

Affirming God's Praise

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[0:00] We're going to turn now to our Bible reading for this morning. And this is our last morning looking at the Lord's Prayer.

! And please do turn up Matthew chapter 6.! You'll find that on page 811. So Matthew 6. And once you've found Matthew 6, just stick a thumb in that, because we're going to turn back to read firstly from 1 Chronicles.

So find Matthew 6, and then turn back to 1 Chronicles chapter 29, page 357, if you're using the Church Visitor Bible.

So 1 Chronicles 29. I'm going to read there from verse 10. So this is King David gathering at the temple.

And here's what he says to the people. Therefore, David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly. And David said, Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.

[illegible]

Now, I don't know about you, but this is how I learned it in school. But you'll see in the footnotes of the ESV what is not normally included, but it's in the footnotes, and the version from the AV includes it.

So I'm going to read from the authorized version, and you can follow along. In the ESV. Matthew 6, verse 9. After this manner, therefore, pray ye, our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.

[3 : 05] Amen. Well, may God bless to us his word this morning. Well, good morning, everyone.

Do turn with me in your Bibles, if you would, to Matthew chapter 6. And we're coming one last time to our study of how do we pray? How we pray as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ.

By the way, the heating has been on in here since 3 o'clock this morning. But it's a drafty building, and that's why it's chilly. So we're doing the best we can, but wrap up warm.

Hopefully by this evening it'll be a bit warmer. Affirming God's praise. That's what we're doing.

As we say the words of this doxology, the familiar doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen. And that comes, as Paul says, and as he read, comes at the end of verse 13 as it appears in the authorized version of the Bible, sometimes called the King James Version.

[4:16] It was a translation that was put in place by King James VI of Scotland and I of England, published in 1611. And it was the translation authorized for public worship in churches across the nation.

Some of you may still use it. I still do from time to time. I did it in my childhood. The beauty of the language of the authorized version is difficult to pass. Of course, it did a huge amount, didn't it, to shape the whole English language.

There's so many phrases in our language that come to us from the authorized version of the Bible. But, of course, in the last 400 years or so since then, scholars have had access to additional manuscripts of the Bible, additional even older manuscripts that have come to light and been used. And textual scholars, therefore, have brought some of those insights into many of the more modern translations that we have, like our ESV, which really is an updated version of what was the revised standard version that came out some decades ago, bringing in these things.

And so that's why, if you're a new Christian and you wonder why people might have different versions of the Bible and why there might be slight differences in the way things are translated from the authorized version, that's why.

[5:40] It's because there's a variation in some of these very old manuscripts. The differences are very, very small, by the way. Very, very few and far between. But there is a little bit. And that's why these words at the very end of the Lord's Prayer, that's why they're in the footnote here in our ESV Bibles.

Footnote 5 down at the bottom, you can see. And that's because these words aren't present in some of the earliest manuscripts.

So scholars argue with each other about whether they should be included in the text or not. Leon Morris, in his commentary on Matthew, a very fine scholar, the late Leon Morris, he actually argues there's a much better case for them being included in the text than many are willing to admit.

But whether or not Jesus taught these words at exactly this point in his teaching on prayer really doesn't matter very much at all because these words in the doxology that are in our footnote here, they're thoroughly biblical.

We read from 1 Chronicles 29, and you heard the prayer of King David at the end of his life as he's anticipating the building of the temple. And the doxology that we have in the Lord's Prayer is a very clear echo of those words.

[6:55] Let me just read some of them again. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty for all that is in heaven and earth are yours.

Yours is the kingdom, O God, and you are exalted above all. And you come across very similar doxologies at the ends of prayers in other parts of the Bible, right through the New Testament.

1 Timothy 6, 16, for example, is just one place where you'll find that. So to ponder these words, I think, is a fitting end to our study on how we pray because it's entirely right that we should end our prayers with just such an affirmation of praise to God.

Praise to God through Jesus Christ, God the Son, our Lord and Savior. And that's what a doxology is. A doxology is an affirmation of praise.

