

“For Thine Is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, Forever!”

(The Lord’s Prayer, Part 7)

Matthew 6.13

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We have reached the last line of the prayer. “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.” Here is what it looks like in Matthew and Luke:

Matthew:

Luke:

I’m not kidding. If you’re reading along in your Bible, and you come to these places in Matthew and Luke where Jesus teaches this prayer to his disciples, in most Bibles, this line is completely missing. In Matthew, the last line of the prayer is “but rescue us from the evil one.” In Luke, the last line is “and do not bring us to the time of trial.” The line about “kingdom and power and glory” just isn’t there in *most* translations – not the NRSV, or the RSV, or the CEB, or the NIV, or the NLT, or virtually all the commonly used translations today. But if you go back and look at some older versions, like the King James, you will find it – but only in Matthew. What’s going on? Well, basically what happened was that a whole bunch of early manuscripts of the Bible were discovered in the 19th and 20th centuries, and in those early manuscripts, the line’s just not there. It shows up in the *later* manuscripts, but only in Matthew. When the King James translators were working on this passage, they faithfully translated from the manuscripts they had access to, which included this line – not knowing that a couple hundred years later, older and better manuscripts would be discovered which didn’t include it. The question really is not, “Why isn’t this line in the Bible,” so much as it is, “Why did this line get *added* to the Bible?” That seems to be what happened: it wasn’t in the original, but it got added later on. And we’re never going to know why. Whatever happened, it wasn’t there originally, which is why almost all of the newer translations omit the line, though usually they’ll put it in a footnote. But when it *was* there, here’s what it looked like:

ὅτι σοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία, καὶ ἡ δύναμις, καὶ ἡ δόξα, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἀμήν

The translation is pretty straightforward; these are all easy words in Greek. Literally, it goes something like this: “because yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, unto the eons, amen!”

It’s actually remarkably similar to a line we find in the Old Testament, in a prayer that David prayed near the end of his life, when he was preparing to hand his kingdom over to his son Solomon:

“Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all. And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name.” (1 Chronicles 29.11-13) David goes on to pray for his people, and for his son. Basically David is extolling God’s virtues, before he brings his requests to God. What we find here in the Lord’s Prayer is something similar; the Lord’s Prayer (when it includes that last line) extols some of God’s virtues, in this case *after* we have made our various requests. That first word – “because” or “for” – is critically important; it links this line of the prayer with everything that precedes it. We want to honor God’s name; we want God’s kingdom to come, we want to do God’s will, we want (no, we *need*) our daily nourishment, both physical and spiritual; we want (no, we *need*) to forgive those who have done us wrong, just as we want (*need*) to receive God’s forgiveness for all the things we do that are wrong; we pray that we will not have to face any trials in life; we pray that God would rescue us from all the designs of the evil one; *and we have the boldness and the audacity to ask for all of this for – because* – of who God is. Because of what belongs to him. Because the *kingdom* is not *ours* – it’s *his*. Because the *power* is not *ours* – it’s *his*. Because the *glory* is not *ours* – it’s *his*. And because that’s not just true *now* – but because it will be true *forever*. Unto the eons. Until *eternity!*

What we’re doing here in this last line of the prayer is we’re reminding ourselves of *who God is*. These are good reminders for us. If we’re going to pray boldly and audaciously, we need to remember who we’re praying to. We need to remember what our God can do, and what rightfully belongs to him.

We pray all these things because there’s a kingdom. There really is a kingdom. A kingdom that is *God’s*. We live in a world of presidents and prime ministers, but there is a *King* who’s more important than *any* of them. We wake up every morning, and there is a *King* who is calling for our allegiance. A *King* who invites us to serve him, of our own free will. Why? Because *his* way, and his way *alone*, is what will lead to righteousness and freedom and peace and healing and restoration and all the other things we long for. There’s a kingdom. It’s *good*. And it’s *God’s*.

