

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Last Sunday after Trinity, November 23, 2008

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HYMNS: 339, 458:9, 244, 257, 238:6.

LESSONS: 1 Chronicles 29: 1-25, Revelation 1: 1-6, Matthew 24: 21-31.

SERMON TEXT: Matthew 6:13c (KJV)

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Throughout the prayer our Savior taught us, we find references to all that God is and all that he can do. He rules our lives from heaven. His name is and should be holy. We want his kingdom to come so that we may be ruled by him. We want what he wants. We know he can and does provide for our earthly needs as well as assuring us of the forgiveness of all our sins. He delivers us from evil and steers us away from temptation with his holy Word. But in the last words of this prayer, Jesus reminds us that all things are truly under his control.

Scripture speaks repeatedly of the Glory of God and of the Power of God and of the Kingdom of God. Jesus here is reminding us that truly,

ALL IS GOD'S!

- 1. No kingdoms shall endure except God's kingdom.**
- 2. All power belongs to God.**
- 3. All glory belongs to God.**
- 4. Amen, Amen, that is, so shall it be!**

These words of the Lord's Prayer are not found in the NIV except as a footnote. Why? Some of the ancient manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel do not include these words. It is possible that they were added by later copyists. Luke does not include these words. Whether these words were originally included or not, they are thoroughly scriptural and certainly appropriate as a conclusion or doxology to the Lord's Prayer. They remind us that God, who rules over all things, has the power to answer all our prayers and deserves all glory now and forever. He is the one who has commanded us to pray and has promised to hear us, so we can be certain that our prayers will be heard and answered. With the 'amen' we confess: I know all this is true.

The Second Petition has reminded us that our Father's kingdom is the manifestation or revealing of his saving concern for us. The love which it reveals assures us that he will hear and answer our prayers. The address of the Lord's Prayer reminds us that he rules over all things from heaven in glorious power and is surely able to give us what we ask. His glory shines forth brightest in his grace. He will add to his glory every time he answers our prayers. Nor will he ever vanish from the scene. His glorious virtues will endure forever. He will always be there for us as we approach him in childlike confidence. There is every reason then for us to conclude our prayer with Amen, the word which expresses complete confidence. We may pray for ourselves, and for all people in the world in confidence.

In the 21st century, we aren't usually accustomed to speaking of "kingdoms". The word suggests a king, and few countries in the world are actually ruled by a king. There are democracies, there are dictatorships, there are ruling bodies made up of military men. But everyone to whom Jesus ever spoke knew what a kingdom is. The Jews had known from childhood of the glorious kingdoms of their past, especially kings like David and

Solomon, who are mentioned in our Old Testament lesson. They knew what a king was. And at the time of Jesus' life, they were ruled in the earthly kingdom of Caesar, the Roman emperor, or "king". They could see and feel the power of king as the ruling authority.

But scripture in speaking of the kingdom of God reminds us that God's kingdom is the only one that shall endure. Especially in our Gospel lesson do we hear about God's kingdom prevailing on judgment day, when God the Father will send his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ to judge the living and the dead. What a grand and glorious day that will be for all who believe in Jesus as their Savior from all their sins! What a dread, horrible day that will be for all who do not believe, who rejected Jesus, who denied his role in the history of mankind. Before he ascended into heaven Jesus himself said ***"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*** Mark 16:16 Or, as you read from the KJV: ***"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."***

The Jews in Jesus' day may not have lived in a kingdom where Caesar was a kind, loving, generous leader who lived and ruled for the benefit of all his people. They, like many in history and even today may not have lived in a kingdom in which all was done "for the people" by the leader. We do not live in a nation today in which everything is done for all the people by a kind and generous government. We must pay taxes to support the programs of the government, some of which we may not approve of. But in the Word of God, the Bible, we find evidence of the kind of king our God, whom we are privileged to call "our Father", is. He loved all his people so much that he wanted to redeem them from the worst calamity possible – eternal damnation. He sacrificed his only son – in terms of a king, that would be his immediate successor, the one who would rule on the throne when he was ready to hand it over – so that all the citizens of his kingdom should benefit eternally, not just through bread and entertainment, as Roman rulers often tried to appease their people. God's government is always and only for his people, that they may then praise and honor him.

