

Give us this day: 6. More Than a Footnote
Matthew 6:9-13
October 18, 2020
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For six weeks, we have focused on the Lord's Prayer. Many of us have it memorized, but we often run through the words without realizing what we are actually praying. One of the disciples said to Jesus: "Teach us to pray." And the prayer that he taught is meant to do something critically important. I think of the times when I've been with persons at the end of life. On one occasion, it was a person that I was told was unresponsive, but as I began praying the Lord's Prayer, her lips began to move as if there was a will deep inside that could not help but pray. I've been with persons whose dementia was so profound that they could not remember their own name – could not remember me, but when I began praying the Lord's Prayer, they joined in – not necessarily every word, but enough to know that's what they were saying. Somehow, somehow this prayer was so embedded in their lives that when nothing else could break through this prayer remained. I received an email last week from one of our members who is assisting her grandchildren in their hybrid learning. Each morning as their school day begins, they recite the pledge of allegiance, sing the national anthem, pray the Lord's Prayer, and then hear or act out a Bible story. She said that her grandchildren did not know the Lord's Prayer but they now have it memorized. She has given her grandchildren something more than a prayer.

I titled this series, *Give us this day*, because this is challenging, it is difficult to be in this day. We want out of this day. We want tomorrow. We want something better than today. Before we turn to the Lord's Prayer, I want us to look at a verse that comes later in Matthew chapter 6. It's verse 24: **No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be loyal to the one and have contempt for the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.** We are torn. Which will we serve? Which one keeps us awake at night? There is so much in this day that we are not entirely sure who or what is our master. Until God is the master of life, we will carry around so much anxiety, worry, and stress that we miss what God wants for us. You can only have one master. And then in verse 25, Jesus said, **Don't worry about your life.** Because what you worry about eventually becomes your master. What you worry about is evidence of what is your master. You can only have one master. Part of the reason we struggle in the moment is because something other than God has become our master. Who is your master? And Jesus was saying to his disciples: Take a step back and let God be the master of the universe. God was here before you and God will be here after you, and if you belong to God – no worries. If we actually believed that God knows what we need, isn't that where we would begin this day and every day?

When Jesus said, "This then is how to pray." This prayer lays out our priorities and what it means to be mastered and what will keep worry from taking over. I have this prayer memorized and I pray it at least once a day because this is the prayer that keeps me centered. It provides the foundation. We will come back to this in a moment, but let's look at the final phrase of the prayer: **For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.** If you look this up in your Bible, most modern translations place these words, not in the text, but as a footnote. In 1611, when King James authorized the translation of the Bible into English, the Hebrew, Greek and Latin manuscripts that they were translating contained these words. But since the King James Version even older manuscripts were found that did not contain this line. It appears to have been added by the church as early as the first Century as a doxology to the prayer. Doxology means, literally, "words of praise." So more recent translations have removed these words from the text and put it as a footnote. But it is more than just a footnote. It summarizes the essence of the prayer.

For thine... Thine, and not mine. Our tendency is to focus on “my.” I remember times when our children were little and they would fight over a toy – “it’s mine” and the other would say “it’s mine.” Back and forth until one gave up or one forced it out of the other’s hand. But it’s not just childhood behavior. I have a tendency to focus on what I want or what I think is best, but God doesn’t really need my advice. Not mine but thine. That ought to be our basic orientation. What defines your life? Is it MINE or THINE? I’ve told you I wake up every morning to these words: “God, thank you for this day. I give my life to you. Lead me in the way you want me to go.”

For thine is the kingdom... Jesus came to heal the world, and he asked his disciples to continue that work – and that includes us. We are to live in such a way that faith is more than a private belief. It’s a way of living. God’s rule. God’s will. In their book on the Lord’s Prayer, Will Willimon and Stanley Hauerwas write: This line is the “pledge of allegiance to a king and his kingdom that throws all our allegiances into crisis.” When we pray this prayer, we are pledging allegiance to God above everything else.