Doxa is the Greek word for praise or glory. Logos, the word for word. So it's a word of praise. It's ascribing, it's affirming the praise of God.

[8:04] And to affirm means, that means to give solemn assent to something. It means to declare the truth of something. And so what we're saying in this doxology is that all that we pray is on the basis of the truth about God's kingdom and his power and his glory as it is made known in Jesus Christ, God the Son.

We can pray for, notice that word in the footnote, for the kingdom and the power and the glory are God's forever through what Jesus has done.

That's what we're saying amen to. And that's so very important for us to note. Sometimes people forget that. We've said that before. Sometimes people think that the Lord's Prayer is a sort of generic prayer that you could use anywhere for people of any religion and none, a sort of civic occasion, that kind of thing.

But we've seen, I hope, that you can't just rest this prayer out of where it comes in Matthew's Gospel and take it on its own. Not at all. It comes here, in the middle of the Gospel of the King and the kingdom.

Matthew's Gospel begins, doesn't it, telling us about the genealogy and the birth of the long-awaited King. Jesus' first words as he begins to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom is, the kingdom is at hand.

[9:26] Repent. The kingdom is in the midst of you because I'm in the midst of you, says Jesus. The kingdom will come in all its final glory and consummation when Jesus himself returns to judge the whole world.

Read it on in Matthew's Gospel, chapter 24 and 25, and you find that. And so, everything that we pray and everything that we're taught to pray in this prayer is for all of this is true in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the one who's bringing in his kingdom. The kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours forever. Amen. So you see, this is a prayer for kingdom people. It's a prayer for people who know that and who rejoice in that.

And who share in the kingdom of God the Father through the work of God the Son. Matthew chapter 11, later on, Jesus says, no one knows the Father except the Son and those whom the Son chooses to reveal him to.

And so this doxology, it affirms our praise of God the Father through Jesus the Son in whom the Father is made known. And we say that again.

[10:42] This doxology affirms our praise of God the Father through Jesus the Son who makes the Father known. So I want to take the doxology in two parts and just try and help think through some of what this really means.

I want to start at the very end with the word, Amen. Because in this doxology, we are praising God's name in Jesus. We're affirming our praise to God's name as it is made known uniquely and ultimately in Jesus Christ alone.

Now, Amen is a word that is derived from the Hebrew word that gives us the word truth and faithfulness. So it's an affirmation of the inevitable as well as an affirmation of the desirable.

It's saying, yes, let it be. So shall it be. Psalm 72 begins like this. Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to your royal son.

It's a prophetic, it's a messianic psalm about the great king, David's son, whose name will endure forever and ever, whose reign will endure forever, in whom all the nations are going to be blessed.

[11:54] And that psalm ends, blessed be his glorious name. That is God's name as this comes to pass. May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

So let it be and so shall it be. And it's hard to know, actually, in that psalm, whether the psalmist means God's glory will fill the earth or he's talking about the king's glory that will fill the earth. But you see, that's the point because it's both. God's glory fills the whole earth as the glory of his great king and his great name fills this whole earth. And that, of course, is the whole message of the New Testament.

And when we say Amen, you see, we're affirming exactly that. We're praising God's name that is fully and finally revealed forever in Jesus, his son.

God the Son. That's why in the upper room, just before his betrayal, Jesus repeatedly tells the disciples, doesn't he, that they will pray to the Father in my name.

[12:57] In my name, says Jesus. And that's implicit here, you see, in this great Amen that ends this prayer that Jesus teaches us to pray.

Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1. For all the promises of God find their yes in Jesus Christ. That's why it's through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

You see, to utter Amen at the climax of our prayers is to say yes. Yes, in Jesus at last we can be sure.

We can declare as true forever that what God has promised for his people and for this world, he has done, and it shall be as he has said. So we can come to the Father in prayer with certainty through Jesus the Son.

So it's obvious, isn't it, that this is a supremely Christian prayer. It's only in Jesus, says Paul, that we can say Amen to God. Only because he came.

[14:05] Only because he died on the cross for our sins. Only because he was raised. Only because he's ascended to reign in heaven. Only because he lives forever as our great high priest.

