

The Kingdom, Power & Glory

Matthew 6:8-13

In working through the Lord's Prayer, we've attempting to connect God's vision of the future to the present. We've seen great things are ahead—a great city, glorious people, teeming with gospel life. Jesus is teaching us that his future kingdom comes now through the prayers of his people—his kingdom come, his will be done. So far, we've seen *why we pray*—because we've been rescued by the Father and called into his kingdom mission. *How to pray*—give us, forgive us, deliver us. We pray specifically, continually, and dependently. In our final message, we're considering the closing refrain: “**For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**” Let's look at it in three parts: Kingdom, Power, & Glory.

The Kingdom

“Thine (or Yours) is the kingdom...” This doxology isn't included in many of the reliable Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, which is why you'll find it footnoted in many of your Bibles. So why should we include it? Well, it has been valued *historically*. The *Didache*, a first century Christian teaching document, instructed the early Christians to pray the Lord's Prayer three times a day, *and it includes the doxology* (8:3). While it may not have been Jesus' original words, it was considered valuable by the early church. Another reason, it's *theologically rich*—to God be the kingdom, power, and glory. In fact, this doxology shows up in different forms throughout Scripture (1 Chr 29:11-13; Rev 4:11). So it's “biblical” in the sense that it's historically valued and theologically rich. It also gives us a proper focus in prayer. Yours be the **kingdom**. What's that? We saw several weeks ago that the kingdom of God is the realm where God reigns. Where is that? Wherever Jesus shows up, and where his message is believed. In his itinerant preaching, Jesus proclaimed: “**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel**” (Matt 4:17; Mark 1:15). Jesus Kingdom **message** was to repent. This means to turn from following one king and to start following another. Repentance isn't merely a switch in behaviors; it's a switch in allegiances. If you swear allegiance to the flag, you're devoted to democracy, with all its benefits and challenges, but you come under the reign of the Constitution. The new allegiance of the kingdom is quite visible when Jesus casts out a demon and says: “**But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you**” (12:28). In casting out a demon, Jesus restored the man's speech and sight. He brought the restorative reign of God over the realm of this man. As a result, he established a new, better, orderly rule. **See, when Jesus kingdom comes, things get turned upside down or really right side up.** You see things as they really are. Insanity is exchanged for sanity. Instead of the demons possessing people, Jesus possessed the demons. The gospel of the kingdom restores our sanity. Oh, you say, I'm perfectly sane. Really? If you've ever known an insane person, you'll know they are often confused. They blur the lines between reality and fantasy, and it just so happens that the fantasy puts them at the center of their reality. I'm watching *Fringe*, a sci-fi tv series that follows a fringe division of the FBI that investigates unexplainable phenomena related to a parallel universe. The key to understanding these wild occurrences is Walter Bishop, a doctor who was released from a mental hospital to help the FBI with his unorthodox explorations into

fringe science. *Everything* revolves around him. He is essential to every case. He insists on his way. He is obsessed with his experiments, procedures, and licorice. Every corpse has to be autopsied in *his* lab. He won't use another. He is the (insane) man. **Insane people create an alternate reality where they are king.** Very often we create an alternate reality where we're king, where everyone should do what we want, where we are in control and we are right. No one should challenge us, deny us, and definitely not cut us off. People who do get our disapproval or anger. **Sin is a step into momentary insanity, where we slip out of the universe of the kingdom into the universe of self, where things are out of control.** In our kingdom, everything revolves around us. In God's kingdom everything revolves around him. When it does, things get turned right side up, the insane become sane. Jesus comes along and says: Repent, turn away from trusting in yourself and, "Believe", trust in me. Trust that my plans are better, even if it's difficult. I'm restoring your sanity; I'm turning things right side up. **The kingdom of God comes through those who repent and believe!** So when we pray "yours is the kingdom," we're saying: "Your reign is better. I give up control. I submit my plans to your plans, including kids who don't behave and co-workers who don't cooperate." God's kingdom comes through the people who have a new and better King.

