

The Lord's Prayer: The Power and the Glory

by Rev. Dr. John C. Tittle

Prayer of Illumination

Lord God, we wish to see Jesus.
By your Spirit's power, give us eyes to see his glory.
Through Christ we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Matthew 6:13(b) (KJV)

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

*The grass withers and the flower fades,
but the Word of God endures forever.*

SERMON – The Lord's Prayer: The Power and the Glory

It was 1967 and things were not going so well for *Ol' Blue Eyes*. The Rat Pack was crumbling apart. The "Chairman of the Board" was being pursued by the FBI over his mob connections, and his marriage to Mia Farrow was already on the rocks by their first anniversary. Things came to a head when a Las Vegas hotel manager cut off Frank Sinatra's gambling credit. Sinatra stormed out, found a golf cart and drove it through the hotel's front window. With one right hook, the hotel manager knocked out Sinatra's front teeth. The headlines were not kind.

Not long after the imbroglio, Sinatra instructed former teen idol Paul Anka to write him a hit. Anka obliged. Anka owned the copyright to a French tune and wrote new lyrics to it in an inspired all-night session. As he wrote, he took on the persona of Sinatra and imagined how he had lived his life. The last lyric was penned at 5 am. He called Frank who he knew would be at the bar: "Frank, I've got something interesting—I'm gonna bring it out." Anka played the song for him, and Sinatra replied: "That's kooky, kid. We're going in."

Two years later, Sinatra had a minor hit in 1969 where the song peaked at number 27:

*I've lived a life that's full
I've traveled each and every highway
But more, much more than this
I did it my way*

It became Sinatra's signature song, but with time he grew to hate it because it reminded him of that embarrassing chapter in his life in 1967.

Side note, some interesting facts about the song *My Way*:

- It's the most requested song for funerals in the UK.
- Think twice about singing *My Way* karaoke: Between 2002-2012 twelve people were shot on stage in the Philippines while singing the song *My Way* karaoke.
- Donald Trump chose this song for his first dance with Melania at the inaugural ball.

But if we're honest with ourselves, we all have a little bit of *Ol' Blue Eyes* in us. We love moments of glory, where we're in the limelight, living life on our terms—doing it “our way,” rather than God's way. But there's a price to pay. “There is a way that seems right to a man,” says Proverbs, “but its end is the way to death.”

Each of us have choices to make in our lives—what song will be the soundtrack of our lives? Will I do it *My Way* or will I do it *Thy Way*? My encouragement for us this morning is this: say to God,
“It's either THY way, or the highway.”

The Lord's Prayer helps refocus our life priorities. Prayer reframes and reshapes how we understand and express kingdom, power, and glory in our lives. The Lord's Prayer teaches us about the road less travelled—a God-centered life and a life mindful of others, that's not just about me.

Do you remember what line comes right before “*thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory*” in the Lord's Prayer that we talked about last week?

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

Maybe the greatest temptation and the greatest evil is to pray and live for MY kingdom, MY power, MY glory, MY will, and MY way. That's what Satan tempted Jesus with—economic power, political power, and spiritual power. Jesus said NO to that kind of power, and a resounding YES! to a very different kind of power, for a very different end:

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me:
To bring good news to the oppressed
To bind up the brokenhearted.
To proclaim liberty to the captives.
To comfort those who mourn,
To give a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.* Isaiah 61:1-3 (NRSV)

Jesus used his divine power to feed the hungry multitudes, to heal the sick, to cast out unclean spirits. These signs and wonders didn't point to himself—but they pointed to God and the kingdom of God that was breaking in. “*I came not to be served,*” says Jesus, “*but to serve.*” To wash feet ... to die so that that we might have life.

When Jesus was born, the sixty-year-old Caesar Augustus had already been ruling for twenty-five years. He accomplished what no one had in two centuries—peace in the whole Roman world. One great ancient historian put it this way:

“Augustus gave peace, as long as it was consistent with the interests of the empire and the myth of his own glory.”

At the same time, fifteen hundred miles away in a far outpost of the Roman empire, a young couple made a hazardous journey to Bethlehem. At the birth of this child in a manger, the angels sang of the good tidings of great joy that this newborn king would bring to the world.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14 (NKJV)

It's a tale of two kingdoms, two powers, two glories. Caesar's glory is full of brute force and questionable motives. Jesus' glory is full of grace and truth.

Fast forward to Jesus' passion when he encountered another Roman leader—Pontius Pilate.

