

## **PP** Living the Amen: *Becoming a People of Prayer*, Part 14

11/2/2006

Have you ever really wondered Why we say Amen after we pray?

A father said “Amen” after grace one evening and one of his children asked what “Amen” meant. Before he or his wife could answer, their five-year-old responded, “It means, ‘Send.’” Is that the answer? We compose the body of our prayer and then click the send button to get it to God?

It’s in the NT 28 times in English, but the Greek word is found 152 times

It’s important and we will see this morning why it is and what significance it has for us

This morning, we come to a section of this prayer that cannot be found in most of our

Bibles unless we look down at the footnotes section

Why is that?

This doxology doesn’t appear in any of the oldest manuscripts

But the Jews had a custom of ending all prayers with a brief doxology

So it seems that the early Jewish Christians in Syria, in their habit of reciting this prayer, added this doxology which made its way into the early church’s tradition and eventually into their writings

This is why most of our Bibles do not have it as part of the inspired, inerrant word of God, but merely as footnote

However, there is nothing unbiblical, or inaccurate about this doxology

In fact, every statement of this doxology is reinforced in Scripture

**PP** Notice its similarity to 1 Chronicles 29:11-*“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.”*

So while we do not hold it as part of the inspired Word of God, it beautifully describes the heart’s response when praying through these truths

For that reason, we will look at the significance of this doxology: *“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen”*

### **PP** 1-We praise God because the Kingdom belongs to Him

**PP** In short, the kingdom is the reign of God

We belong to the kingdom of God in Christ, and the kingdom of God lives in us

Because we belong to God the King, our wills must reflect this

This is a praise that God reigns over us and that we are utterly dependent on Him

We want to see Him reign, we want to praise our King, because His is the kingdom and we live within it

God’s kingdom is one of love, peace, unity and beauty

We have nothing to fear, for our King is the sovereign, uncontested ruler

He loves and cares for His people

He is in control of all things and we will answer to Him for our lives

This truth is especially needed in our uncertain times

How is your 401?

Your house worth less than what you owe?

Is Your company downsizing?

There is one who is always in control and His sovereign rule always carries out what is  
best in your life, no matter what it seems at the moment  
He is our great King and it is His kingdom in which we live

Have you ever looked at these stain-glassed windows from outside the church?  
If so, you may have noticed that the colors are muted and the shapes indistinct  
But look at the windows from inside our sanctuary and notice the vibrancy of the colors  
and the story of the gospel they communicate  
These windows are designed for their beauty to be most apparent when inside the  
building  
This is similar with the kingdom of God  
Its full mystery and beauty can only be seen from the inside  
Friends, if you cannot see the beauty of the kingdom of God, you may be standing on the  
wrong side of it  
The children of God can see it and only they can declare with praise-filled joy, *"Yours is  
the kingdom..."*

## **PP 2-We praise God because all Power belongs to Him**

Can I tell you something about ancient grammar?  
The phrase 'kingdom and the power' is called a hendiadys  
I know, this is life-changing knowledge, but a hendiadys occurs when two words form a  
single thought, like the phrase 'try and win'  
Two words, 'try' and 'win' that together form the same sense of victorious effort  
Kingdom and power form the thought of omnipotent control  
They really can't function independently of one another  
A king without power is quite simply a powerless king  
Our King has all power to rule and to carry out His desires  
I love the Greek word here for *'power'*

### ***PP Dunamis***

At one point I wanted to have this word painted on my motorcycle  
This word rocks, or rather explodes, since it is where we get our word *'dynamite'*  
Jesus told the early church that they *"will receive [dunamis] when the Holy Spirit comes  
upon you."*

The Son of Man is going to return *"in a cloud with [dunamis] and great glory"*.  
God holds all might, nothing can thwart His will  
That power enables Him to rule and to care for His children according to His desires  
How emboldened and confident ought to be our prayers  
We come before the sovereign King of all creation, and make requests of the one Who  
holds all power

## **PP 3-We praise God because all Glory belongs to Him**

*"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen"*

Our sovereign king, cannot do anything but lead us to His see His glory

But what is glory? Despite how often this word occurs in both Scripture and our culture, few people really know what it means

