

## Welcome

I welcome you to the final meditation in our series on the Lord's Prayer. I hope that over the past five weeks you have gained some new insight into this prayer that we so affectionately say on a regular basis. Our church reopening committee met this week to draw up guidelines as we continue to plan on how we will be church this fall. We will be mailing out our recommendations as well as posting online to ensure everyone is in the loop as we move forward towards reopening. Of course, in the meantime that does not mean we need to wait to connect with friends and neighbours through technology or a simple phone call. So I invite you to reach out this week to that someone who has been on your mind. I now invite you to come together in mind and spirit as we continue to gather together this day.

## Opening Prayer

Compassionate God, we have come to the end of another week full of turmoil from the massive explosion in Beirut to the increase in Covid cases south of the border and we now begin a new week one full of unknowns. We feel apprehension yet we are hopeful that this week will be one where we notice positives instead of negatives, friendship instead of foes, caring and compassion instead of discrimination and indifference.

Loving God we know It is not always easy to live our lives following in the footsteps of your son, yet this is what we long to do, deep in our hearts; may we be strong enough to push aside the despairs of an angry world and remember that we now have the opportunity to change things; ourselves, our communities, and our world, because we have you as our support and our strength. We can make a difference. We are not alone. We live in Your world and for this we now gather to worship your Holy name. Amen.

## Song

Our opening hymn today is entitled "Your Kingdom Come" and is sung by the artist Pete James. Please enjoy.

## Scripture:

Rev. 22:1-5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup>down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.<sup>3</sup> No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

Matthew 6:5-14 (NIV)

<sup>5</sup> “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup> “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one

<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

### Meditation

*“For Thine is the Kingdom...” [The Lord’s Prayer, Part 6]*

If you are a fan of the actor Bill Murray you may remember an of the wall movie made in 1991 entitled “What About Bob?”

Bob is a man with problems who consults a prim-and-proper psychiatrist played by Richard Dreyfuss. Bob ends up completely well, many adventures later, while the psychiatrist ends up in the hospital. Then there is another problem: the story can't just end there. The story's not yet balanced or complete. It lacks an ending. How, you wonder, can the pieces possibly be put back together in the few moments that remain?

They are, of course—but only in the closing sixty seconds. Without that brief closing segment, the movie would be seriously flawed. The story would feel as if it were still unfinished. And it would have been.

*No one likes a story without an ending.*

What matters, after all, is how it all turns out. Everything that comes before means nothing. What counts is the bottom line.

That's also the way it is with the Lord's Prayer: it matters how it ends. The ending makes a difference—because those last few sentences are really much more than a prayer. They are a summary of who God is. They point us to the sort of relationship God wants us to share with him. So we don't want the prayer just ending in mid-air. We want a bottom line.

And there is a bottom line. Almost every time you've ever repeated the Lord's Prayer, you've said these words: "For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.” Those words are the prayer’s powerful conclusion.

We all know that’s how the prayer ends. Problem is: whenever we read the prayer from a modern translation, as we did this morning, those words seem to be missing. Those last familiar words just don’t seem to be there. This morning we read the prayer from Matthew’s Gospel, and you didn’t hear those words, did you?

Now if you look up the text and check it carefully, you usually find a footnote that says this: *Some late manuscripts [read], “for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”*

So what are these “late manuscripts”? And why do they have those well-known words while other manuscripts don’t?

Well here is what I think likely happened. The Gospels were originally written in scrolls called manuscripts—, not published in books—and they were written thirty or forty years after Jesus had died. In time, the manuscripts were copied—then the copies were copied, then they were copied, and so on—until there were lots of copies. Unfortunately, by that time, the original manuscripts were lost.

When scholars today check the copies that remain—and very few do remain, especially of the earliest copies—here is what they find: that the earliest copies we now have of Matthew’s Gospel do not contain the usual closing of the Lord’s Prayer at all. It ends instead with the section that says, “...Deliver us from evil one.”

Only later copies have the ending we are all familiar with. So if only later copies have that ending, then those words must have been added during the copying of new manuscripts. Likely the words first appeared 50 or 100 years after the original manuscript was written. No modern translation of the New Testament includes those words as a part of the original prayer.

So what does that mean? It means that Jesus likely did not include these words at the end of his prayer at all. He did say those sorts of things at other times; but his original prayer most likely just ended where it does in our modern translations.

So the section beginning, “For Thine is the Kingdom...” is not likely the words of Jesus.

So where did this later ending come from?

Chances are, Bible scholars tell us, those words were added to the prayer as it was used in the early church. When the first Christians began saying the Lord’s Prayer, they got in the habit of adding an ending that sounded like a good conclusion. Then, a few years later, some scribe or monk who was recopying Matthew’s Gospel and who knew that ending simply wrote it in without thinking. He likely never even noticed he was doing it: that was the way he had always learned it. Later copies, made from his manuscript, then of course included what he had added.

“Well then,” you may say, “if Jesus didn’t really say these words

on the end of the prayer, maybe we shouldn't say them, either." Maybe if you have ever been at a catholic mass you may have awkwardly found yourself being the only one speaking this last line at the end of the Lord's prayer.

But There's nothing at all wrong with the ending. It's is actually a very good ending. It's a summary statement—a bottom line—added by the first Christians, who by that time knew the rest of the story. They had witnessed the resurrection. They had experienced the power of God's Holy Spirit. They had been convicted by the authority of the Gospel. They knew first-hand that the truths contained in the Lord's Prayer could be counted on. So their summary statement is really a summary of their whole experience of the truth of the Gospel.

