

“Kingdom, Power, Glory”
1 Chronicles 29:10-20; Mathew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4
Rev. Curtis Bablitz
August 27th, 2023

For the past six weeks, we have been working our way through the Lord’s Prayer, and this morning, we read both passages in the Bible where the Lord’s Prayer can be found, in Matthew and in Luke. And you might have noticed that neither passage was exactly the same as the prayer we pray every Sunday, and both of them are missing a pretty big part – the ending. “The kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, forever and ever, Amen.”

In both Matthew and Luke, after the part about deliverance from temptation and evil, the prayer just ends, but every church that prays this prayer always adds this little bit at the end – it’s called a doxology, a declaration of glory added on to Christ’s prayer. But if it’s not in Matthew and it’s not in Luke, then where did it come from? Who added it?

So, to figure this out, we’re going to need to do a little detective work, and the first stop is in a very ancient book, probably written around the time the other gospels were being written. The Book is officially called the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, but it’s more commonly known by its Greek name, the Didache, a short little handbook on how to live as a Christian in a community of Christians, as a church. It’s like a beginner’s guide to worship, with very brief instructions on how you should serve communion, how you should baptize people, and how you should pray. And this is what the Didache says about how Christians should pray:

“as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, like this: 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 today our daily bread, and forgive us our debt as we also forgive our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the power and the glory for ever.

Pray this three times each day.” So there it is. That is almost word for word the same prayer we pray to this day – for some reason, we don’t use Matthew or Luke’s version, we pray the Didache’s version. It’s strange, because when the first Christian leaders were gathering together the books that would make the New Testament, the Didache just barely missed the cut – Matthew and Luke were put in, but the Didache was left out, and yet it is the Didache’s version of the Lord’s Prayer that is the one we use.

So the Didache adds on that doxology, but that just leads to the next question: Why? Why add something to the words of Jesus? And where did the writer of the Didache get the doxology from anyway? Well, if you read the Didache – and it’s available online, and it’s short - it’ll probably take you like ten minutes to read it if you’re interested – you’ll notice that it is a very Jewish book – it is written from the perspective of early Jewish Christians who are working out how this new way of Following Jesus fits in with their long history of being the people of the Covenant, the followers of Yahweh.

There are references to the temple, and to the tabernacle, and to King David. And it is a very Jewish practice to end every prayer, no matter what kind,

with a similar kind of refrain or doxology, kind of like how many Christians end their prayers with “We pray this in Jesus name.” So it’s not surprising that these very Jewish Christians would add a doxology onto the Lord’s prayer. And it’s also not surprising where they found that doxology, back in the Holy Scriptures of the people of Yahweh. Our detective hunt leads us to another somewhat obscure book, a book that most Christians probably haven’t read - the book of Chronicles.

Now, let’s face it, Chronicles isn’t a popular bible study choice – it basically retells the same stories that are found in the books of Samuel and Kings, the history of the people of Israel from Samuel to Saul to David to Solomon to the divided kingdom to exile to return, but in a much less exciting way. Samuel and Kings are just better writing with more details and drama, while Chronicles keeps constantly interrupting the story to give long lists of officials and descendants of such and such.

And Chronicles is much more positive and optimistic about Israel’s history, which makes sense when you consider that Chronicles was written much later than Samuel and Kings, when the people had returned from exile and they wanted to look back at their glory days with fondness. The problem with this is Chronicles leaves out almost all the stories about when David messed up – Chronicles seems like this huge PR campaign to make David look like some perfect, golden King instead of the faithful but flawed and foolish David we see in Samuel/Kings.

And Chronicles focuses the entire story on the Temple – much of the story about David and Solomon is really a story about how they went about planning and building God's temple in Jerusalem. And again, that makes sense when you know Chronicles was written by the returning exiles whose first priority was rebuilding the Temple and restoring proper worship to Israel – they would have cared very much about the story of that temple and how it had been built.

And the story of the temple started way back in the book of Exodus, when Moses was leading the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt through the wilderness, where they saw God's presence with them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and when they received the law on Sinai they saw the mountain shake and smoke from the presence of the Lord on the mountain, giving Moses the law. And that Law told the people to build a structure where God's presence could be easily identified, so that when the people worshipped together and the priests offered sacrifices on their behalf they would be able to understand that God was present with them.

The people built a huge tent called the Tabernacle, and that was the physical place where God's presence lived, it was the place where all the people knew they could go to encounter God. The Tabernacle travelled with them all throughout the wilderness and into the promised land, and it moved around the country all throughout the centuries as different priests and judges and finally kings took charge of it. David is the last of these leaders to care for the tabernacle, but now that Israel is settled as a strong nation, David makes plans to replace the tabernacle with a permanent temple to be built by his son, Solomon.