**PP** ‘*Glory*’ in the Old Testament comes from a root that means *heavy* or *weighty*. It would suggest an impressive or wealthy person that carries a weighty influence. When used of God, glory was closely linked with His acts of splendor, holiness and love which reveal Who He is

The ‘*heavens declare the glory of God*’

The OT consistently links His glory with His presence among His people

This made its way into the New Testament as well when we read that the Son of God was born and the angelic host declared “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!*” (Luke 2:14)

**PP** To the Greeks, ‘*glory*’ came when one achieved fame through great exploits. To them glory came when others thought highly of them because of great acts

**PP** The New Testament completely transformed the Greek meaning of glory by bringing in the OT concept of God’s majesty coming through His self-revelation. In short, God’s glory is seen in the display of Himself in our universe and nowhere is that display seen more clearly than in Jesus Christ

**PP** “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*” John 1:14

Do you see the progression in this doxology?

The King rules His kingdom with absolute power

And His actions in all creation reveals His Who He is and brings Him glory, fame

“*Yours is the kingdom, power and glory forever, Amen.*”

**PP** Now here is the important question to me: *How do we give God glory?*

At least three important ways:

**PP a)** *We give God glory when we recognize His presence and praise Him for the qualities His acts reveal*

**PP** The 24 Elders in Revelation 4 cast their crowns before God’s throne saying “*Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.*” (11)

**PP b)** *Another way we glorify God is when our lives display His qualities*

**PP** Jesus said clearly in John 15:8- “*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*”

That fruit that we bear is the living out of His own qualities, proof we belong to Him

This brings glory to God

Showing patience with others, mercy to the suffering, grace to those who wrong us,

gentleness to insensitive people, humility in service, all of these display God's qualities and bring Him glory

Do you want your life to glorify God?

Then ask Him to help you live like He does

Living out God's grace in our character and in loving acts of service that the Holy Spirit is producing in us makes His name known to those around us and brings Him glory

**PP c) *There is a third way that we give God glory and it is by living the 'Amen'***

Giving God glory means acknowledging and singing the praises of what is already a reality

'*Already a reality*'? What do I mean by this and what does this have to do with glorifying God?

This is exactly what the '**Amen**' in this doxology does

In Judaism Amen was used in response to praises, blessings, vows and prayers

When prayers would end with 'Amen', it signified a hope for its fulfillment

**PP** Similarly, in the Old Testament, 'Amen' meant '*so be it*', a certainty that the words uttered would, in God's will, be fulfilled

The meaning shifted slightly in the NT as it came to mean 'it is so' and carried with it an affirmation

**PP** Where Amen used to signify that it would be so, it evolved to mean it is so

Why is this significant?

**PP** The key is found in Revelation 3:14, "***And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.'***"

The '**Amen**' is Jesus Christ, the '***faithful and true witness***'

A witness is one whose testimony and word is completely reliable, accurate and trustworthy in legal proceedings

The promises of God are embodied and fulfilled in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ

By ending their praise of God with 'amen', the Old Testaments saints expressed their certainty that God would be faithful to them and He would send to them a Deliverer

By ending our praise and prayers with 'amen', we are affirming that God has been sent that Deliver to us and is indeed faithful

Our Amen is no longer '*so be it*', as much as '*it is so*'

In fact, this word is the very last and final word in the Scriptures (Rev. 22:21)

**'Amen', It is so!**

To live the Amen is to live with the certainty that Jesus Christ has guaranteed, by His own blood, the promises to us found in Scripture

From what will the children of God fear?

What world changes can make the children of God tremble?

For it is indeed true that the '***kingdom and the power and the glory***' are forever God's

When you read the news and it creates anxiety, remember the Amen of the Lord's prayer

When bad news reaches your ears, remember the AMEN Who has guaranteed the promises of God

When you are discouraged, turn your thoughts to the AMEN that has declared that the kingdom of God is overpowering the kingdom of this world, regardless of the political or economic landscape

Live the Amen as you search diligently for employment

Live the Amen as your heart is with your family that is serving in war

Live the Amen when you are waiting on the result of that biopsy

How can we have this confidence?