*For Thine is the Kingdom....*

Since this is the last week in the lord's prayer series Let's just review what we've learned so far:.

*Our Father....*

Father—because Jesus named God in this way. Father—because our God is not nameless and impersonal. This God has invited us to join his very own family, to be his very own children. This God has invited us to come to know him in a most personal way.

This God who is our Father—who longs to be not just your Father or my Father, but the Father of both of us, of all of us—so that we

may also be brothers and sisters of each other.

*Our Father who art in heaven....*

God who has invited us to call him “Father” is also ruler of the universe, Lord over all, from his throne in heaven. Yes, he is personal and intimate. Yes, he is also power beyond measure.

*Hallowed be Thy name....*

We pray first of all, not for ourselves, but for God. We pray that this God would be honoured and loved and respected here in his world, among the people he loves, in the creation he has crafted. We pray that his whole world would come to honour him as God alone should be honoured.

*Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven....*

We pray for more than just that God would be honoured. We pray that his Kingdom—his rule—would be accepted by the whole world. We pray that all people everywhere would choose to obey rather than to rebel, to forsake evil, to pursue justice. We pray that peace would triumph over violence, love over hatred. We pray for God’s broken, hurting, world.

*Give us this day our daily bread....*

Now—only now—do we pray for ourselves: that God in heaven would meet our needs—for bread, and for all other necessities of life. We pray that he would do it day by day, as we bring our

needs before him.

*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us....*

We pray for ourselves a second time: not only to be cared for, but also to be forgiven for our sins and our failures. We ask to be restored in the eyes of our Father, to set us free to begin again.

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil....*

We pray for ourselves a third time: that God would allow us to stand fast in the face of the hard things of life. We pray that God would keep evil from destroying us. We pray he would support us with his everlasting arms.

*For Thine is the Kingdom....*

Now, at the end: the bottom line. In the end, the only Kingdom that will last forever will be the Kingdom of our God.

Where do you think the world is heading? People have always wondered that. Humanly speaking, of course, no one knows.

When I was a child, I felt the world I grew up in was optimistic. Back in the 1970s, I would marvel how cars were getting bigger and better, while new inventions were making life easier and easier. The standard of living was rising. Medical technology was curing most diseases as I remember the getting my vaccinations. The scientists seemed to know everything that was needed to make the

world all that it should be—or if they didn't quite, they soon would. We thought we knew where the world was heading.

Those were the days before climate change and a worldwide pandemic.

Maybe it's just the media's fault or our instant access to everything that's happening with a focus on the negative. Will the scientists come up with a new vaccine now? Will they be able to save us?

*For Thine is the kingdom....*

Perhaps our world will find answers to some of the frightening things we face. Maybe things will get better. I hope we do find answers. I pray that we do.

But maybe we won't. Maybe the world we have put together will come apart at the seams. We don't know. No one knows.

*For Thine is the Kingdom....*

There is a Kingdom that will stand forever. In the end, the only Kingdom will be our Lord's. The end of the story is that the last word will be his.

The opening verses of the Bible describe a perfect world. But read on. In no time the picture is defaced, altered, ruined. Chapter after chapter tells of the struggle between those who are trying to restore the picture and those who would further deface it.

It's a never-ending soap opera—endless struggle, endless sin. It is broken only by the life and death and resurrection of Jesus.

Then—skip ahead to the very last chapter of the Bible. How does the story end?

The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There shall be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever [Rev. 22:3b-5].

*For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever....*

Forever? That's where the story is headed. When all is said and done, "forever" is all that really matters.

Forever is all that matters—because through Jesus our Lord, "forever" belongs to us. We are citizens of that forever Kingdom, and our Father in heaven is forever the King.

*For Thine is the Kingdom...forever.*

Thanks be to God. Amen.

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Let us now Honor God with all of our hearts as we offer prayers for all those in need today. Let Us Pray

For this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place. Lord, hear our prayers

For peace, and justice among all peoples. Lord hear our prayers,  
For students and teachers, and all those soon returning to their studies in whatever form that takes. Lord, hear our prayers.

For workers whose work is uncertain, or non-existent or stressful during, and for those who employ and manage them during this truly uncertain time. Lord, hear our prayers

For farmers and abundant fruits of the earth, and for safety from violent storms.  
Lord hear our prayers.

For the sick and the suffering, and their families, and all those in distress we think especially those injured and killed in the blast this past week in Beirut Lebanon.  
Lord, hear our prayers.

For this special part of the world that we call home and those who live in it, and for our families, companions, and all those we love. Lord, hear our prayers.

For those who rest in Christ and have passed on before us. Lord, hear our prayers.  
Lifting our voices with all of creation, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. As we now pray for those particular people for whom we have special concern this day. We silently name them before you, loving God.  
Whatever their need or personal crisis that has become too heavy to bear, we ask you to guide, guard, nurture and sustain them. Lord hear our prayers

Gracious God, bless us your people and encourage us in the words of your Son who taught us to pray saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen

To close off this series let us listen to the classic rendition of the Lord's Prayer as found in our Hymnal. Have a Blessed Week Until we meet again.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IGN6Fq\\_mlU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IGN6Fq_mlU)