For thine is the kingdom and the power... The Greek word is *dynamis* from which we get the word dynamite. It is influence, authority, strength. We are saying that God is the ultimate source of all power. Our ability to get anything done is the result of God who gives us strength. The question is: Will you use that power for your desires or God’s? We have the freedom to use power for good or for evil. And we see the misuses of power in this world – or how someone can get a little bit of power and then exert that power for their own benefit. You may remember the quote by Lord Acton: **Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.** Lord Acton was referring to the Pope during the Inquisition. The Pope said anyone who disagreed with the church (which was actually the authority of the Pope) could be arrested and tortured until they confessed, and then put to death. Even in the church, power can corrupt. To say, “Thine is the power” is saying, “I’m giving my power and influence to God. Teach me how to use what you have given me.” What’s it look like when we use power for good? What came to mind is our Make a Difference Days this month. Here’s a reminder of what this looked like a year ago. [video] Those of you who were part of this could have been doing something else, but instead 196 people came together to use their power for THINE. That’s power! Next week, we are inviting you to be part of doing this again.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory In Greek, the word is *doxa* – splendor, glory, majesty. This word appears 480 times in the Bible, almost always describing God. We are meant to glorify God by our actions. But from the beginning, we want glory. Let me tell you about my grandson. Last Monday, Basil and I were playing with a toy where he would take certain shapes (circle, square, triangle) and try to fit them into the correct slot and when he put the circle in the circle slot [slide] I cheered. The next time he did it, I cheered and then he cheered. For 15 minutes, he kept putting the same circle in the same slot and I realized he kept this up because he wanted to hear me cheer. He wanted the glory. We all do – and that’s not a bad thing. It builds our self-esteem, but as we mature in our walk with Jesus, we give up the desire to be praised and give God the praise. Years ago, when we just started putting sermons on our website, we only kept them there for a couple of months. Now you can go to our website and read or watch the past five year’s worth of sermons. But years ago, I receive an email from a pastor in another part of the country who thanked me for a series that I done on the Sermon on the Mount. But then he described how writing sermons was not his gift and when he found mine, he began to use them but part way through his series on the Sermon on the Mount, the rest of my sermons disappeared from our website. “Would you be willing to send me the rest of your sermons?” And my first thought was – these are mine! I wrote them. I spent the time preparing them. The illustrations came from my life. So no. He said he would pay for them if that would help. I struggled with this for a couple days and then one morning I felt God saying to me,

You did this for me, and if what you did for me could bless others that would also bless me. So, I replied to his email, attaching every sermon from the series, and said, "I hope these sermons will be a blessing." Over the summer I received emails from other pastors, asking if they could use what they found on our website, and each time my response: anything and everything you see, you may use and I don't need and this church does not need the credit. We all are working for the same God.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Forever – into the ages. We will take nothing with us except what we do for God's kingdom and God's glory. Amen. So be it.

I want to give you an image to help you understand the importance of this prayer. There are so many things that we fit into our lives. And we end up overwhelmed, because it all doesn't fit. And we keep trying to cram more in – and this stuff starts to rule over us – it's what we worry about. It's what keeps us awake at night. But with this prayer, Jesus is saying – first things first. And once you center your life on what's truly important, all the other things will not consume you or distract you or keep you from what God can do through you. This, then is how to pray. This is the prayer that lays out your priorities and what will keep other things - what will keep worry from taking over. This is the prayer that centers me – every day – from this day – to eternity.

Let's pray:

Our Father who art in heaven –
Hallowed be thy name –
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done -
On earth as it is in heaven -
Give us this day our daily bread –
Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us –
Lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil –
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. –

Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of October 18, 2020

Weekly Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Monday, October 19

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 29:10-11

Then David blessed the LORD before the whole assembly: Blessed are you, LORD, God of our ancestor Israel, forever and always. To you, LORD, belong greatness and power, honor, splendor, and majesty, because everything in heaven and on earth belongs to you. Yours, LORD, is the kingship, and you are honored as head of all.

Observation: None of the earliest existing manuscripts of Matthew and Luke include the "doxology" ("For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever") with which we usually end the Lord's Prayer. It seems clear to most scholars that one or more devout scribes added it later. They may well have drawn the language at least in part from David's prayer in today's reading. Jews often added such doxologies at the close of prayers.

Application: David was king—an absolute monarch. He held all the power in Israel that a human could have. What does it tell you about his inner life that he said that God, and God only, is the source of all power and greatness? How similar or different to David's is your perspective on life, and on any of your successes or power? For what reasons?

Prayer: Lord God, I'm not a king like David, but I feel an inner tug to bask in any honor or splendor that comes my way. Remind me, often, that yours (not mine) are the kingdom and the power and the glory. Amen.