Because **‘[God’s] is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen’**

You know, when I was a boy, I would dream and day dream of having the power to fly

We lived in the shadow of ‘hang-glider hill’, where I would lie down and just watch those gliders float for what seemed to be hours

It was also a popular place for hawks and turkey buzzards and their ability to glide on those thermal drafts was mesmerizing

Birds can fly amazingly well, but it takes two wings

When one wing is injured they are grounded immediately

Friends, this is the way prayer and praise work together

The doxology is the praise that works in concert with prayer, and when we learn to keep both together, we can soar in the heights of the kingdom of God

When one no longer works, we are ground dwellers

Is it time for you to go back to the basics and learn how to pray?

Is it time to live out the Amen in your life and let praise inhabit your mouth, affirming the promises of God in Jesus Christ?

Are you tired of being grounded in your prayer life?

Christ has taught us how to become a people of prayer

*“I used to think the Lord’s Prayer was a short prayer; but, as I live longer, and see more of life, I believe there is no such thing as getting through it. If a man, in praying that prayer, were to be stopped by every word until he had thoroughly prayed it, it would take him a lifetime.”*

Pray

**PP Re-View** *Becoming a People of Prayer* series, part 15

11/9/2008

This is the final sermon in the Becoming a people of prayer series

I have tried to capture the highlights of the series for a brief look back

If you are inclined to do so, all the sermons and all my notes are on our website

You remember those African converts who each had their own special place outside the village where they would go to pray in solitude? The ways to those places were special footpaths through the brush. When grass began to grow over one of these trails, it was evident that the person to whom it belonged was not praying very much. These new Christians, out of concern

for one another, when noticing overgrown paths would go to that person and lovingly warn,  
“Friend, there’s grass on your path!”

So let me ask, is there still grass on your path?

We struggle in prayer, and when we do we lose the sense of beauty and majesty and  
wonder of God

Prayer begins this recovery process, by lifting our eyes back onto the heights of God’s  
glory and centering us on the God Who cares for us with tenderness and concern  
and power

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones once said that “*man is never greater than when he is there in  
communion and contact with God*”

**PP** There is power in a little pronoun called ‘Our’, the first word of this prayer

**PP** “*You cannot pray the Lord’s prayer and even once say ‘I’*

*You cannot say the Lord’s prayer and even once say ‘my’*

*Nor can you pray the Lord’s prayer and not pray for another,*

*For when you ask for daily bread you must include your brother.*

*For others are included in each and every plea—*

*From the beginning to the end of it, it never once says ‘me’!”*

If God is our Father, then that makes us brothers and sisters, united in Biblical fellowship

Have you spent more time praying for others? Encouraging others to pray? Teaching  
others how to pray?

This is part of what makes us a redemptive community, a family of God, children of our  
Heavenly Father

**PP** What does that mean that God is our ***Father***?

Understanding this is *freeing!*

God’s finger is not poised over some cosmic smite button, ready to inflict suffering on

His children the moment they step out of line

Yes, God disciplines His children, but love is the motivator, not vindictive wrath

**PP** We are the adopted children of God and as J.I. Packer wrote: ‘*If you want to judge  
how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s  
child, and having God as his Father.*’

The New Testament gives two yardsticks to measure the love of God

One is the death of Christ on the cross and it is the one which grabs most of our attention

The other, though lesser known, is adoption

Our Father always desires the company of His children, is always accessible to His  
children, never too preoccupied to listen to His children

We are God’s heirs, and co-heirs with Jesus Christ

And the Holy Spirit is the down payment or Divine deposit, that guarantees us of our  
inheritance

We can cry out in praise that our Dad is Magnificent

But unlike the book of that title, where the son tells tall tales of his dad to his friend Alex,  
our Father exceeds any tales we can tell

**PP** He is our Father in heaven, and that does a wonder thing to our vision

It turns our eyes upward, to our transcendent God, Who is great and mighty and infinite

No god or power or authority exists that is over our God

He inhabits the very center of all there is and the throne seat of all authority

But that word heaven also turns our eyes inward to our own humility and transparency