"Are you the King of the Jews?" asked Pilate.

Jesus answered, *"My kingdom is not of this world."*

Pilate later asked, *"Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to crucify you?"*

Jesus answered, *"You would have no power over me unless it had been given to you from above."*

Jesus, the King of kings and the Lord of lords redefines kingdom, power, and glory by the manger and the cross.

"Do you want to be the greatest?" says Jesus, *"Be a servant."*

In the Gospel according to John, Jesus spoke about his hour of glory—when he would be high and lifted up—on a cross.

And so he prayed as his crucifixion loomed:

"Now my soul is troubled.

And what shall I say, Father save me from this hour?

No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.

Father, glorify your name." John 12:27-28 (NRSV)

Then a voice came from heaven, *"I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."* The crowd standing there heard it, and said that it was thunder. John 12:29 (NRSV)

It's easy to miss the point of God's glory—and instead, just hear thunder.

Living for God's glory is so radically different from everything else out there. Jesus tells us what kind of glory to seek by saying, *"My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."* God, the most glorious being in existence, made humans to bear and image that glory. We're to "let our light shine" so that others may "see God's glory."

The goal of all of life is to give glory to God alone: *"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God,"* says the Apostle Paul. Or as The Westminster Catechism says, the chief end of human life is *"to glorify God and enjoy him forever."* We're to do this on sunny days and on the darkest of days.

In a prison camp in World War II, on a cold, oppressive night, hundreds of prisoners of war were beaten and then yelled at for an hour by the commander. They were ordered back to their dark barracks and to be quiet. But in the stillness of the night, someone somewhere could be heard praying the Lord's Prayer. Some prisoners lying next to him began to join in. The prayer was overheard by prisoners in the other barracks. One by one, they too joined in the prayer until by the time the prayer concluded with *"Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory"* hundreds of prisoners joined their voices in a powerful, growing, and defiant prayer, punctuated at the end with a thunderous, *"AMEN!"* And then, the tables were turned. The prisoners had thrown off their spiritual and psychological shackles in the darkest of days, and could continue on in the worst of situations.

The great theologian and pastor Karl Barth put it this way:

"To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."

When we live life to God's glory, we're given eyes to see what good can come out of a bad situation. In faith, we sacrificially say *"to God be the glory."* Sometimes it rolls off our lips, Other times we pray it with gritted teeth.

Let's get some practice this morning. Say it with me: *To God be the glory!*

Each time I speak a line, I want you to respond with: *To God be the glory!*

Ok? Let's try it!

- I woke up this morning! *[To God be the glory!]*
- The desert has been refreshed with rain! *[To God be the glory!]*
- Thanksgiving is Thursday! *[To God be the glory!]*
- The beginning of the season of Advent is coming upon us! *[To God be the glory!]*
- We haven't met our financial budget this month! *[To God be the glory!]*

What? I can't hear you ... let's try that again.

- *[To God be the glory!]*
- The car broke down and you need a new transmission! *[To God be the glory!]*

What? It's a bit harder this time?

- The medical bill just came into the mail! *[To God be the glory!]*
- The turkey burned, but there's plenty of squash and spinach! *[To God be the glory!]*

It's hard, isn't it? When things don't go as we think they should, the last thing we want to do is glorify God. And then, even when things do go extraordinarily right, we start worrying that surely something wrong is going to happen. But in all the seasons of our lives, Jesus calls us to give glory to God. No matter our circumstances, No matter if we're feelin' it or not, we're called to be thankful to God and

esteem God's power and glory, and to love God before all else, and to serve God with gladness even in difficult times. We glorify God, because all of our hope hangs on the Lord, who is the God of the impossible.

To close the sermon and the series, I'd like to share about one of my most memorable experiences in ministry, and it happened around the Lord's Prayer. A few years ago, I visited in the hospital one of Immanuel's spiritual pillars who was nearing death. He was not conscious—but I knew that people in such states can still hear. After praying, I prayed the Lord's Prayer over him. And from out of nowhere, he spoke and joined in with me for the whole prayer. And when he was done, there was silence once again. The Lord's Prayer was a part of him.

Immanuel, let us also absorb and live the Lord's Prayer, in our living and our dying. For in doing this, the Spirit is making us closer to God, more faithful, more energized to carry out God's will. May we be caught up in this great Thanksgiving doxology, and swept up in the hope of God's gracious kingdom, power, and glory.

"Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." Matthew 6:13(b) (KJV)

And all God's people said: "**Amen.**"

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