Tuesday, October 20

Scripture: Mark 9:33-35; Luke 13:22-30

They entered Capernaum. When they had come into a house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about during the journey?" They didn't respond, since on the way they had been debating with each other about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be least of all and the servant of all."

Jesus traveled through cities and villages, teaching and making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" Jesus said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow gate. Many, I tell you, will try to enter and won't be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and shuts the door, then you will stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open the door for us.' He will reply, 'I don't know you or where you are from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' He will respond, 'I don't know you or where you are from. *Go away from me, all you evildoers!*' There will be weeping and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in God's kingdom, but you yourselves will be thrown out. People will come from east and west, north and south, and sit down to eat in God's kingdom. Look! Those who are last will be first and those who are first will be last."

Observation: Jesus kept telling his disciples what awaited him in Jerusalem (Mark 9:31-32). They kept debating which of them would be greatest when Jesus set up his (earthly) kingdom. Others had ideas and questions about his kingdom too. William Barclay's Commentary noted the idea behind the question asked in Luke 13:23: "When this questioner asked his question it would certainly be on the assumption that the kingdom of God was for the Jews and that gentiles would all be shut out." The questioner thought he must be one of "the few" God would save.

Application: Most of us can relate at some level to the disciples, wanting to be sure Jesus and others properly appreciated their value. Jesus taught a different focus for our natural ambition: It was not that Jesus abolished ambition. Rather he recreated and sublimated ambition. For the ambition to rule, he substituted the ambition to serve. For the ambition to have things done for us, he substituted the ambition to do things for others. To what ends do you direct your ambition? If you need to redirect it, how can you do that?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in your kingdom, the last are first—and you know I hate to be last. Turn my values right side up, that I may truly be a citizen of your kingdom. Amen.

Wednesday, October 21

Scripture: Acts 1:6-8; Ephesians 3:18-21

As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?” Jesus replied, “It isn’t for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

I ask that you’ll have the power to grasp love’s width and length, height and depth, together with all believers. I ask that you’ll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God. Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen.

Observation: Just before he left this earth, Jesus boldly told his followers they would be his witnesses “to the ends of the earth.” At that point he had a group of about 120 committed followers (Acts 1:15). He promised them power—not to overthrow the Roman occupation, but to carry on his mission. To talk about reaching even Jerusalem, which had crucified their Lord a few weeks ago, must have felt daunting. A mission to reach “the end of the earth” must have seemed utterly impossible to many of them—but it wasn’t.

Application: Ephesians 3 wasn’t just abstract spiritual talk. Paul described a life-changing, world-changing power at work in real people’s daily lives. It wasn’t the Roman Empire’s brute force. He prayed that the Spirit in their “inner selves” would enable God’s people to “have the power to grasp love’s width and length, height and depth.” Find a quiet time to spend with God this week. Ask God to spark a vision in you of what God’s power might do in and through you that goes far beyond all that you could ask or imagine.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you promise me your power—not the power to boss people around, but the winning, persuasive power of self-giving love. Make me powerful as Jesus was. Amen.

Thursday, October 22

Scripture: John 12:23-33; 2 Corinthians 3:18

Jesus replied, “The time has come for the Human One to be glorified. I assure you that unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it can only be a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their lives will lose them, and those who hate their lives in this world will keep them forever. Whoever serves me must follow me. Wherever I am, there my servant will also be. My Father will honor whoever serves me. “Now *I am deeply troubled*. What should I say? ‘Father, save me from this time’? No, for this is the reason I have come to this time. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” The crowd standing there heard and said, “It’s thunder.” Others said, “An angel spoke to him.” Jesus replied, “This voice wasn’t for my benefit but for yours. Now is the time for judgment of this world. Now this world’s ruler will be thrown out. When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to me.” (He said this to show how he was going to die.)

All of us are looking with unveiled faces at the glory of the Lord as if we were looking in a mirror. We are being transformed into that same image from one degree of glory to the next degree of glory. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Observation: In Barclay's Commentary on John's gospel: "To the Jews the 'Son of Man' stood for the undefeatable world conqueror sent by God.... Jesus did not mean by glorified what they understood. They meant that the subjected kingdoms of the earth would grovel before the conqueror's feet; by glorified he meant crucified." Jesus used the word, glorify, to describe the effect of the very instrument of killing that the Romans considered the most humiliating form of death they could invent!

