

## Sermon

# Yours is the Kingdom...

Dan Neary

This church is filled with gracious people who are often highly complementary; you are really great about giving us positive feedback about things around here. I don't think I've received any more positive feedback than that we've received on this series from the Lord's Prayer. I agree; this has been a great series, and Dr. Vertefeuille has been a great preaching partner (this series was, in fact, originally his idea).



Now we come to the sixth of our seven part series, starting the Doxology section of the prayer as some have designated it.

Before we get into our study, let's pray together:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

<sup>10</sup> Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

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

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. <sup>1</sup>



Most of our contemporary Bibles, including the NIV version that is in our pews and the TNIV version that I've been using for preaching, do not include those last few lines:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. <sup>2</sup>

Now the reason that most of our Bibles don't include those lines is pretty simple and straightforward: it doesn't appear that Jesus said it this way. The most reliable and earliest manuscripts end the prayer with the words "deliver us from evil."

Our translations of the Bible come from manuscripts that were first, of course, handwritten and hand-copied. Many of these manuscripts include the prayer just as we just prayed it... the way that the Church throughout the centuries has prayed it. When the King James Version was translated, 400 years ago, it was understood that this traditional reading was most reliable.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: King James Version*, electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version. (Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995). Mt 6:9-13.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: King James Version*, electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version. (Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995). Mt 6:13.

In the centuries since, with better tools and older manuscripts, as well as more developed scholarship, we've come to understand that this doxology was added somewhere around 100 years after Jesus first taught us to pray with these words.

It appears that some well-meaning scribe, understanding that this would be the pattern of prayer adopted by the Church, decided that this doxology was a fitting closing to the prayer. It was routinely copied that way, and has become our tradition in the Church.

So... why would we devote sermons to these words that are not, rightly, part of Scripture and were not part of the teaching that Jesus gave on the subject of prayer?

**First**, tradition is meaningful. Generally, when we pray the Lord's Prayer, we include these words. Part of our motivation in this series is to give us all a thoughtful background to these words that we pray.

These words stand with a long list of words that come from our tradition that shape us as Believers. From the words of hymns and songs on through the declarations of creeds, words that come from tradition are important and are worthy of our consideration.

**Second**, I think that well-meaning, second-century scribe was right; this doxology is a fitting closing to *The World's Greatest Prayer*.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. <sup>3</sup>

Listen to what John Stott has to say about the Lord's Prayer:

"... in the Lord's Prayer Christians are obsessed with God – with his name, his kingdom and his will, not with theirs. True Christian prayer is always a preoccupation with God and his glory. It is therefore the exact opposite of the exhibitionism of hypocrites who use prayer as a vehicle for their own glory." (Stott, p. 151)<sup>4</sup>

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. <sup>5</sup>

Stott goes on to say:

"Christian prayer is seen in contrast to its non-Christian alternatives. It is God-centered (concerned for God's glory) in contrast to the self-centeredness of the Pharisees (preoccupied with their own glory). And it is intelligent (expressive of thoughtful dependence) in contrast to the mechanical incantations of the heathen. Therefore

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<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible: King James Version*, electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version. (Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995). Mt 6:13.

<sup>4</sup> Stott, J. R. (1978). *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*. Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>5</sup> *The Holy Bible: King James Version*, electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version. (Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995). Mt 6:13.

when we come to God in prayer, we do not come hypocritically like play actors seeking the applause of men [or God for that matter], nor mechanically like pagan babblers, whose mind is not in their mutterings, but thoughtfully, humbly, and trustfully like little children to their father.” (Stott, pp. 151-152)<sup>6</sup>

These few words that makeup this last line of our traditional prayer, reinforce the central theme of this prayer... that this is all about God.