That's why we know that we can pray to God. And that's why we know that our prayers will mean anything at all. We can say Amen. So shall it be. And so let it be.

Because our Lord Jesus Christ has risen and he is reigning. So all that we pray, you see, is in Jesus. It's through him alone that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

We affirm our praise of God's name completely and forever made known in Jesus. We are praising God's name in Jesus when we say that word Amen. But there's more than that because secondly, in the whole doxology, we are we're praising also God's nature.

God's nature that is made ultimately and uniquely known in Jesus. We're affirming the praise that God himself has made what he is like and in every way what he is like.

[15 : 20] He's made it known in Jesus and he has made known therefore the true nature of his kingdom and of his power and of his glory. And we pray all these things in the Lord's Prayer for in Jesus yours, thine is the kingdom.

See, it's in Jesus and in Jesus alone that God reveals to us the true nature of his sovereign authority in this world. And in taking these words on our lips, you see, we're affirming that Jesus is the great king.

Jesus is and no other both now and forever. The last words that Jesus spoke to his disciples before he ascended to heaven reiterated that, didn't he?

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, said Jesus. And therefore, and only because of that, can he give the church his authority to go into all the world to make disciples of all nations and to command allegiance to that one king's authority.

And that's why we can have great expectations, that's why we can have great ambitions in our prayers because we're going with the authority of the king.

[16 : 41] And we can expect that the great king of this world is going to be at work calling people to bow the knee to him in all the world, in every nation. But notice, and this is very important, isn't it?

It's yours is the kingdom, not ours. It's heaven's kingdom. It's not earth's kingdom. And therefore, we have a heavenly authority, not an earthly authority.

And that's very important, isn't it? Remember Jesus' words to Pilate in John chapter 18 when he was taken before him. Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world.

And he says to him, if it was of this world, then my servants would be fighting with swords so I wouldn't be delivered to the Jews. They'd be fighting, in other words, to establish my kingdom by force.

But no, the authority that Christian people have is not that kind of authority. It's not an earthly authority like that, not at all. We are to have great expectations for the authority that we carry into the world, but not, not that it should be carried out in the world's way.

[17 : 52] That's why Paul says to the Corinthian church that our weapons are not those of flesh and blood. Rather, our weapon is that of the word of God, which is the divine power, the heavenly power that, yes, will destroy strongholds of people's thought.

It will take every thought captive to obey Christ. But it's the authority of God's word, not of earthly weapons. So, yes, we're to pray, your kingdom come, your will be done, but we are to seek to advance heaven's kingdom heaven's way.

See, it's just how we're the same as we're to ask for God's provision, God's way, not our way. See, and it's in Jesus that we see the true nature of God's authority in this world.

It's his word that advances his kingdom. It's his word that will humble people to become his subjects. That's why Jesus gave to Peter and the other apostles the charge, feed my sheep, not fight with my sword.

And we need to remember that, don't we? That's really important because there have been times in history when the church has forgotten that, when the church has taken the sword in the name of God. And that has led to great tragedy and great disaster.

[19 : 22] And it will do so again in our day. If misguided Christians think that they're fighting with the weapons of this world. If misguided Christians think that you fight holy war with missiles.

Or if misguided Christians think that the way to really advance the kingdom of Christ is by political power or these things. We mustn't forget that.

Nor must we forget that in our own life and ministry. Because it's possible, isn't it, to dress up in rather pious kingdom language things that are actually just our own earthly ambitions.

But no, we're to seek his kingdom his way. not our kingdom or our empire our way even in our own ministries.

And it's possible, isn't it, for us as Christians at times to pursue ministry and mission with earthly ambition instead of that heavenly one.

[20 : 28] Our ambitions are very easily corrupted, aren't they? Our hearts are deceitful. And it's important that we remember these things. That's what Jesus is talking about in this very chapter, isn't it, in Matthew chapter 6 in verse 2 where he talks about the hypocrites who say their prayers in public so that others will have an opinion of them.

