

## **BENEDICTION**

Saturday, March 7

Reading: 2 Chronicles 29:10-19

**Matthew 6:13 (NKJV)** *For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Those of us who have grown up in the church are sure to notice that the familiar benediction we said in church is missing from most modern Bible translations (or put in brackets or in a footnote). There is good reason for this as it was likely not an original part of the Lord's Prayer. Luke's account does not have this closing benediction. In Matthew, the benediction actually interrupts Jesus' flow of thought. The earliest Greek manuscripts we have that contain this ending is from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century, several hundred years after Matthew wrote his gospel.

While this beautiful ending may not be part of the original gospel of Matthew, its origins are very early. The Christian writing known as the Didache (written between 100-150 AD) is a kind of manual that described early church practices and liturgy. It encourages believers to pray the Lord's Prayer three times a day and ends the prayer with the words: "for Yours is the power and glory forever and ever." The word "kingdom" was added a few centuries later. Almost from the beginning, Christians were using this prayer in their church meetings and apparently added the benediction to give a formal ending to Jesus' prayer. The closing benediction was likely inspired by a prayer of David found in 1 Chronicles.

1 Chronicles 29:10-11 "Praise be to You, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is Yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; You are exalted as head over all."

Whether this benediction is a part of Matthew's original gospel or not can be debated. But in either case, it is a beautiful conclusion to Jesus' prayer. It brings us back to where we started. "Yours is the kingdom" reminds us to pray "Your kingdom come." "Yours is the power" reminds us to pray "Your will be done." And "Yours is the glory" reminds us to pray "Hallowed be Your name." He is forever our Father in heaven who provides for our needs, pardons our sins, and protects us from evil.

Can you say "Yours is the kingdom" if you always ask "What can God do for me?"

Can you say "Yours is the power" if you try to do everything in your own strength and only go to God as a last resort?

Can you say "Yours is the glory" if your thoughts center on yourself instead of what you can do for the name of Christ?

As we wrap up our study of the Lord's Prayer, let us not stop our praying. God's kingdom, power, and glory are forever! And so should be our lifting up of praise and petitions to our Father in heaven.

"Praying the Lord's Prayer forces us to look for things to thank and praise God for in our dark times, and it presses us to repent and seek forgiveness during times of prosperity and success. It disciplines us to bring every part of our lives to God."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Timothy Keller. Prayer, p. 94