Application: The apostle Paul said, remarkably, that for Christ's followers, gazing at Christ's glory is like looking in a mirror. That, he said, is because looking at Christ's glory changes us. "We are being transformed into that same image from one degree of glory to the next degree of glory." In what ways is Christ's glory transforming you? Can you say like Jesus, even at times of struggle, pain or apparent defeat, "Father, glorify your name!"?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, being human, I sometimes like to imagine you glowing and glorious, all your earthly service and suffering shed like an old coat. But you said that was your glory! Revise my ideas of glory to match yours. Amen.

Friday, October 23

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-4; Romans 12:9-21

Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and agreeing with each other. Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others.

Love should be shown without pretending. Hate evil, and hold on to what is good. Love each other like the members of your family. Be the best at showing honor to each other. Don't hesitate to be enthusiastic—be on fire in the Spirit as you serve the Lord! Be happy in your hope, stand your ground when you're in trouble, and devote yourselves to prayer. Contribute to the needs of God's people, and welcome strangers into your home. Bless people who harass you—bless and don't curse them. Be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying. Consider everyone as equal, and don't think that you're better than anyone else. Instead, associate with people who have no status. Don't think that you're so smart. Don't pay back anyone for their evil actions with evil actions, but show respect for what everyone else believes is good. If possible, to the best of your ability, live at peace with all people. Don't try to get revenge for yourselves, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. It is written, *Revenge belongs to me; I will pay it back, says the Lord. Instead, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink. By doing this, you will pile burning coals of fire upon his head.* Don't be defeated by evil, but defeat evil with good.

Observation: In Philippians 2, the apostle Paul set out a powerful ideal. Christians are to work for the good of others rather than putting their own good first. The following discussions of Christ, Paul and other Christians provide examples of those who have put the good of others ahead of their own. Similarly, in Romans 12 he called Christians to live the way Jesus, their true king, did. They were to seek peace, overcome evil with good, and live as citizens of God's invisible yet supreme kingdom.

Application: "Be the best at showing honor to each other.... If possible, to the best of your ability, live at peace with all people." We'd often rather "be the best" at other traits and successes, wouldn't we? What inner fears and drives make it hard for you to honor and live at

peace with people who are different from you? How can the truth that the eternal God loves and values you give you a footing on which you can set aside the need to climb above others?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want my life to count for good, to make this world a better place. Plant the principles Paul voiced so clearly in my heart, that I may not just talk about them but live them humbly and gratefully every day. Amen.

Saturday, October 24

Scripture: John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

“Don’t be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me. My Father’s house has room to spare. If that weren’t the case, would I have told you that I’m going to prepare a place for you? When I go to prepare a place for you, I will return and take you to be with me so that where I am you will be too.

So we aren’t depressed. But even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day. Our temporary minor problems are producing an eternal stockpile of glory for us that is beyond all comparison. We don’t focus on the things that can be seen but on the things that can’t be seen. The things that can be seen don’t last, but the things that can’t be seen are eternal.

Observation: Earlier in John’s gospel, Jesus said those who trust in him have eternal life—present tense (John 3:36, 5:24, 6:47 and 54). We don’t need to wait until after our earthly life to enter the eternal quality of life Jesus offers us. Jesus also gave his followers a vivid picture of God’s house as a spacious place with plenty of room for everyone. The apostle Paul knew firsthand about physical challenges. The physical toll of those hardships likely gave personal meaning to his statement that “Even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day.”

Application: In Romans 8:24, Paul wrote, “We were saved in hope. If we see what we hope for, that isn’t hope. Who hopes for what they already see?” In 2 Corinthians, he said we focus on things we can’t see, which are more durable than what we can see. What do you hope for that remains out of sight? What steps do you take to anchor your hope in God’s goodness, and to live with patience and trust? In his commentary, Barclay wrote, “From the physical point of view life may be a slow but inevitable slipping down the slope that leads to death. But from the spiritual point of view life is a climbing up the hill that leads to the presence of God.” What can you do to ensure that God is renewing the person you are inside every day?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I’m so thankful that your kingdom is forever. I love you. I want to be a part of your great forever. Thank you for promising to hold me safely in your love—forever. Amen.