would corrupt Him. So, they declared that Jesus could not have had a real earthly body because it would have contaminated Him. So, they say, He only ***appeared*** to have a body. He did not really suffer, nor did He really die. He really never had any direct contact with us.

But the God of the scriptures, while absolutely Glorious and Holy, since He has all power, determined to condescend to us, to bear our sins in a real, physical body, to suffer all temptations that we suffer, yet without sin. He, rather than staining His glory, made it known to men that they might worship Him. And, through the suffering of His Son, made it possible for us to be nearer Him one day than any of the angels have ever been.

2 Cor 5:20-21

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. KJV

It is a most peculiar thing (a blessing for us to be sure) that God has determined that the grandest, wisest, and most perfect way for Him to demonstrate His Glory is by glorifying with His Own Glory the fallen and depraves sons and daughters of Adam.

Even if Jesus had left out the words at the end of this prayer, every thinking and appreciate saint would want to say as he ended the prayer, “for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen”