

August 10, 2008

THE LORD'S PRAYER: THE DOXOLOGY
MATTHEW 6.13B

The closing doxology of the prayer is a final, strong affirmation both of God's ultimate kingship and of our loyalty to his way of being the kingdom.

1. THE DOXOLOGY FROM US

"Doxology": question of authenticity of this section in the prayer. Something very similar in *Didache*, early 2nd century. N. T. Wright (*The Lord and His Prayer*): "This concluding doxology doesn't appear in the best manuscripts of either Matthew or Luke, and it is only comparatively recently, in the last few centuries, that it has been restored to the liturgy of the Western church. But it was already well established within a century or so of Jesus' day; and it is actually inconceivable, within the Jewish praying styles of his day, that Jesus would have intended the prayer to stop simply with 'deliver us from evil'."

Doxology = ascription of praise. Doxology literally means "word(s) of glory/praise."

Doxologies are in Scripture because of God's worthiness. But they are also understood as statements of faith, believing that the one who has, e.g., the kingdom, power, and glory, is able to answer the prayer.

Scriptural examples: 1Chr 29.10-12; Rom 11.36; 16.27; Gal 1.5; Phil 4.20; 1Tim 1.17; Eph 3.21; 2Tim 4.18; Heb 13.21; 1Pt 5.11; 2Pt 3.18; doxology is the proper response to God's Person and works.

Church's historical liturgies: *Gloria Patri* (4th c.); *Gloria In Excelsis* (based on Lk 2.14; late 4th century); *The Doxology*

How do we "glorify" God? Is he not already all-glorious? Can we or do we "add" glory to God when we praise him?

Our praise/glorifying God, is not adding anything to God as if he has any deficiency. Ours is the humble, proper recognition and submission to the fact that he does have these things.

There *is a sense* in which God becomes "more glorious." Example of creation. God does not need to create because of some lack. He creates an ever-increasing creation as the overflow of the glory of the love of the Triune family. (cf. Ps 19 for creation declaring God's glory.)

In the end, even if we don't understand it, we do it by faith. The Scriptures teach us to do it. And we believe and do so that we might understand; then we understand in order that we might better believe, paraphrasing Augustine.

Kingdom: If the kingdom already belongs to God, why do we pray for his kingdom to come? If God already rules over all, why are we praying that his will be done?

We are praying that God's righteous rule will be manifested and seen in its fullness on the earth.

God's kingdom is an established reality. His throne is in heaven and he rules over all (Ps 103.19). God is sovereign over all and his will *will* be done ultimately.

All of the kingdoms of this world are under the ultimate authority of God's kingdom. E.g., Daniel 4 and Nebuchadnezzar.

Power: God = *'el shaddai*, God Almighty. Reveals himself in this way in relation to his covenant.

We cannot think of God as merely "pure force" or "brute strength." His power and the way he exercises it is always in accord with his own character and, thus, his covenant.

In these terms, God can do anything he is pleased to do (Ps 115.3; Jer 32.17; Job 42.2; Gen 18.14).

God does not use his power solely to crush (even though he does that). His throne is also a throne of *grace* (Heb 4.16).

God shows great power in patience with us and in extending his grace to us who receive it many times without proper gratitude. He shows his great power in delivering us from our sins; not just in the defeat of our enemies, but also in giving us life from the dead.

Glory: God's presence is revealed in his *glory cloud*, the *shekinah*; Mt. Sinai, in the Tabernacle, in the Temple, and in the visions of prophets like Ezekiel. God's glory is the revelation of who he is in all of his splendor and beauty.

Hebrew word = "heavy." The idea of weightiness translates fluidly into things such as honor, riches, and even beauty (beauty being the reflection of this weightiness). God being eternally all-glorious means that he is supremely and absolutely "weighty."

The glory of someone involves that which proceeds from or comes out of him that enhances his weightiness. E.g., increasing riches, taking a wife, having children.

Cf. 1Cor 11.1ff. - Man = the image and *glory* of God. Woman = the *glory* of the man (1Cor 11.7). Man proceeds directly from the hand of God, the woman is taken from and proceeds out of the man.

This relationship of "proceeding from" and glorifying is the eternal relationship of the Divine Family. The Son proceeds from the Father and glorifies him. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and glorifies them. So, God is eternally glorious.

That glory is ever-increased through the mutual self-giving of each member of the Trinity deferring to and giving himself to the other members; not through selfish seizing of this weightiness.

"World without end": Each of these things belongs to God infinitely. Speaking in terms of time, there will never be a time that the kingdom, power, and glory will not belong to God the Father. He will always possess them.

Speaking in terms of "comprehension," they are limitless, ever-abounding, ever-flourishing and not able to be fully comprehended.

2. THE DOXOLOGY FOR US

Is God ego-centric?: No. From all of eternity the Divine Family is glorious because each member defers to and glorifies the other. When we are brought into this Family, we are to get caught up in the same practice. As we glorify God, the other members of the Trinity glorify us.

John Frame: "There is a circle of glorification within the Trinity itself. The Father glorifies the Son (John 8:50, 54; 13:32; 14:13; 17:1, 5), and the Son glorifies the Father (John 7:18; 13:31; 17:4). The Spirit glorifies the Son (John 16:14), and therefore glorifies the Father through the Son. In this context, we learn also that Christian believers glorify Christ (John 17:10), and he gives glory to believers: 'I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one' (v. 22)."

When we give glory to God, that glory is returned to us in fuller measure. Doxology is the ongoing self-giving of members of the family. Doxology is a calling. We have responsibility to worship the Father, Son, and Spirit *as well as* seeking to glorify other members of the family instead of selfishly seeking to advance our own reputations. In this doxology we are called to doxological relationships with all of the members of God's family (cf. Phil 2.1-11).

Kingdom: The kingdom belongs to the Father, but the Father gives the kingdom to the Son, and in the Son to us (Lk 12.32). The Son receives the kingdom, but at the end of this age, he will deliver the kingdom over to his Father (1Cor 15.24).

The kingdom that belongs to the Father for which we praise him belongs to us because we belong to him. His kingdom is for our sakes. His sovereign control over all things is for our good. Cf. Rom 8.28

Because of this, all kingdoms of this world—including all of their authorities—are measured by this kingdom standard. Kings must rule as *the* King rules. Their delegated sovereignty must reflect his absolute sovereignty.

Power: As we praise God for his power, we must also realize that he gives us power, ability to do that which he has called us to do. As we use the power he gives us in the way that he uses his power, God's power is realized more and more on the earth. As that happens, he reciprocates and gives us more ability.

Glory: When we enter into the Family in the Son, we become the givers and recipients of this glory. This is the doxology *for us* because as we glorify God he glorifies us. As this happens we are changed from glory to glory; i.e., continually being more glorified. Cf. 2Cor 3.18

"World without end": This will be the infinite, inexhaustible life of the kingdom.