

The Lord's Prayer

Passion Week 2018 Kent Ellett Speedway Church of Christ

These short lessons are intended to help us think about the content of the prayer Jesus gave us as a model prayer. The readings are about the phrases of this prayer. They are broken into eight lessons over this week as we walk with Jesus into Jerusalem and relive the events of that week of teaching, conflict, love and suffering. My hope is that you will explore Jesus' prayer as we pass with him through the night and into the victory that saved the cosmos. Feel free post on our Facebook page about your discoveries and your questions in hopes of spurring all of us on to deeper love and good works.

For Palm Sunday

(Getting Acquainted with the Prayer and the idea of collective recitations)

Matt 6:9-13 NIV

Nestle Aland Greek New Testament

"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'

Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομα σου.
ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου
γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημα σου
ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς.
τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῶν σήμερον
καὶ ἄφες ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν
ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλεταῖς
καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν
ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονήρου.

*(later manuscripts for yours is the Kingdom
and the power and the glory forever, amen.)*

*(One 5th century codex, a fragment, and some of the Fathers
ὅτι σου ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία καὶ ἡ δύναμις καὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας
αἰμῆν. See adaptation from Davidic prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:11-13)*

Introduction: Why the Lord's Prayer

Within the Stone-Campbell tradition there has been a minority voice—yet a strong voice-- which resists the use of this prayer in congregational and devotional settings. This was partly because the Gospels were thought to belong to a pre-Christian age. The feeling was that since the Kingdom had already come with the founding of the church, it did not make sense for us to keep praying for what had

already happened. Yet, 1) this overlooks that Jesus says that the Kingdom is *already* present in his earthly ministry (Mt 12:28) while there were still dimensions of the Kingdom's which were then still future, 2) it ignores that the gospels were among the last of the New Testament books to be compiled for the ongoing moral and ecclesial instruction of the church—not just recording historical information, and 3) it ignores that the will of God is not always done on earth as it is in the heavens, and therefore the kingdom's reach is not finished *coming* until Christ's final *coming*.

It is true that there are other exemplary prayers in the New Testament, and to elevate one above all others is to ignore the canonical breadth of prayer. One can also acknowledge that often-repeated words may be entered into thoughtlessly. These are always dangers. But perhaps they are not as big of a danger as that of babbling in a pagan stream of consciousness which seldom gets around to hallowing God, submitting to his will, praying for basic needs, forgiveness, our enemies etc. In other words Jesus has given us a means of concisely getting to the foundational matters.

Jesus intended this prayer to be said collectively. Luke makes it clear that the prayer is to be collectively rehearsed, *“when you (plural) pray, say, ‘Father...’”* The *“Our Father”* teaches us to collectively pray in the first-person plural. It is also highly likely that he intended for the prayer to be recited like the Jewish *Qaddish* prayer which it was in some ways patterned after. Note the similarity to the Lord's Prayer in the way this prayer begins: *“Exalted and Hallowed be his great name, in the world which he created according to his will. May he establish his kingdom... (See Donald Hagner, Word Biblical Commentary Matthew 1-13, p.147)* Such prayers were said three times a day, and we know from *Didachi* 8:3 that parts of the early church recited the Lord's Prayer three times daily in such a fashion. While the ending, taken from David's prayer in 1 Chronicles, is clearly a later edition to the prayer, the witness to this amendment came very early, and the change is perhaps due to the ending being regularly used in church services. So while primitive Christianity does not insist on the exact form of this prayer as if from the mouth of Jesus exactly, earliest Christianity did practice collective recitations around these themes.

Summary: Jesus in Luke tells the disciples to recite this prayer. Matthew's version is based on prayers that were often recited. The early church as well as the synagogues during Jesus' lifetime recited prayers such as this one. This may be a good practice for us, too.

For Monday

Some Observations about the *“Our Father in Heaven”*

Prayer is focused on God. God is the audience of our prayers.

While praying aim for simplicity and be concise. It is not that a lengthy prayer is impermissible, but even lengthy prayers should have a point—and the petitions should bring our most basic needs before God.

Yesterday I pointed out that Jesus taught us to pray collective prayer in the plural in a way that enlists everyone's joint prayer. The prayer is like a team in a huddle chanting a chant which builds team-consciousness. Christians too often live in churches which make people spectators—not participants.

Leo Miller makes a similar point. http://www.christianappeal.com/issues/1975/ca_june_1975.pdf As we speak the "our father." Leo writes, we pray together and transcend all differences—young or old, rich or poor, male or female, learned or simple—we all are just children of the same Father whom we together share. Thus, our English translations begin with a word about our equality.