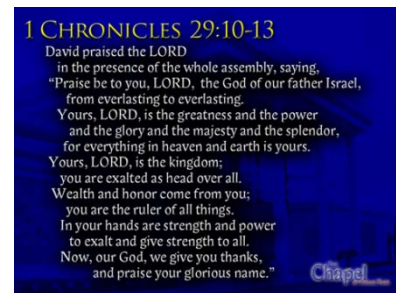
First – tradition is meaningful

Second – this doxology is a fitting close to the

**Third**, these words are a direct *lift* from Scripture.

Brad read from the end of the Old Testament book of First Chronicles. 1,000 years before Jesus walked the earth, King David led his people in prayer:

- “Praise be to you, LORD,  
the God of our father Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.  
<sup>11</sup>Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power  
and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,  
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.  
Yours, LORD, is the kingdom;  
you are exalted as head over all.  
<sup>12</sup>Wealth and honor come from you;  
you are the ruler of all things.  
In your hands are strength and power  
to exalt and give strength to all.  
<sup>13</sup>Now, our God, we give you thanks,  
and praise your glorious name.”<sup>7</sup>



Yours is the Kingdom. Yours is the power and the glory. These words that serve as the *exclamation point* of the Lord’s Prayer are consistent with this prayer prayed 1,000 years earlier than Jesus... and they resonate with the entire witness of Scripture.

Everything is Yours, Lord... including our very lives.

Those of us who have been at this life of faith for a while may run the risk of losing track of just what a *radical* thought this is.

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<sup>6</sup> Stott, J. R. (1978). *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*. Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>7</sup> *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005). 1 Ch 29:10-13.

Recall the passage from the New Testament that Brad read earlier from Romans 14:

<sup>7</sup>For we do not live to ourselves alone and we do not die to ourselves alone. <sup>8</sup>If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. <sup>9</sup>For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.<sup>8</sup>

#### ROMANS 14:7-9

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So, whether we live or die,  
we belong to the Lord.  
For this very reason,  
Christ died and returned to life  
so that he might be the Lord  
of both the dead and the living.

As a Believer, the core of what I believe is that Christ died for my sins, and returned to life so that he could be my Lord. Jesus bought me with his suffering and death. As a Believer, the old life is dead... and this new life that I enjoy is not my own. This life is the property of the purchaser; it isn't mine anymore, it is Gods.

How are we supposed to get our minds wrapped around that? Like I said, I've been at this for a while, so I've grown comfortable with the *idea*... maybe even numb to the idea. But when I'm in my right mind, I realize again that this is a radical idea that does not come naturally. This idea that nothing is mine, not even my own life, is a lofty goal to which I must strive for every day.

Am I really buying into this? Can I sing "I am Thine O Lord"? Can I really pray, "For Thine is the Kingdom"?

There are, of course, all sorts of ways for us to examine our own lives... all sorts of disciplines to pursue to continually give our lives to God. Prayer and fasting, service and study, fellowship and accountability... all these are powerful tools in our pursuit of a faithful Christian life.

But as I've thought and prayed this week about all this, I can think of no better discipline than what we see in 1 Chronicles.

When I've asked myself, "How do I know if I really believe that *everything* is God's, including my own life?" I find answers in David's prayer and the circumstances surrounding the prayer.

Many of us have prayed the Lord's Prayer many times; this prayer of David's deserves our attention as well (you'll be seeing this in our liturgy in the coming weeks). It is a beautiful reminder that everything is God's: greatness, power, kingdoms, wealth, honor, and strength. It is all God's "from everlasting to everlasting."

#### 1 CHRONICLES 29:10-13

David praised the LORD  
in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,  
"Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.  
Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power  
and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,  
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.  
Yours, LORD, is the kingdom;  
you are exalted as head over all.  
Wealth and honor come from you;  
you are the ruler of all things.  
In your hands are strength and power  
to exalt and give strength to all.  
Now, our God, we give you thanks,  
and praise your glorious name."

Great *words*... but I think the *context* teaches us even more.

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<sup>8</sup> *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005). Ro 14:7-9.