The last thing that David does as king before he dies is he gathers all Israel together and fundraises for the construction of the new Temple, he collects all the wealth of the kingdom together in one place so Solomon can use it for God's new home.

And then, in front of all the people, David offers a prayer to God, the last prayer he gives, the last words that David speaks in the Bible before he dies. And this is what he says: "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." And that's where our doxology came from – from the last words of King David as he offered a prayer of thanksgiving to God for giving him the materials to build the temple.

Now you may be wondering – why does this matter? We've taken a very roundabout route from Matthew and Luke to the Didache to Chronicles to Moses to David, hunting down this elusive doxology, and now that we've found it, what have we gained? What was the point? Well, when we pray "the kingdom is yours," it's very easy to let that prayer stay abstract, very spiritual and distant, about heavenly kingdoms, glory and power that's far far away from our everyday life.

But when you realize that the first person to pray "The Kingdom is Yours" was actually a King, then that makes a difference. When King David prays "The Kingdom is Yours", he isn't talking about some future spiritual realm, he's talking

about THE kingdom, the Kingdom of Israel, the kingdom they're all standing in at that very moment. Which means David is praying, Lord, I'm not really the King of this Kingdom – You are. I'm not the real power in this country – You are. David is recognizing that he is just the servant of the true King of Israel, the Lord God of Hosts, and that the Kingdom and everything and everyone in it, it all belongs to God.

And David knows that the Kingdom only exists because of the POWER of God – it was God's power and strength that brought them out of Egypt, that established them in the Promised Land, The Kingdom is God's because the Power is God's. And the Kingdom exists *for* the GLORY of God – the whole reason they are there, the whole point of everything God has done for them is so that God's name can be spread over the whole universe, so that everyone in the world will see how blessed God's people are and will praise Yahweh for what he has done, so that all nations will gather in Jerusalem to learn the Word of the Lord.

King David looks back at the history of his people and the power that got them there, he looks around at the kingdom he leads, he looks forward at how the people will one day glorify God in the Temple, and he realizes that all of it, Past Present Future, every inch of it belongs to God. The Power of God built the Kingdom of God, so that the Kingdom of God can build the Glory of God. And so David prays, O Lord, the Kingdom is yours, the Power is Yours, the Glory is Yours.

And that is also what we pray. And maybe we aren't Kings - there isn't a kingdom here that we rule over, there isn't a nation we take charge of. All we

have is ourselves, the little two foot by two foot by six foot box we each occupy on this earth, this little kingdom of our own body and mind. But when we look at ourselves, at our own lives, what was true for King David is still true for us today. We belong to God. The Kingdom of our lives belongs to God. We are here today because the power of God has been at work in our lives, providing for us and guiding us towards Jesus Christ.

So often we think we're in charge, the rulers of our own lives and destiny, but when we try to run things we just end up causing more trouble for ourselves and the world around – this kingdom of my self only thrives when it is ruled by its true and eternal king. And we exist to give God all the glory, so that every part of our lives brings honour and praise to our saviour and King, so that by the testimony of our words and actions everyone around us will come to know the living God and see Jesus Christ in us. In our Past, our Present and our Future, the Power and the Kingdom and the Glory belong to God. Just as surely as the tabernacle and temple became God's home, where God's presence could be encountered and revealed to the people, so God's home today is here, in each of our hearts, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God's presence and power can be encountered in us.

We are God's kingdom, we are the consequence of God's power, we are the proclaimers of God's glory. The apostle Paul in his letter to the Corinthians said "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price." We are God's home, we are God's temple, we are the place

the Holy Spirit has decided to live, with us and in us. And that is why we pray “for the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory are Yours, Forever and Ever,” because everytime we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are becoming the kingdom, we are receiving the power, we are proclaiming the Glory of the most High God, and we are telling the world that now and forever, we belong to God.

Everything that we have prayed for so far, it all happens as part of God’s ongoing work in this world and in us - God’s power works on us to bring God’s kingdom in us so that God’s glory will be proclaimed by us. Our purpose on this planet is to glorify God and enjoy his goodness forever and ever, and that is what we pray for, everytime we pray this prayer, because we are God’s people, we belong to Jesus Christ. Today, may we experience God’s power, so that in our hearts and in our lives, God’s kingdom will come, and God’s name will be glorified in all we do. In the name of Jesus Christ – Amen!