

God's Power and Might
Lord's Prayer – Week 4
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Retranslation from Aramaic; Jeremiah 10:10-13
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Two elderly men sat in the back of the church one Sunday as the preacher held forth, sermonizing with zeal and the slightest sheen of sweat on his brow. Apparently he had been holding forth for quite some time. Finally, one of the old men leaned over and asked "When's he gonna finish?" The other man replied, "He finished a long time ago. He just hasn't quit yet."

Knowing how and when to finish is a good thing. Good stories are marked by good endings. Good presentations have good and memorable endings. Good sermons likewise should have a good ending.

Let's begin at the beginning... what have we learned so far? The Lord's Prayer has 8 parts:

Invocation

3 "Thy Petitions" – because they begin with the word "thy" and they center on God

Hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come

Thy will be done

3 "Us Petitions"

Forgive us our debts

Lead us not into temptation

Deliver us from evil

Doxology

Today, let us talk about the end... the doxology.

So as I asked in the beginning, how do you end a prayer? ? ?

The question isn't merely about language. Most of us know the words that signify a prayer's conclusion: "In Jesus' name" and "Amen" top the list. Indeed, those are the things we say to end a prayer, but is that it? What happens to our praying when the prayer itself has ended?

Rev. Mark H. Crumpler writes, "The prayer Jesus taught us to pray doesn't have a nice ending. Neither Luke nor Matthew gives us as much as an "Amen." New Testament scholars are generally agreed that Jesus did not give us these words, the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer. In fact, your Bible may place these words in a footnote and not in the body of the biblical text. Earlier manuscripts did not have this as part of the prayer. Yet, the Jewish custom was to end every prayer with a doxology. Jesus seems to leave us hanging. If his first disciples had been listening to Jesus speak this prayer, heads bowed and eyes closed, they would have peeked at the end, wondering what happened. They might have awkwardly glanced at each other as if to say "is that it?"

So somewhere along the way an ending was added to the prayer Jesus gave us. These are words we know well. These words lower the landing gear and bring us to the stopping point; **"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen" (Doxology)**

One of the earliest expressions of thanks that we learn as a child is the doxology, a song that religious folks have been singing to God for several centuries. The most common version of the doxology (the one we in church) comes from a hymn written by Thomas Ken in the 17th Century (lyrics below). The word doxology comes from two Greek words, doxa (meaning 'glory') and logos (meaning 'word'), so quite literally, doxology means "words to glorify." You know these beautiful old words, and we will sing them in a little bit. "Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

So what does this doxology mean? Let's look at these statements individually.

"For thine is the kingdom." This statement reminds us that God is in control. God is inviting us to come to Him and to cry out to Him in prayer

and to ask Him for what we need. At the end of our prayer, we are to understand that He is in control of it all. Aren't you glad God is in control. Nothing ever surprises God or catches Him off guard. You'll never hear God say "Wow, I didn't see that one coming" Or "Wow that one got away from me." God is in control. Our doxology, at the end of the Lord's Prayer, reminds us that all the prayers we have given to God, have been given to the one who has control.

"And the power." This statement reminds us that everything is done through God's power. Why do we pray? We pray because we have faith that God has the power to fix our problems. If God doesn't have that power, then we wouldn't pray, right? How much power does God have? Jeremiah reminds us that "at His wrath the earth quakes," and "He made the earth by His power." God is all-powerful. But that means that when we are done praying, we need to leave our worries with Him. Because He is truly the only one who can fix them.

"And the glory, forever." This statement reminds us that it's all for God's glory. Everything we do, think, and say should be for God's glory.

While man has an ego that needs to be stroked by praise, God does not. Yet He calls us to praise Him. He even commands it. Why? Not because He needs praise, but because we need to praise Him. Praise does something for us. It reminds us of God's greatness and of His glory. It alters our perspective. It changes our attitude. Praise should be where we begin and end with God.

"Amen." We close our prayer and with the little word "Amen". The word "amen" is a Hebrew exclamation, which is an expression of faith. "Amen" means, "it shall truly and certainly be" or so be it. We close our prayers saying that we have given everything over to the Lord and we are trusting in Him for the outcome. Amen... "I trust you with this God."

So New Testament scholars tell us that Jesus didn't actually utter the doxology of the Lord's Prayer. The scholars may be right, but it is good and

right that we say these words when we pray the Lord's Prayer. This is a good way to end a prayer, and here's why:

Once we've said what we need to say, everything from that point on belongs to God.

Once we've sought the glory of God's name and the doing of God's will; once we've asked for God to rule all things; once we've asked for our daily bread and for forgiveness; once we've asked to be kept from anything that would pull us from God and destroy our faith; once we've said all we know to say the rest is up to God.

All authority, all power, all glory belong to God. We leave our prayer in God's hands. More than that, we leave our very lives in God's hands. That's a good way to end a prayer.

And so today we come to an ending. We're ending our reflections on the Lord's Prayer. We're meditating on those last words that we speak so often. But the praying itself does not end.

As Paul urged us in Thessalonians, we "pray without ceasing". We bring our lives before God and we give expression to what we need and what we yearn for. As Jesus instructed, we speak these things without babbling or rambling on and on. The prayer ends but the praying goes on as we look to God to accomplish all things concerning us.

All authority and power and glory belong to God. We confidently leave our prayer in God's hands knowing that he will bring all things to completion. And there's no better ending than that.

So the next time you pray the Lord's Prayer, remember: Our prayers and our lives should bring praise to God and glorify His name. Because God truly has the control and the power. And when we end our prayers, we should leave everything with Him, trusting that we have left it with the one who has control. We leave our worries, problems, and thanksgivings at God's feet saying, "So be it..." Amen.