They want to be seen by others. And that's always a temptation, isn't it, for us? But no, to pray yours is the kingdom is to learn from Jesus what God's authority is really like in this world. It's to say, yes, amen. All I pray for, well, may it be judged by your kingdom's authority, not mine. Your kingdom your way, Lord, not mine.

And we need to remember that in all of our ventures for the Lord Jesus. And second, we also pray, amen, let it be so, for again, yours is the power.

And we're saying there that you see that it's in Jesus that God reveals to us the true nature of his sovereign control in this world and in our lives. Hebrews chapter 1 tells us, doesn't it, that Jesus upholds the whole universe by the word of his power.

[21 : 45] He alone is in control of the whole wide world. And that's why we can have such great confidence in prayer. That's why we can pray, amen, so let it be. And so shall it be because yours is the power.

We can pray for our daily provision in verse 11. Give us our daily bread. We can pray for our daily protection. We can pray, Lord, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.

We can pray it with marvelous assurance that yes, the whole world is in his hands. Yours is the power. And there's so many wonderful reminders of that in chapter 6 of Matthew's gospel, aren't there, down in verse 26.

He knows and cares for every single bird of the air. He cares even for the lilies of the field. And how much more does he care for you and everything in your life?

Yours is the power, Lord, so we don't need to be anxious. That's Jesus' whole point in that passage. Don't be anxious. Yours is the power so we can pray with great, great confidence but also with real contentment because God's power, his sovereign control over all things is supremely revealed in Jesus as a power that is not at all like the way the world imagines power.

[23 : 03] It's a power, as Paul says to the Corinthian church, that's made perfect in weakness. Christ was crucified, he says to them, in weakness. That's a stumbling block to the world, a stumbling block to Jews, foolishness to Gentiles and yet, Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Paul says, in my gospel, there's weakness, there's fear, there's trembling. That's how I came to Corinth, he says. But therein was the true revelation of God's ultimate power.

And again, that helps us when we pray because when we pray to the God of power to answer our prayers, we might often imagine God answering with mighty power, with impressive thunderings, with all sorts of grand happenings in the matter that we're concerned with.

But you see, to pray yours is the kingdom is to have learned that, well, God's words to Paul are often the way that God answers prayers.

Remember, Paul prayed, please, Lord, remove this burden from me, remove this thorn in the flesh. And the Lord said, no, because my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.

[24 : 23] Weakness. See, it's to pray for God's power in our lives and to be content for God to show his power his way.

And that might look very, very weak to the world and it might often seem very, very weak to us as well. But to pray that way is to say amen.

Yes, Lord, you are in control. Yours is the power. So everything I pray, let it be truly submitted to your control. Not my idea of power at work in my life.

Not my idea of power at work in my words, but yours. And remind me that. Remind me that it was in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that you showed supremely your power power in this world.

And then third, you see, we pray amen. Let it be so for yours also is the glory. Yours is the glory.

And again, in that, you see, we're saying that it's in Jesus and Jesus alone that God reveals the true nature of his sovereign presence in this world.

[25:37] in the Bible, God's glory is his appearance. It's the visible expression of the invisible God. The glory of God is the presence of God.

And when God spoke to Moses, and remember, Moses said, Lord, we won't go unless your presence is with us. Show it to me. And up on the mountain, he showed him his glory.

That's how he showed his presence. In Isaiah, in Isaiah chapter 6, where Isaiah saw the glory of God, he saw his glory. And as John tells us later on in his gospel in John chapter 12, what that meant was he saw Jesus' glory.

The glory Jesus had with the Father before the world began. Jesus himself talks about that, doesn't he, in John chapter 17 in the upper room. And what this is saying, you see, is that it's in Jesus that God's glory is most fully manifest in this world.

prophet Zechariah promised that one day I, God says, I, will be the glory in the midst of my people. And you see, in Jesus Christ, God's presence in all his glory is revealed among his people.

[26:52] No one has ever seen God, says John, in the beginning of his gospel. The only begotten God, though, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. And that's the beginning of that wonderful gospel truth.

Jesus, the Son, you see, is the exposition. He is the complete explanation of God and his glory. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, says John.