Some think that behind the Greek translation, "Pater" is the Aramaic "Abba." (Mark 14:36) This is possible, especially since all three times *Abba* occurs in the New Testament, it appears in contexts that are about addressing God in passionate prayer. *Abba* is traditionally regarded as a term of special childhood intimacy more adequately rendered, "Daddy." This is possible, though in today's climate of permissive parenting such a translation is likely to be over-sentimentalized.

While obviously a familial term, *Abba* is also royal terminology descended from the Hebrew, *Ab*. In Psalm 89:26 God speaks from his place in the heavens. He says of the Davidic Messiah-King that he will say to me: "*You are my Father.*" In this context calling God Father is to speak of how the representative priest-king (David and his heirs) image the divine rule on earth. Thus, the Messiah is God's "firstborn" (verse 27) the most exalted of kings. I believe it is texts such as these which account for Jesus' predominant use of "Father" to describe the Transcendent life of God. It was his way of accepting his calling to be God's representative human—his King. So, for Jesus to call God Father was a volatile acceptance of Jesus' royal status as the adopted Son who images God's rule on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus draws attention to such Davidic texts when confronted about this Father/Son usage.

The point of all this is that in teaching his disciples to pray saying *OUR* Father, Jesus is conferring on us a kingdom. In teaching his disciples to pray this way he is sharing this royal, priestly ministry of imaging God in the world. He is conferring on us the Spirit of son-ship. We are sons of God in Christ's own sonship. To call God Father is to remember we image God in the world and that as sons we have a glorious inheritance.

To address God as one "*who is in the heavens*" is not intended to make God seem remote. While we do not necessarily believe Hebrew cosmology is scientifically true, we understand that there are no better metaphors for seeing into the invisible other than the ones we have been provided. The Bible imagines the whole world as existing within the heavenly temple. The intent is not to locate God away from the business of earth, but it is to insist that there is a steady center point which mysteriously holds the world together. Amidst a world which is sometimes unjust, there is a perfect foundation against which all behavior can be measured. There is a dimension of life that does not readily meet the physical eye but which encompasses all things. Christians understand that while the father is mysteriously in all and through all, he is also *above all*—that is to say he loves us as sons from a "higher" perspective which is beyond our understanding or manipulation.

Summary: To call God Father is to assume our position as royal family members, called to image God's rule in the image of Jesus, his adoptive King and exact representation of his being. In saying that the Father is in heaven we are saying that all of creation exists within his heavenly temple and that all of creation is ruled and connected to a stable wisdom.

For Tuesday

“Hallowed be your Name”

The name of God reveals his character. (See Exodus 3:14-16, Exodus 34:6-7) In John 17:6 and 17:23 Jesus describes his work as revealing God’s name.

This phrase (hallowed be your name) can be prayed in two different ways: To the extent that this phrase is taken as a continuation of the prayer’s address to God, the phrase becomes reflexive—that is we set apart God in our own hearts as we address him—and as such the phrase becomes a kind of praise. In Isaiah 29:23 The phrase *keeping [God’s] name holy* is used in a context where people “honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (29:13)

However, as God renews covenant with the people, we also notice that the Temple cult will again function properly bringing abundance to the land. The people “*will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob, and will stand in awe of the God of Israel. Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding; those who complain will accept instruction.*” So, it could be that praying that God’s name be hallowed may also mean, “please God, help everybody live so your reputation doesn’t suffer.”

This way of praying “hallowed be your name” goes with the petitions which follow it in the Lord’s prayer. Considered as a petition that God’s reputation be honored among the nations, “Hallowed by your name is much like Malachi 1:6. There we understand that profaning the name of God involves treating him as of secondary importance in the sense that the temple worship of God is careless and sacrificial offerings are less than the best. Making God’s “*name great*” among the nations involves the purity of heart and attention to purity in the cultic worship.

These cultic contexts about offering pure and effective sacrifices are very important background for understanding Jesus’ prayer, “glorify thy name.” in John 12:28. There, Jesus is speaking of his own self-offering when he prays that God’s name be lifted up in his self-offering. The perfect cultic offering hallows and glorifies God’s name.

Summary: We therefore sanctify God’s name by giving God our first and best in our praise and finances, and also petition that God’s name and reputation will likewise be honored world-wide.

