

## **“The Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory” (An Exposition of the Matthew 6:9-13)<sup>1</sup>**

### ***Introduction***

In our study through the Lord’s prayer, we now come to the conclusion (or *doxology*) of the prayer. The Lord’s Prayer concludes with these words:

**“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.”** (Matthew 6:13, KJV).

If you were raised in a church where the Lord’s prayer was a part of the liturgy of the worship service on Sundays (which used to be *much* more common than it seems to be in our day), no doubt those words are *very* familiar to you.

But have you ever stopped to think about what these words mean? What exactly are we saying when we pray, **“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.”**? And what does it mean when we add the word, **“amen”** at the end? What is the Lord Jesus teaching us about prayer (and about our God and heavenly Father) when he concludes this great model prayer with those words?

Some translations (such as the KJV) include this closing doxology in Matthew's Gospel, while others (such as the ESV) omit this part of v.13 altogether, including it only in a footnote. The NASB includes it, but *places it in brackets*, stating in a footnote that the earliest manuscripts do *not* include the doxology.

So what are we to make of this difficult textual question? And what should we learn from this doxology that we commonly pray at the conclusion of the Lord’s prayer? Those are some of the things that we hope to learn from our text this morning.

### ***The Textual Question***

Perhaps the *first* thing that we need to deal with is the *textual question* itself. In many ways this feels like one of those topics that is 'above my pay-grade,' so to speak. It would certainly be *easier* to just leave it unaddressed.

But we must *not* be afraid that the Word of God, which is inspired, inerrant, infallible, authoritative for all things regarding our faith and practice, and is sufficient for life and godliness, would somehow fail to stand up under scrutiny. And so we should not fail to address these things honestly and openly.

As we have already seen, some translations (including the ESV that we preach from every Lord's day) omit this part of v.13, relegating it to a footnote at the bottom of the page. Others include it, but add a footnote stating that the earliest manuscripts do *not* include it.

*Why is this?* To briefly summarize things, around the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some very important New Testament manuscripts were discovered, and some of these were deemed to be the *oldest* and therefore represented the closest thing to the original texts (or *autographa*) of Scripture.

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

Certain prominent textual critics (*Westcott and Hort*) gave priority to this textual type (known as the *Alexandrian* text type), and this textual tradition had some notable differences in some places, including the ending of the Lord's prayer in Matthew's Gospel.

Prior to that time, nearly every translation of the New Testament included the doxology of the Lord's prayer. It is *not* found in all of the manuscripts, but it *is* found in the majority of them, and it is also found in at least *some* of the oldest ones.

The *King James Version* of the Bible includes the doxology. Interestingly, the *Latin Vulgate* (among some other ancient Latin versions) actually omits it as well. And it was translated in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (so we can't just blame the whole thing on Westcott and Hort).

John Calvin writes,

“After all these petitions comes the reason why we are able to be so bold in asking and so confident in receiving. The reason is not expressed in the Latin versions, but suits this passage so well that it ought not to be omitted.”<sup>2</sup>

Not only is he interpreting the meaning and significance of this doxology for us (referring to it as “the reason” for our confidence in prayer), but he also here gives us his opinion of whether or not it belongs in the text. He says that it fits so well with the Lord's prayer, that “it ought not to be omitted.”

It certainly *does fit* the Lord's prayer, doesn't it? Add to that the what is sometimes referred to as the argument of the “majesty of history,” and I believe a strong case can be argued for the inclusion of this doxology in Matthew's Gospel.

Now Luke's Gospel also includes the Lord's prayer, but omits the doxology. In Luke 11:2–4 we read,

**“And he said to them, “When you pray, say:**

**“Father, hallowed be your name.**

**Your kingdom come.**

**Give us each day our daily bread,**

**and forgive us our sins,**

**for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.**

**And lead us not into temptation.”**

Our Lord Jesus taught the Lord's prayer at least twice, and it was *not* a verbatim repetition both times. And so we must conclude that the doxology is *not* necessarily *essential* to the Lord's prayer, or else He would have included it both times.

But it certainly fits the prayer to a 'T.' And so there is much benefit to us in learning it and praying the Lord's prayer according to it

Add to that the fact that everything in the doxology in v.13 is most certainly *scriptural* (i.e. agrees with the doctrine taught in the rest of Scripture), and we can rest assured that including it will in no way lead us astray in our prayers, but will prove edifying and helpful to us in many ways.

