

## The Doxology– Matthew 6:13b, 1 Chronicles 29:10-13

Today is the end of our series on the Lord's Prayer and we have reached the end of the prayer and the line, "*For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen*"

But it feels like one of those 'Curious Canberra' segments they have on the ABC, but in this case, it is a Curious Christian with the question, "Where does this line come from anyway?" It isn't in the gospel of Luke and, unless you go back to the Authorised King James Version, it isn't in Matthew, so why do we include as part of the Lord's Prayer? And why do Protestants say it, while Catholics do not?"

So, I have been doing some research this week on this last line in the Lord's Prayer and discovered a few things about liturgy that – perhaps you won't be surprised - weren't part of the curriculum at Baptist Theological College!

This line is found at the end of the Lord's Prayer in some manuscripts, but not in the earliest and most authoritative manuscripts. It is not found in Luke, as I said before, and not mentioned by most of the early Fathers. It is – a *doxology* – or "an expression of praise to God" coming from the Greek *doxa* (meaning 'glory' or 'splendour') and *logos* ('word' or 'speaking'). In the Jewish synagogue, the different parts of the service were separated with the *Kaddish* or *Qaddish*, a hymn of praise to God, and early Christians did the same, concluding the Lord's Prayer with this doxology, "*For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen*"

The words are probably based on the prayer attributed to King David in 1 Chronicles 29 which includes the phrases, working from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century King James Version: "*Thine is the kingdom*"; and '*the power and the glory*'; '*forever and ever*'. It was added in the early second century and its use continued in Eastern Christianity, in Orthodoxy, and it came into English Protestant worship through Thomas Cranmer and the first Book of Common Prayer.

It is one of those curious Christian things that when it comes to the Lord's Prayer, Catholics are more faithful to Scripture – more *sola scriptura* - and Protestants lean towards following church tradition!

So why do we use this doxology and other doxologies in our worship?

Functionally because they separate parts of our worship. But far more significantly because they help us give glory and splendour to God! They help us *doxologise*! They are pithy expressions of theology handed on to us by the community of faith throughout the ages. And they are hymns of praise, which writer Kathleen Norris says, are like icons - windows pointing towards the holy. These doxologies enable us to see - in some part – the dimensions of the splendour and grandeur of God.

Firstly, they remind us to look out – out of the world we inhabit – to see the world God is creating, the world of God's incredible love and compassion.

The Greater Doxology begins with the words '*Gloria in excelsis Deo*' (Glory to God in the highest). Where do these words come from? They are the words that the angel's sang when

Jesus was born, and they remind us that when we praise God we join a chorus of praise throughout the universe; and we praise a God whose ways are higher than our ways; whose kingdom is more just and more righteous than the kingdoms we know; whose power (remember last week's sign language?) is demonstrated in self-giving love rather than in might and violence, and whose glory is revealed in human beings coming fully alive rather than reserved for self-aggrandisement.

That is why the Greater Doxology goes on to say:

*Lord God, heavenly King, Almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us...*

Let us sing '*Gloria*' to this God - the God who calls us to look beyond our world - together!

Secondly, the doxologies remind us to look back and to look forward; to see that the God who has been creating our world since the beginning will continue to create it in the future. That although we live in a time of suffering, of financial inequality and uncertainty, of environmental degradation and geopolitical tension and terrorism that our God has a far more far reaching and far more faithful agenda.

Friedrich Nietzsche, was the child and grandchild of Lutheran pastors, but he once claimed that he rejected Christianity in part because so few of its followers demonstrated the resurrection joy it proclaimed. The doxologies remind us that God has been, is now and will be active in our world, and that worship – being lost in wonder love and praise – should be our way of life.

Can I invite you to sing the *Gloria Patri* or the Lesser Doxology this morning. James will play it through once for us and then we will sing...

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen. Amen.*

Thirdly, doxologies remind us to look around us, to see that God is not only concerned with one group of human beings, but that God created all things and people, sustains all things and people, and will redeem all things and people, all because of God's overwhelming love for all things and people.

In response to that, let us sing a doxology that we should know well – even those of us with only a Baptist education! 'The Common Doxology' or simply 'The Doxology', written by Thomas Ken in 1674:

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

Finally, the doxologies also call us to commit! We are not just opening our eyes to the world that God inhabits, the world that God has been creating and continues to create, a world in which all things are valued and loved, but we are asked to become part of that world – to be transformed by that world – and to begin transforming our own world and ourselves through God’s creative power.

Can I invite you to sing another well-known doxology, this time from the book of Jude:

*"Now unto him that is able to keep,  
able to keep you from falling..."*

I said earlier that the idea of using doxologies comes from the *Kaddish*, but the *Kaddish* has another common usage in Jewish thinking. When people speak of ‘*saying Kaddish*’ it unambiguously refers to rituals of mourning. Mourners ‘*say Kaddish*’ to show that despite their loss they will still praise God.

Doxology calls us to look to the world beyond our world, to look to God’s work through eternity, to see God’s love for all human being and to commit ourselves in every stage and every season of our lives to give God praise.

Let me close with some words from St Augustine:

*Let us sing alleluia here on earth, while we still live in anxiety, so that we may sing it one day in heaven in full security....God’s praises are sung both there and here, but here they are sung in anxiety, there in security; here they are sung by those destined to die; there, by those destined to live forever; here they are sung in hope, there in hope’s fulfillment; here, they are sung by wayfarers, there, by those living in their own country. So then....let us sing now, not in order to enjoy a life of leisure, but in order to lighten our labours. You should sing as wayfarers do – sing, but continue your journey....Sing then, but keep going.*

Let us sing together another – newer – doxology as we continue our journey.

*Creator of this great land, we adore you...*