For Wednesday

Your Kingdom Come; Your will be done

Dispensationalist views of the Bible suggest that Jesus’ prayer only applied to the time before the founding of the church. Such views usually flatly identify the church with the Kingdom, suggesting that the prayer for the Kingdom to come is not necessary after the church came—or was established at Pentecost.

I have endeavored in numerous ways over the years to demonstrate that the church is not the Kingdom—the church is ***the central temple*** mystically united with its High Priest ***within the Kingdom of God***. This Kingdom of God includes unbaptized children (Mt 19:14), angels, heavenly beings (Mt 25:31) the faithful of all ages before the time of Christ, (Mt 8:11) and those who do by conscience the things

the law requires though they do not possess Jewish or Christian revelation. (Romans 2:14) Such creatures are saved by Christ alone and follow him sometimes unawares. The Kingdom of God also includes the land—the whole creation and all those creaturely things that are in compliance with the integrating rule of Christ and who rejoice in the freedom of the children of God. (Rom 8:21)

I have also endeavored to teach that the kingdom of God is both **present and coming**. The second temple was never filled with shekinah glory. The promises associated with the restoration of Israel were never fully realized before Jesus. So in the incarnation and in the life of the church as the ongoing incarnation of the body of Christ the shekinah glory has returned to the kingdom of Israel—the kingdom of heaven has come to have a new manifestation on the earth in the earthly temple—the mystic body of Christ. In that sense the Kingdom has come.

Nevertheless, the mystic cords which connect the heavenly temple in Christ (and its wider heavenly Zion) with its earthly manifestation in the church (and its wider kingdom) have not been fully realized. As of yet we do not see all creation subject to the perfect rule of Christ. This, is still awaited until the New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven from God. Then the dwelling place of men will be the dwelling place of God. This is a vision of a marriage of earthly and heavenly temples. The earthly will not merely reflect dimly the heavenly, but it will be united to it. Thus, until that day, the kingdom has come, and it is yet coming.

Specifically what kind of things do we imagine we are praying when we pray this prayer? Traditionally, we have thought of it as **praying for the success of the gospel and the sanctification of the church**. Here the image of the body of Christ reflecting the glory and image of the heavenly Christ comes to mind. These are central concerns. www.christianappeal.com/issues/1975/ca_june_1975.pdf

Nevertheless, since the Kingdom is a wider society than that of the church, comprising all nations and all nature, it is very likely that Jesus understood his prayer to be about the fulfillment of the prophetic tradition which looked forward to the restoration of Israel and the affect this would have on society and all nature. The prophets envisioned that when the Messiah came into his kingdom, there would be abundance, provision for the poor, the swallowing up of death, the consolation of grief, and the integration of the nations. (Isaiah 25:6-8) Amos 5:24 envisions the streams of life from the Temple creating social justice. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! These are just as surely part of the coming kingdom as the success of preaching, for gospel preaching must include the announcement of this kingdom reality.

Summary: The church is the center of the Kingdom, but it is not all of it. The Kingdom has come, but its presence has not overtaken all opposition. The church has arrived, but it has not fully arrived. We pray that God's creative will (as it is expressed in the heavenly temple) will make more of its imprint on the earth.

Maundy Thursday

Give us this day our daily bread.

The traditional translation, "*Give us this day our daily bread*" interprets the prayer strictly in terms of our dependence on God for our current sustenance. Hauerwas and Willimon in *Lord Teach Us: The*

Lord's Prayer and the Christian Life, argue that while the prayer is never just a survival strategy, it is a prayer for God's presence and provision in each moment. For these writers, "daily" carries the idea of "enough." "Since most of us perish from too much rather than too little bread," they write, the prayer becomes something akin to "Give us the grace to know what is enough." Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, said that we are not permitted to expect more than the simplest provision. In the tradition of daily manna in the wilderness- wandering story, this prayer is a warning against hoarding.

Hauerwas and Willimon go on to say that the act of praying together for only our daily needs is a kind of collective affirmation of a Christian attitude towards money. To pray this prayer collectively is to realize that our money really belongs to the collective community as long as there are daily needs among us. This interpretation is based on rendering *episousion* "necessary" or "concerning our being."