God's kingdom is the one we should seek above all things. Jesus told us ***"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*** What things? Well, listen to Matthew 6:24-34: ***"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."***

Yes, O Lord God, creator, redeemer, sanctifier, yours truly is THE kingdom. But you also have all power! We are so surrounded today by evolutionary teachers and influences that it is easy to forget who really holds the power. Even many who claim to be Christians and claim the name Lutheran reject God's power in creation. Billions of dollars and billions of hours are spent teaching evolutionary ideas about the origin of all things and researching what man in his infinitesimal wisdom – his tiny, tiny wisdom – thinks started all things. Humans by and large reject what God in his infinite wisdom – his infinitely huge wisdom – did and says about the origin of all things. God holds all the power and just allows mankind little bits of power. Surely, God rules!

We need only listen to what man tells us about the power of nature – thunderstorms, or hurricanes, or volcanoes or earthquakes – to realize that creation – yes, the things God created – contains more power than mankind could imagine. I find it amazing when men tell us that one lightning storm can discharge enough energy– if it could be harnessed – to supply the entire U.S. with electricity for 20 minutes. I am astounded at the power of earthquakes to destroy what man has built so solidly. I am flabbergasted at the power found in natural events. But these “natural events” are truly the work of God who holds all power in heaven and earth. And that is the power that Jesus tells us has been given to him. **“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”** Matthew 28:18. (KJV) **“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”** (NIV) Truly, he has power over all things, nature included, as we learn from his miracles. But more important is Jesus’ power over the powers of sin and darkness. Jesus beat the devil by coming back to life. God not only has the power to create life but the power to bring someone dead back to life! What a remarkable show of God’s power! And that power is all for your eternal good! **“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”** Romans 8:28.

Jesus tells us simply to pray and honor God also with the words “for thine is the glory for ever and ever”. God’s people in the Old Testament could see that glory in the wilderness leading and watching over them with the pillar of fire at night and the pillar of cloud by day. That pillar could be seen for miles and was one reason the pagan peoples of the world feared the children of Israel so.

Repeatedly in scripture we see examples of the glory of God. He is so grand, he is so powerful that men SHOULD praise him, but they don’t. From the greatest, grandest wonders of the universe that we can see every night when we look at the starry sky to the tiniest, grandest wonders of the universe in the infinitely small examination of a living cell, we can see the glory of God.

That is glory that Jesus wants to share, as he told his followers: **“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”** John 14:13-14. Notice that the all-powerful Son of God only wants to give glory to his Father in heaven, the one we can address as warmly as we would talk to our fathers here on earth!

And, we could say “you ain’t seen nothin’ yet”. On judgment day Jesus will appear in all his glory to share that with all who believe! Oh, what a glorious day when all shall see Jesus coming in his power and glory. But we don’t have to wait until then to see even parts of God’s glory. We can see it as God rules our lives, and gives us each breath here on earth. We can see it as God provides for us food, clothing, and shelter. We can see it and feel it in our hearts when we are assured – here in our worship services and whenever we read the scriptures – that all our sins are forgiven because of what Jesus did for us. We can recognize it in all things Our Father in Heaven has created!

Scripture is filled with other doxologies, as this last part of the Lord’s Prayer has been called. And what is a doxology? It is an expression of praise to God. It comes from a Greek word that means “word of praise”, or “word of glory”. In our hymnal we find many hymns of praise to God. Scripture is also filled with them. So, as we close with the word “Amen”, that is, Yes, O Lord, may it be so, we use also just one of many doxologies found in scripture:

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21.

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