The Power

God's kingdom came with power. It has the power to change everything, to turn things right side up. It has the power to change our **perspective**. It shifts attention away from ourselves onto God, "*Your will be done, even if it means I suffer, Lord.*" When we pray the Lord's prayer we're asking for an alternate vision of reality. Have you ever noticed how a change in perspective about the future can radically change the present? In Terminator Sarah Connor believes Judgment Day is coming on a specific date, so she lines her whole life up with that future. She is willing to do *whatever it takes*—escape an insane asylum, take on SkyNet, or take a bullet to save the world. In *Looper*, Joe, a self-serving assassin learns something about the future—his perspective changes—which results in a powerful transformation of his character. He denies himself to save the world. **If you believe the kingdom message, it will powerfully change, not just your perspective, but your person.** Peter watched the kingdom come in Jesus and he wrote: "**The end is at hand, be self-controlled and sober minded—for the sake of your prayers.**" His perspective changed him. He knew the end of all things was coming and with it things being turned right side up. So, he didn't check out (like a lot of conservatives); instead, he dug in. He sobered up and got self-controlled. Self control is disciplining yourself to line up with your goals, exercise to weigh a certain amount, rehearsals to nail the tune. Peter disciplined himself to line up with the kingdom. **Kingdom perspective changes us.** You'll orient your life around what matters—holiness, justice, salvation. Considering the pursuit of **holiness**, A. W. Tozer said: "I want to be so holy that when heaven arrives, the leap won't be so great." There's a slackness about holiness in the church today. We've lost our perspective. We don't have that kind of tenacity. We've lost our vision of the alternate reality of the kingdom and slipped into the insanity of the American Dream. But when you get under God's reign, when you're bowed before him, holiness becomes appealing, even urgent. **You pray for power to be something you're not.** Holiness sends us in all kinds of directions. It might send you to your knees, to a third world nation, it might send you away from porn, it might send you

next door; it might send you right up the ladder among cultural elites. Where did holiness send Jesus? Jesus' holiness took him right into the slums; it put him next to the sinners, it put him in front of the cultural and political elites. **His holiness put him on a mission to seek and save the lost**, to change the world. Our vision is too small. Our dreams too petty because they don't line up with the kingdom of God; they line up with the kingdom of America. And His holiness moved him to **pray** "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." And he did the Father's will, even at the darkest hour, when it was hardest, trembling in the garden the night before the cross, **prayer** lined him up with the Father's will, *even when it was hard* and led the greatest revolution in human history—overthrowing of sin, death, and evil. We need to sober up. What we believe about the future, changes the present. If you knew the end (and you do), you'd get self-controlled. You'd make sacrifices. You'd make amends. You'd pursue a holiness that would send you in the direction of the kingdom. We would pray. We'd pray because we know God has the power to put things right, to transform the insanity of sin with the sanity of grace. **The end is at hand, be self-controlled and sober minded—for the sake of your prayers.** **The kingdom has the power to change not just your perspective but to change your prayers.** You'll pray, plead that your life align with the King. You'll pray for his kingdom to come in Austin as it is in heaven. How? Try prayerwalking. Walk your neighborhood, downtown, the greenbelt and pray for his kingdom to come. As you pray, ask the Spirit to draw your attention to *images for intercession*. This week I was walking the neighborhood and heard classical music floating out of neighbor's house. I prayed for the beauty of the music to fill the city and for my neighbor to know where such beauty comes from. Images for intercession. Walk the eastside and pray for Hispanics and Hipsters to repent and believe for the kingdom of God is at hand! Take an Instagram and hashtag it #onearthasitisinheaven

The Glory

The Kingdom, the power (to change our perspective & prayers), and the glory. God's glory is his reputation. Our reputation is determined by our character. God's reputation is determined by his character. God's character is perfect in every way—his mercy, his justice, his love, his holiness, his grace, his immensity, his sovereignty, his mystery. His glory is the sum total of his diverse excellencies expressed in Father, Spirit, Son, the panoply of his perfections writ large across the canvass of redemptive history, culminating in his kingdom come, in a stunning, alternate vision of reality—the new heavens and the new earth, the new Jerusalem, the holy city, his very own dwelling place, among an undeserving people, in unmatched grace, in unending glory forever and ever! His reputation hangs on history culminating in his kingdom filled with a diverse people who have changed allegiances and give him glory. The Lord's prayer is asking the Lord to bring it. To bring the kingdom. To turn it all right side up. To replace the insanity of sin with the sanity of salvation. In the words of NT Wright, **"It is the prayer that the alternative vision of reality may become, not just a vision, but reality."** So let's be a people who pray for God's reputation, for God's glory, for God to bring the kingdom. **"Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever, Amen."**