Yet, if we look carefully at Matthew's formulation of this prayer—particularly in light of the echoes of daily collection of manna in the wilderness, we might read the prayer as follows:

τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῶν σήμερον
bread our coming-day give to us this day

Here the participle *episousion* is read as "tomorrow's" or "concerning what is becoming." Thus, the prayer would read, "Give to us our future bread today." This is the interpretation of some preeminent Biblical scholars such as Joachim Jeremias, Raymond Brown, and Davies and Allison. George Beasley-Murray agrees, rendering it, "give us today our bread for the coming day," while still insisting Matthew has in mind real physical bread. Hagner, following this tradition, spells out where this line of interpretation is headed. He renders it, "Give us today the eschatological bread that will be ours in the future." The church, after-all has traditionally prayed this prayer in anticipation of the Eucharist whereby we eat bread that participates in and mediates eternal reality.

Thus, the prayer asks for the present realization of the blessing of the eschaton—when nobody will have too much or too little, but all will have what they need through God's abundance. Bread, by synecdoche, represents all the blessings of the eschatological (end-time) banquet.

This interpretation in no way invalidates all of the insights of that school of interpretation which simply translates "daily bread." (Hence, English translations continue to reflect this tradition) Yet, this end-time translation is much more parallel to the previous petition that prays for God's Kingdom will to be done on earth—that the final heavenly reality should now come to fruition on earth.

Summary: Permit me to venture an inclusive kind of interpretive rendering: "In this moment may we collectively depend on and seek your blessing—may we be collectively contented and blessed with the simple and sufficient provision which you will distribute to us all on the great coming day."

Good Friday

Forgive Us our Debts as We Forgive Our Debtors

John Comer in his 1975 article on "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" insisted that God was not terrorizing us, refusing to forgive unless we first proved ourselves to be decent forgiving

people—as if we essentially earned forgiveness by our forgiving. The flesh would like to read this prayer as let us forgive others so we can be forgiven. This leaves the whole process under our manipulative control. Rather, Comer suggests this prayer represents two kinds of gifts from God—the gift of being forgiven and the gift of being like God in unburdening ourselves and others with bitterness. To forgive others is as blessed as being forgiven. Both are from the same gift-giving God. www.christianappeal.com/issues/1975/ca_june_1975.pdf

Comer's interpretation was effectively responding to a history of legalism in the church, and it joined Jesus' two-faceted prayer under a gracious umbrella. It did not however consider "debts" (ὀφειλήματα) to be anything but metaphorical moral offenses. Churches in our tradition in 1975 still saw themselves largely as chaplains of the wider culture, and not part of a counter-cultural kingdom with its own alternative kind of economy. Thus, it made little sense to talk about literally forgiving financial debts that others could not pay. Yet, this most literal and straight-forward interpretation must not escape us. Such realities are why it's more difficult for the rich to want to enter the Kingdom economy.

Keeping this literal interpretation alive may also help us grasp metaphorical extension of the concept of a debt-forgiveness and why seeking forgiveness and seeking to forgive are really inseparable kinds of desires.

Let us begin by observing that a moral offense "costs" its victim something. It is a debt. It makes no difference if the debt is owed to another person, the ecosystem, or God himself. The world often hears Christian emphasis on the importance of forgiveness as just overlooking offenses as if they were no big deal. This is not the concept of forgiveness. Forgiveness takes seriously the concept of a heavy debt.

If the offense is theft, the outward debt owed is obvious. If Israel does not pay its 10 percent contribution to the temple when they are living in comfort in their own houses—then God feels and is in fact robbed. The debt requires financial correction. More commonly, a child must return another child's toy.

However, if one considers the how an offense is, as Anselm insisted, "a loss of due honor," (as contemporaries put it—a disrespect or dehumanization of the victim) the amount owed becomes more difficult to assess. The friend who had a toy stolen may feel like the thieving friend really isn't a friend even when the toy is returned. In such cases it is more difficult to make any kind of meaningful restitution. Particularly, when an offense involves something like becoming drunk and abusing someone's child, the burden of the "loss" (financial metaphor) or the "offense" (human honor metaphor) is thus carried in multiple victim's souls as some form of (or combination of) grief, shame, fear, or rage.

This is where our typically legal metaphors fail us. Forgiveness is often reduced to receiving a "not guilty verdict" that allows us to be free from the legal consequences of our actions. Forgiveness, in this context when the offended party is an abstract institution like the government, becomes getting to go to heaven in spite of the fact that we sin and should be thrown into the jail of Tartarus. While not without its truth, this metaphor by itself is very deficient, for it ignores relational burdens in the heart of God and man. The concept of a forgiven "debt" involves economic and relational realities. To seek forgiveness is to seek a release from the burden of debt one has caused another to carry in his or her soul. It is the knowledge of this burden which the offender carries (wittingly or unwittingly) as guilt, and the victim carries as shame, loss, fear and rage.