We pray all these things because the *power* is God’s. God is *powerful*. *Mighty*. *Strong* to save. He is the one who led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. He is the one who caused the blind to see and the lame to walk. He is the one who can heal people, body, or mind, or soul, or even all three. He is the one who brought us salvation and redemption on the cross. He is the one who brings us sanctification and new life through the Holy Spirit. He is the one who can free us even now from all our troubles – our marital struggles, our financial worries, our bad habits, our addictions, our worries, our cares. He is the one who has the *power* – the power that *really matters*. The power that can do things that *we simply can’t do* on our own. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” says Paul in Philippians; there is a *power* that we can access when we are aligned with God that can enable us to do things we aren’t ordinarily able to do. We were not designed to just endure the trials and tribulations of this life on our own. There is a strength and a power that comes from *God*. This is the power that we are *relying* on every time we pray this prayer, or *any* prayer when we’re asking for God’s help and mercy. You want a way out from all the trouble you’re in? Ask God to *lead* you. You want healing for that person you love so dearly? Ask God to *heal* them. You want freedom from the crushing blows that

someone continues to throw you way? Ask God to *change their heart*. We're talking about *power* here, folks, *God's power*. This is no flight of fancy, no figment of our imagination. This is the power of the God who created the *universe*, including galaxies that we know about that are more than *thirteen billion light years away from us!* This is the power of the God who created each of *us*, starting out as a single cell at the moment of our conception, which multiplies and divides to become an incredibly complex organism comprised of something on the order of 37 trillion cells! This is the power of the God who made all the creatures in the ocean, all the birds in the sky, all the beasts of the earth – scientists have catalogued about 1.5 million different species that exist on this earth, with many more remaining to be discovered! The magnitude and the complexity and the diversity of this creation is *enormous* – and there's a Being who had the power not just to *create* it all, but also the power to *envision* it in the first place! *Power, folks, God's power – oh my gosh!* I'm reminded of the last few chapters in the book of Job, when God basically says to Job, "Look, dude, here are some of the things I have done. Can you even hold a candle to the *least* of them?" God's power is simply *enormous!* What we do when we pray ... is we're trying to *tap into* some of that power. We're asking or inviting God to *use* some of that power. Yet often, our prayers sound pretty weak, don't they? Pretty timid? "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen." We typically say it in a monotone, as if this line is of little or no significance. But my gosh – we're affirming here all the things here that God is, and has, and can do. Let us not utter these words feebly. "For *thine* is the *Kingdom!* And the *Power!* And the *Glory!* *Forever!*"

Yes, the *glory* is God's too. What's the glory of God? That's hard to conceptualize. There are some images in scripture: Isaiah 6, Revelation 3, God *enthroned* in the heavens, in all his glory. We have to *imagine* what that looks like. Scripture paints pictures with words, not with images. But we know what the view from a majestic mountain vista looks like. We know what a gorgeous sunset on Lake Michigan looks like. We know what the Rockies look like, the Himalayas, Yosemite, Yellowstone, the Great Plains, the beautiful farm fields here in central Michigan, on a beautiful summer morning. We know what a newborn baby looks like. We know what *glory* looks like. Magnificence. Radiance. Grandeur. Majesty. All the beauty of this universe, visible to the human eye; our minds and our hearts just utterly in *awe* and *wonder*. That's glory. And *God's* glory? God is more *beautiful* and *majestic* than all of that combined. We should just *humble* ourselves before his glory, awestruck and inspired.

Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory ... *forever. Unto eternity.* Not just now, not just in our lifetime, not just in the lifetime of our children, or our children's children, not just in this span of history that we find ourselves in, but *hundreds* of years from now, *thousands* of years, *billions* – from the very dawn of time to its very end, and even beyond that, for God outlasts time itself. God's kingdom and power and glory *endure*. Though the earth should change, and maybe even pass away; maybe our sun will eventually die out; *God's* kingdom and power and glory will endure. Forever! Unto eternity!

And so we come to the end. *Amen.* May it be so! We lift up this prayer to you, O Lord. We make these requests. We ask for these things. We ask for them regularly. Routinely. We ask because we know: *you're* the one who's got the Kingdom. *You're* the one who's got the Power. *You're* the one who's got the Glory. And you've got it all forever, and ever, and ever. *Amen!*

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