If you have a Bible open, you can see that this prayer is set in a very special context. Nearing King David's final days, he accomplished one extraordinary task; he led his people in a spectacular offering; he led a capital campaign to build the temple.

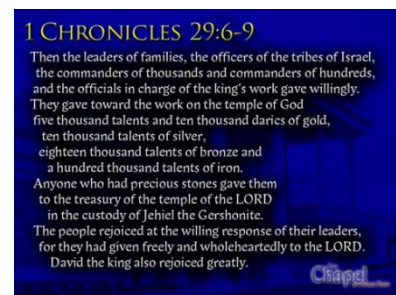
David, the one described as a "man after God's own heart," had a vision to build a spectacular temple as the center for worship. He even drew up the plans, but God told David that it would be the next King's task to actually build the temple. David's son, King Solomon, did indeed build a temple for God like none other.

As King David's final accomplishment, along with anointing Solomon as his successor, David led the people in raising enormous wealth dedicated to the building of this great temple.

Look at the verses just prior to the prayer:

<sup>6</sup>Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. <sup>7</sup>They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron.

<sup>8</sup>Anyone who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. <sup>9</sup>The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly. <sup>9</sup>



This enormous wealth was added to the treasures already dedicated to the work by King David himself. David set the example, and then issued the challenge to the others.

Picture it... this prayer that David prayed, this declaration of praise to God, was literally prayed in the midst of *piles and piles* of wealth. David led these declarations of God's sovereignty, that everything was God's, in response to this spectacular offering.

We know that we really understand that everything is God's when we are giving abundantly.

These were leaders, officers, and commanders... people of wealth and power who would naturally be self reliant. Many had likely come from meager beginnings and would have, rightfully, been proud of all they had accomplished. As an act of worship, acknowledging that God was their source, they gave abundantly.

They, like David, acknowledged their devotion to God, His work, and His temple by sacrificing their wealth. David's love for God was famous, and he understood that this devotion was more than mere words and feelings:

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<sup>9</sup> *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005). 1 Ch 29:6-9.

<sup>3</sup>Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple:<sup>10</sup>

David described it as an act of consecration:

Now, who among you is willing to consecrate yourself to the LORD today?<sup>11</sup>

And once this spectacular offering was received, David, once again, makes it clear that this amazing offering was not a matter of his generosity, nor a matter of the collective generosity of the people. It was not merely a matter of philanthropy... it was an act of worship.

<sup>16</sup>LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. <sup>17</sup>I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. <sup>18</sup>LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.<sup>12</sup>

Keep **our** hearts loyal to you.

So what?

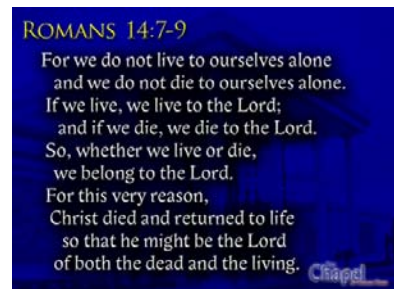
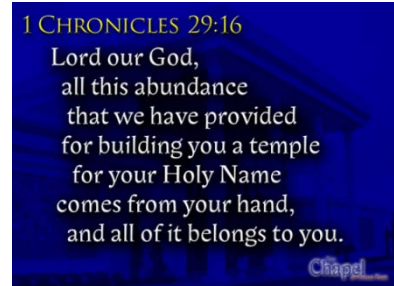
Let's bring this right down to where we live... where we are today.

Let's ask ourselves what we can learn... how does God's word order our steps today?

We simply must start with this idea that we are not our own.

Do you believe? Are you "living to the Lord?" And when you die, will you "die to the Lord?"

Is the life you are living yours? Are you self reliant... a self-made man or woman? Are you going it on your own? How is that working for you?



<sup>10</sup> *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005). 1 Ch 29:3.

<sup>11</sup> *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005). 1 Ch 29:5.

<sup>12</sup> *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005). 1 Ch 29:16-18.