This is an intractable human problem which is humanly impossible to repair. One cannot take a harsh word, a rape, or a murder back. Once unleashed, it creates lasting consequences which only the mystic purification of the cross and resurrection of the dead can ultimately rectify. While we often speak of a person choosing to forgive others, such a choice is only desirable if God actually can be depended upon to share and lift the burdens we bear in our soul.

Thus, to pray for forgiveness is to pray that God would carry the burdens and restore the losses our victims cannot restore for themselves so that we can be lifted from the debt we owe to the other. When we consider our debts and offenses against God himself, the situation is not changed. We pray that God would forgive us by vindicating Jesus and seeing to it that he is raised victorious from the relational burden we have caused at Calvary.

To pray for forgiveness is to ask that God would help both us and our victims to be released from the burdens we have caused. We cannot honestly pray for this kind of forgiveness and not be touched by the need to release others of the very thing that we, ourselves desperately seek. Our forgiveness depends on God's vindication of our victim. Every person's forgiveness requires another's vindication, and same burden-lifting, loss-turned-into-gain Mystery accomplishes each.

It might seem, then, that we have arrived at the opposite problem from the one we began with in this essay. Rather than our forgiveness being contingent on our forgiving others, now our forgiveness might be seen as contingent upon another person's forgiving us! Only from a strictly human point of view would this be true. Since Christ's saving work is what provides not just debt-forgiveness, but vindicating restitution of all things to those who will receive it, we may rest in the fact that Christ has released our victim from the burden we have caused, and in the end will mysteriously set all accounts correct. A key to unburdening ourselves from the painful guilt of our sin is to know that God will lift the burden in our victim's soul even if in this life our victim continues to nurse wounds and engage in retaliation. We may, thus, be assured the harms we have caused shall be completely wiped away with every tear. It is only upon this saving reality that our forgiveness and our other's vindication together depend.

Summary: Thus, in praying for forgiveness of our debts and our the debts of our debtors, we don't pretend to earn forgiveness by forgiveness, but we know we can only receive forgiveness by participating in a saving Relation who forgives and bears the burden of the violated in one simultaneous reconciliatory act.

Holy Saturday

Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from evil

The nature of this phrase in the Lord's Prayer largely hinges on the definition of the word usually translated "temptation." "Temptation" in common parlance tends to involve the idea of enticement or seduction. Beasley-Murray treats the phrase "lead us not into temptation" as if it were an idiom. Since we know that God does not need to be dissuaded from enticing us to do evil, Beasley-Murray believes

this phrase is an idiom which collectively means “don’t let us succumb” to seduction. Certainly, this is an appropriate prayer.

Yet, I have not read of any instance of this phrase “lead us not into” having the idiomatic meaning of not succumbing as Beasley Murray suggests. I therefore, take the words “lead us not into” to be asking for God not to guide us into a place of severe *testing*. This interpretation has the disadvantage of requiring us to think about changing the cherished English versions of the prayer. Yet, the lexical meaning of the word *πειρασμόν* clearly allows for us to think that we are praying for our life journey not to be lead into a place of *testing*.

If God, himself were the agent of the testing or trial, then we might think of the story of Abraham being led up Mount Moriah to offer his son Isaac as a test. Yet, it seems counter-intuitive to think that if God needed to bring us to a place where our foundational allegiance is firmly decided, that we should pray that God not lead us to such a sanctifying test where on the “Mountain of the Lord it shall be provided.”

Instead, I prefer to interpret this prayer in terms of the phrase which follows it, “but deliver us from evil.” When a community of people get serious about praying and living in such a way that the Kingdom of God comes (or advances) and the ideal will in the heavenly temple comes to make its rule manifest in concrete ways on earth, that community provokes a spiritual backlash. Forces of evil do not usually relinquish their territory without a fight. The description of the spiritual situation in Jesus’ prayer seems to be that these forces desire to lead the Christian community into a place where faithfulness would be punished. Evil forces may want to severely test the endurance of a band of disciples. Evil forces may, thus, lay traps into which churches may walk. Once in these places of spiritual battle, deep sacrifices may have to be made by church members and leaders, requiring unusual amounts of grief. I take this prayer to be asking that God’s leading would be such that church’s decisions would keep the community away from battlegrounds where the enemy is trying to spring a trap and bereave us for our faith.

In this way this prayer serves as a reminder that salvation is not presented as a form of help for whatever disturbs us. Rather, Kingdom work will bring us into conflict with the powers. We will need deliverance.

