

Sequoyah Hills Presbyterian Church

Knoxville, Tennessee

March 11, 2012

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*The Lord's Prayer (Part 6)*

*Matthew 6: 13*

Today we come to the end of our series, the Lord's Prayer. This final petition is found only in the *King James Version* of the Bible.

***For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.***

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Jesus' disciples wanted him to teach them to pray. To pray is to be connected to God. So in essence, they are asking, "*Would you teach us how to be connected to God?*" That is an awesome thing, when you stop and think about it. How do we connect with God?

He warned them not to be like the hypocrites who pray to be seen by others. There's no connection with God there. He also warned them not to "*heap up empty phrases,*" thinking they would be heard because of their many words. (Matt. 6:5-8) Stay away from long, fancy prayers! (That's a preacher's professional hazard!)

Sociologist, author and well known speaker Tony Campolo was talking about prayer. He said;

*Can you imagine a teenager going into the den and saying to their dad;  
"O merciful and gracious Father, Thou who knowest all things, and sits in infinite wisdom; I am not worthy to be your child, yet in your mercy, you hath forgiven all my past transgressions. You who provide food and clothing, shelter and all other necessities of life, might I ask if I could please borrow the keys to the car?" (paraphrased. "It's Friday, But Sunday's Coming!")*

You wouldn't do that, so why would we talk to God in such formal and distant language? You want to be reverent, but you don't want to be removed, or distant. Whatever reverence means, it cannot mean a lack of intimacy. By its very nature, prayer is intimate. It's a connection. Teach us to be connected to God!

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The disciples could have asked him anything. "*Teach us how to get rich. Teach us how to be great preachers. Teach us how to raise money.*" They didn't ask any of that. What they did ask was; "*Could you teach us to pray?*"

So he taught them. Prayer begins with "***Our Father,***" which says a lot about who God is, and who we are. "*Our Father...*" binds us to one another. "*Our...*"

includes everybody! If I'm connected to God, and God created all people, then I am connected to all people by nature of my connection to God. Do the math! Prayer broadens my world view. It opens the doors and windows in my relationships with others. You can't be connected to God and be disconnected from what God has created.

He also taught us to pray for the ***will of God to be done*** above our own wills. We can't dream big enough. We can't see far enough. The will of God is perfect. Why wouldn't you want God's will in your life, or in the life of the world? Whatever God's will is would be the perfect life. It would be the kingdom, or rule of God.

Jesus taught us to pray for ***daily bread***. Pray for what is needed today, just for *this day*. We are totally dependent upon God for everything that we need just for this day, this Sunday in March.

And then he taught us to pray for the past. Ask for ***forgiveness***. Forgiveness unlocks the past. It opens the future. You need to be connected to God in order to give and receive forgiveness. I'm not sure how, or why you would do it otherwise.

He also taught us to ask for God's power and strength as we face our ***trials and temptations***. Education, money or earthly success will not deliver us from the tests in life, and we all have them. We need God's help to overcome these things.

In all of this, Jesus never used the word "*me*." It's always ***us***. *Give us...forgive us,... lead us not...deliver us*. It's not just about personal salvation, or going to heaven, or God blessing me and mine. Prayer invites me into community. It connects me to us!

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Then we come to the end of this prayer.

***"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."***

We're not actually sure whether Jesus said this or not. This closing statement is not included in most modern translations of the Bible. It's not there in your pew Bible. The reason is complicated. Byzantine and Alexandrian manuscripts, lost documents, the Didache, and the Protestant Reformers. It all reads like a soap opera, but the bottom line is that we aren't certain if these words were in the original manuscripts. Did Jesus say them, or were they added by the Church? Either way, they lay claim to a great truth. The *kingdom*, and the *power*, and the *glory* belong to God....*forever!*

The circumstances around us may look like other kingdoms are in charge, but the truth is, there is another kingdom that knows no geographical boundaries; has no congress or court; no king or president and is not dependent upon humanity in any way. There is another kingdom operating in this world every day, in every place, at every time. It's a *forever* kingdom and *forever* is a big word! No other kingdoms are *forever*. None.

Thine **IS** the kingdom,... not *was*, or *will be*, but **is**, right now, right here, right in the midst of the Roman Empire, Nazi Germany, the British Empire, American politics, or any other human-made empire. “**THINE** is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,...” in the midst of all evil, pain and suffering.

When a new Pope is consecrated, the choir sings, *Sic transit gloria mundi*. “*Swiftly passes the glory of this world.*” And yet humanity continues to grasp at *glory*, which will always elude us. “*Swiftly passes the glory of this world.*” Don’t put your trust in the wrong kingdom.

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These final words are a doxology. *Doxa*, means—*glory* and *logia* means *word*. So doxology means, “*a word of glory.*” Christians, Jews and Muslims can actually pray this prayer together. Catholics and Protestants can pray this prayer. People of all races and nationalities can pray this prayer together. It’s a unifying prayer. It’s a prayer of connection!

In that spirit, would you join me in praying this prayer together?

**Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on 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. Amen.**