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2 *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1541 Edition, translated by Robert White), p.555

For all of these reasons, I personally would have *much* preferred that the scholars behind the ESV had included the doxology in their translation of Matthew's Gospel, and then just included a footnote stating that it is not found in some rather significant early manuscripts.

Not only did Calvin and many others view this doxology as belonging with the original text of Matthew's Gospel, but (not surprisingly) both the *Heidelberg Catechism* and *Westminster Shorter Catechism* explicitly include it in their explanation of the Lord's prayer.

### The Meaning of the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer

The very last question of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* gives us a very helpful explanation of what Jesus teaches us here in the conclusion of the Lord's prayer. It says:

**“Q. 107. What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us? A.** The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen*, teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise Him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to Him; and, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen*.”

The Shorter Catechism says that there are at least *three* (3) things that this doxology teaches us. The *first* thing it teaches us is “to take our encouragement in prayer from God only.”

*Are you ever discouraged in prayer?* Then let the doxology of the Lord's prayer remind you to 'take your encouragement in prayer *from God only*.' As Calvin said, this doxology gives us the “reason” why we are able to ask boldly at the throne of grace! (***“For thine is the kingdom . . . power, and the glory.”***)

In other words, it is because we pray to our God and heavenly Father, whose *kingdom* is over all, whose *power* is infinite, and whose *glory* outshines all others, that we can and should pray with confidence that He is *both willing and able* to answer all of the requests that we are taught to pray for in this great pattern prayer.

In many ways this is the *very same* lesson that we learned in the preface to the Lord's prayer, where we are taught to address God in prayer as **“Our Father in heaven”** (Matthew 6:9).

Just as calling upon God as **“our Father in heaven”** ought to fill us with *a holy confidence in prayer* because it reminds us that God is certainly *both willing and able* to hear and answer us, even so the doxology of the Lord's prayer is also intended to fill us with that same holy confidence and boldness in prayer!

A.W. Pink writes,

“In this pattern prayer, God is made both the Alpha and the Omega. It opens by addressing Him as our Father in heaven; it ends by lauding Him as the glorious King of the universe.”<sup>3</sup>

*In the doxology the Lord's prayer comes full circle!* When we pray as believers in Christ, we are praying to the One to whom alone belongs **“the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever”** (v.13, KJV). In other words, *nothing* shall be impossible with God.

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3 *The Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer*, p.130

The *second* thing that the doxology of the Lord's prayer teaches us is to praise God in our praying. *Do you praise God in your prayers?* Do we do so when we pray together? We should!

It is *far* too easy to neglect to do that in our prayers, isn't it? How often do we approach God in prayer as if we were presenting a shopping list? As Psalm 33:1 tells us, "Praise befits the upright." We should praise God because it is *fitting* – it is the right thing to do.

And we should remember to praise God in our prayers because, in doing so, we are reminding ourselves of just who it is that we are praying to in the first place! What an encouragement that would be to us in prayer! Praise in *prayer* (just like praise in *song*) is much more *practical* than we think!

*Last but not least*, the conclusion to the Lord's prayer teaches us to testify to our desire and our assurance to be heard by God in our prayers by adding the simple word "**Amen.**" That word has the idea of saying "Let it be so." The better we conform our praying to the Lord's will as expressed in this model prayer, the more easily we will be able to add our "amen" to it!

To add our "Amen" at the end of our prayers is to express both our *desire* to be heard of God, as well as our *confidence* that we will be heard by Him by His grace in Christ!

*Heidelberg Catechism* Q.129 (which is the final question in the catechism) says,

**“Q.129.** *What does that little word “Amen” express?* **A.** “Amen” means: This shall truly and surely be! For it is much more certain that God has heard my prayer than I feel in my heart that I desire such things from him.”

*Do you sincerely desire the things that you pray for?* Do you desire and pray for the glory of God's name? For the coming of God's kingdom and the building of His church? For His will to be done? For your daily bread? For forgiveness of your sins? For help in avoiding temptation and not giving in to sin?

Do you desire and pray for the *salvation* of your family members, loved ones, and neighbors? Do you pray for *revival* in our land?

If you are a believer in Christ, I'm sure that you do. You must!

Then be encouraged, even by the simple little word, "**amen.**" For as the *Heidelberg Catechism* tells us, the word "**Amen**" teaches us that "it is *much more certain* that God has heard" our prayers than it is that we really desire these things that we pray for!

*For His is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever! Amen!*