And we have seen his glory. The glory is of the only Son from the Father. We looked at James' letter last week and it's James in chapter 2 of his letter talks about our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory. He is the glory of God's presence in the world. And the wonder of the gospel is that he's present with us forever. He is Emmanuel. He's God with us.

Behold, I am with you always, even to the very end of the age, says Jesus. But you see, here's the question, what kind of glory does this ultimate revelation of the presence of the only God, the true God, what kind of glory does that reveal to the world?

[28:06] And again, it is a glory that is very different, isn't it, from the world's idea of glory. It's not like the glory of Caesar with his victorious armies marching in triumphant strength and pomp and pride.

It's not like the glory of the great rulers of today who stand and watch their tanks and their missiles going past or count their great aircraft carriers and their vast navies. And this is John.

We have seen his glory full of grace and truth. That is abounding in that grace, that steadfast covenant love and faithfulness, just as Moses saw on the mountain, but now fully revealed, fully revealed.

in its terrible beauty and in what really is a shocking horror because the place that the true glory and the presence of God in this world is revealed ultimately and forever is in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's what John means when he said, we have seen his glory. glory. Now is the hour, Jesus said, as he contemplated going to the cross, glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.

[29:27] And that is what he did as he went to the cross. In Jesus and in his cross above all is revealed ultimately and forever the true nature of God's sovereign presence here in the world.

when the Son who being in the very form of God did not keep grasping hold of that which was his by right. The quality with God.

But as Paul says, he humbled himself even to death on a cross. Because that is who he is. That is his glory. And that's what the presence of God means in our world.

That's the mystery of the glory of the God we worship. Here's some words from the late Professor Donald MacLeod.

The place of shame and darkness and pain where the Most High is most completely veiled becomes the place where he is most completely unveiled.

[30:32] Where he most unequivocally serves he is most unequivocally Lord. You see, a glory not of aggressive power but of astonishing passion.

Not of self-aggrandizement but of utter self-giving. And therefore, you see, he's most present with us still gloriously in this world.

In his greatest glory among us. when often he is most deeply hidden and veiled to a world that despises that kind of what it thinks of as inglorious glory.

And we will be most glorified in him very often when our glory is equally veiled to this world and even to ourselves. Often in the crucible of greatest suffering.

often in the place of greatest and most costly self-giving. Peter says, if you're insulted for the name of Christ, you're blessed because the spirit of the glory and of God rests upon you.

[31:47] The spirit of the glory. The spirit of our great Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. And so we pray, you see, verse 12, we pray we have also forgiven our debtors, those who have sinned against us, maybe very deeply, terribly, repeatedly.

We pray, we also have forgiven our debtors for yours is the glory. The glory that is also in us.

The glory that's made manifest not in self-defense, not in self-justification, certainly not in revenge and recrimination, but in self-giving, in self-sacrifice, in redemption, in reconciliation.

And when we say, am I, and we're saying, yes, Lord, may everything that I pray show the world your true glory, this glory.

May the world see in me. May the world see through us your sovereign presence in the Lord Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, and filling us in our lives with that same glory.

[33:09] See, everything we pray, everything we must pray is for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. And in doing so, you see, we're affirming God's true nature.

We're affirming the true nature of his kingdom and of his power and of his glory forever as it is made known in Jesus. And so, we're asking that everything we pray will be shaped by his kingdom's authority.

Everything we pray will be submitted to his kingdom's true power, not ours. And everything we pray will show forth his kingdom's true glory, a gracious glory of a crucified Savior.

Savior. We affirm God's true nature as made known in Jesus and we affirm God's true name made known in Jesus.

It's through him and through him alone that we can utter our amen to God for his glory. Well, let's pray together as we close.

[34:21] King of kings, we do indeed bow before you, the great God of earth and heaven. And we ask that it would be your kingdom's power, your kingdom's gracious glory that the world would see as it saw in Jesus Christ our Savior, would see even in us as his spirit animates our lives.

And so, we pray, so let it be. So let it be. Amen.