This interpretation of the powers slightly lends itself to rendering του πονήρου as “deliver us from the evil *one*.” The article (του) generally is considered definite. Thus, I take it as a prayer to ward off the devil specifically as well as impersonal evil more generally. The devil does set traps—especially for inexperienced church leaderships. (1 Timothy 3:7)

Notice, again, I am taking seriously the *collective* nature of this prayer. While it is surely advisable for individuals to pray for individual guidance, this prayer is intended to be prayed with and for a support-team. It is prayed for other disciples in their individual lives. Yet, most directly this prayer is about the collective life and guidance of the church.

Summary: God don’t guide us into a place of severe testing, but deliver us from the power and traps set by the evil one. We know that our wisdom is not enough, and that without you we would easily walk into disadvantageous battles. Deliver each person in our church from seductive forces and deliver your people from the naïve optimism that thinks we can overcome evil without your constant rescue.

Resurrection Morning

for yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.

A word here is necessary about the nature of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Spirit of God breathes the life and power of God into what would otherwise be dead letters on a page. The words of God on the sacred page are not to be taken as merely static data. They are rather signs which participate in the providential wisdom and dynamic energies of God. This process of inspiration does not depend on the words of this prayer being exactly the historical words of Jesus. If that were the case, we would have to have this prayer in Aramaic, rather than in the Greek of the later church.

So, what we have in Matthew 6:9-13 is Matthew's Greek translation of a prayer (or condensation of several prayers) Jesus prayed. This was created from memory and/or from other sources during the first four decades of the church. So there was never any pretention that the Greek translation was really an exact historical reproduction of Jesus' words. It was rather thought that the prayer represented the essence and character of Jesus' words which were variously recorded in Matthew and Luke.

The traditional ending "*for yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen*" is attested to only by Cyril of Jerusalem among the early Fathers, and by codices and papyri that are older than some of the earliest manuscripts. It is for this reason that the NIV does not include Cyril's ending—though it has been used in the English-speaking Church for a very long time. This ending is based on 1 Chronicles 29:11-13.

I have made the determination to include a discussion of this ending. This is because it is not clear when the process of editing the gospels was supposed to be concluded. Unlike Paul's First letter to the Corinthians, where the letter was likely composed in one or two sittings and sent to a particular historical place and situation, the Gospels were developed and reworked by the church over a period of time for the use of everyone. Mark 16:9-19 and John 8:1-11 are the most dramatic examples of the church continuing to add sections of memory and tradition to the gospel accounts after there were other versions of the Gospels in circulation.

The question we have to face is this: Did the Spirit of God intend for the process of editing the tradition stop before the newer materials like the alternate ending to the Lord's prayer were added? Or was the addition part of a Spirit-led editorial process that God was continuing to guide?

This is not an easy question to answer. Perhaps it is not necessary to do so. Perhaps God's Spirit can use various ways of conveying the presence and power of Jesus' prayer. Perhaps the content of the alternate ending is so in tune with the rest of Christian tradition that its content cannot be in question. Perhaps inspiration is more about conveying a living wisdom and presence than it is getting dead historical data exactly right.

So, I teach the alternate ending as oracles from Jesus: "*for your [is] the kingdom and the dynamic force and the glory into the ages, amen.*" God is King. God in Jesus Christ is the true King. The Lord's prayer always reminds us that as we approach the side steps of the Greek Temple in which Abraham Lincoln takes the place of Athena—sitting on a Divine throne, that the architectural message of the Lincoln memorial is dubious at best. Worldly kingdoms are allowed their kings, one supposes. But Jesus ever lives in God as the true ruler of our political, social, personal, familial, and spiritual identity. True sovereignty belongs to him. The δυναμις—the dynamic energy that can remake society, the dynamic

power that can change hearts—the only means of accomplishing anything lasting resides in and belongs to God. Therefore whatever credit, fame, adulation and praise which is due, is rightfully directed toward him. Whatever is praiseworthy in us is derived from Christ's glory residing in us.

The prayer which begins with addressing the Father in the highest place ends with the same exaltation. It reminds us that our hope resides only in God. We worry when we think we have to in some way secure our own future. This is delusion.

Summary: As Dan Bouchelle writes, “No one enters real life standing up straight, beating their breast, saying “look what I did.” Rather, they limp to victory with wounds from wrestling with the God who saved them despite themselves.” As Johann Sebastian Bach concluded his musical work, “Soli Deo Gloria.” Glory to God alone.