We are here again this morning to urge you to give up your life... to bring your success and your failure, your victories and defeats, your joy and your pain to God. I'm urging you to believe that Jesus purchased a better life for you. Join us in this walk of faith, and your life will not be the same.

For those who believe, certainly the majority here today, let's ask ourselves the question, "do we really believe?"

We say we believe, but do our actions demonstrate that we really believe?

Let's join all the talking heads on the news programs and talk about money.

Our President has been *beating the drum* as senators haggle over an enormously expensive plan to rescue our economy. The message is clear from Washington DC; the only hope to save our economy is if the government spends money... lots and lots of money.

It is a fairly simple application of an old economic theory: spending is down. Government can save us by *jump starting* spending.

Our President's position is that government has to do it, because you won't (or at least can't).

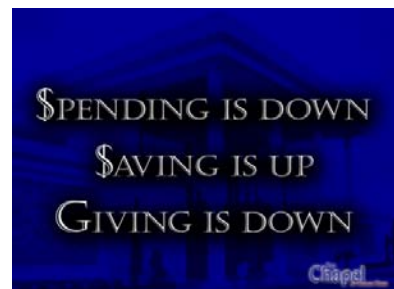
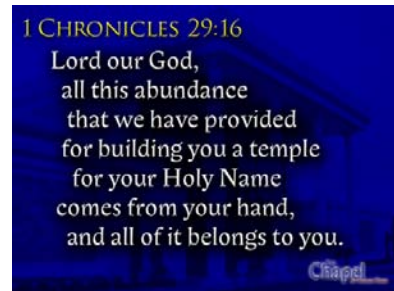
The government might try giving you the money (again) but they've learned that you won't spend it.

Spending is down... saving is up. Simply put, with all the economic uncertainty people are holding on to their money.

Economic theories aside, this seems like a pretty good, responsible way to be. Any personal economic advisor will tell you that savings is a good thing... a very good thing.

Here's another reality: Spending is down, saving is up... and giving is down.

It is a simple fact that people are spending less, saving more, and giving less. It is true in all sorts of philanthropic endeavors, all sorts of churches and ministries, and in our church here.



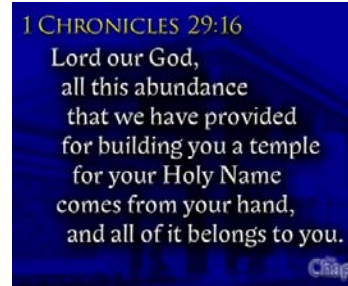
In our case, the last report indicates that giving is down 17% when compared to this time last year. When we take out the designated giving for missions and special projects, regular tithes and undesignated giving is down over 25%.

It appears that, facing economic uncertainty, we're holding on to what we have.

The question I have this morning is "what does that tell me about my faith?" When I hold on to what I have with an even tighter grip, what does that reveal about my belief that I belong to God, and everything is His?

I can pray "Thine is the kingdom," but do my action betray that what I really mean is "mine is the kingdom?"

Laurie and I are tithers; we mean for this discipline to be a constant act of worship that teaches us that our lives are not our own and all we have really belongs to God. Anything less than that 10%, for us, would indicate that we really believe in our own ability to provide rather than God's ability to provide.



1 CHRONICLES 29:16  
Lord our God,  
all this abundance  
that we have provided  
for building you a temple  
for your Holy Name  
comes from your hand,  
and all of it belongs to you.

Just like every other Sunday morning, before we leave today we'll have another opportunity to give.

- Some will see these offering plates as a terrible inconvenience, and a symbol of everything that is wrong with religion.
- Others will see it as something they might aspire to, but for now giving is someone else's work
- Many might see it as just another commercial transaction... paying the price of admission, and receiving some goods or services... maybe a little teaching or at least a bit of entertainment

My encouragement for us today is to consider the opportunity of giving as a tangible way of declaring "Thine is the Kingdom."



*The World's  
Greatest Prayer*  
**Yours is the  
Kingdom**