Our Father Who loves us, also *sees* everything we do, think and say  
There can be no charade in my prayers  
I cannot make myself appear better or hide what is really in my heart to God  
The truth that He is our loving Father who sees all, drives us to voluntarily truthfulness  
Our eyes are drawn forward by knowing our Father presides in heaven

Illus Do you remember Florence Chadwick, who in 1952 stepped into the waters of the Pacific Ocean off Catalina Island, determined to swim to the shore of mainland California. She'd already been the first woman to swim the English Channel both ways. The weather was foggy and chilly; she could hardly see the boats accompanying her. Still, she swam for 15 hours. When she begged to be taken out of the water along the way, her mother, in a boat alongside, told her she was close and that she could make it. Finally, physically and emotionally exhausted, she stopped swimming and was pulled out. It wasn't until she was on the boat that she discovered the shore was less than a half a mile away. At a news conference the next day she said, "All I could see was the fog...I think if I could have seen the shore, I would have made it."

To pray to our Father in heaven is to move our eyes to an eternal perspective

**PP** C.S. Lewis once said that *"If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next... Aim at heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in'; aim at earth and you will get neither."*

Praying to our Father in **'heaven'** moves our eyes upward to His greatness, inward to the reality of our smallness and forward to the joy-filled eternity that lies before us

But the problem for many of us is that we are spiritual haolis

This is the word that Hawaiians would call people from the mainland, but it originated when the Christians arrived:

*"Before the missionaries came, my people used to sit outside their temples for a long time meditating and preparing themselves before entering. Then they would virtually creep to the altar to offer their petition and afterwards would again sit a long time outside, this time to 'breathe life' into their prayers. The Christians, when they came, just got up, uttered a few sentences, said Amen and were done. For that reason my people call them haolis, "without breath," or those who fail to breathe life into their prayers."*

Is your prayer-life oxygen deprived? Without breath?

**PP** What is the cure? Jesus tells us we need to ask that God's name would be hallowed  
Do you remember what it means to hallow God's name?

**PP** It means to *recognize and treat God as holy*

His name is holy, which is tremendously significant!

God's names reveal aspects of His being, His character, nature and personality

And there is no greater name for God than Jesus Christ, because it is in Him that we see the clearest and fullest picture of Who God is

**PP** ***"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world."***

**John 17:6**

Martin Luther answered the question of how we hallow God's name: it is *"When both our life and doctrine are truly Christian."*

If we want to breathe life in our prayer, then we need to learn to hallow God's name

Lord, hallowed be Your name! Help me to live in such a way that my life reveals Your greatness

May Your reputation be increased in the world by the way I live my life!

Hallowed be Your name in my business, my financial stewardship, my friendships, in my family, and my thought life, neighborhood, and church

**PP** The second request Jesus taught us to ask is that God's kingdom would come

Meaning to ask God to bring His reign on earth to its fullest conclusion

Turn those in sin to Your mercy and enable them to trust and obey

But this isn't only a request for the unsaved, it includes the children of God as well

God, give us a greater understanding of kingdom living

Give us a greater desire to see You reign?

God, bring history to its end, send back to us our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and usher in the fullness of Your kingdom

**PP** So we are to pray that God's will would be done, on earth as it is in heaven

This is what Luther called a '*fearful prayer*', because it is a prayer that puts us right in the center of God's refining, purifying sights

Our squirming, sin-saddled flesh consistently, and powerfully seeks to do our wills rather than God's

When we pray 'your will be done' we are praying that God's will become our will

**PP** God doesn't just want obedience, He wants us *to want to* obey Him, and He works in us changing our desires to His desires

This is a prayer of active participation in God's will, not passive resignation

This is how God's will is done in heaven:

**PP** "*Bless the LORD, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, obeying the voice of His word!*" **Psalms 103:20**

The angels' overriding desire is to bless the Lord: to glorify, honor, and bestow on Him their favor

Out of that desire, these mighty ones do, obey, fulfill God's Word, His will

This is what we are asking God for in this prayer

**PP** How can this happen? By asking God to provide us with daily bread

God wants us to obey His will and do the work of His kingdom and He provides all we need in order to do it

The fact that we have to ask for it tells us it we can't provide it for ourselves

We cannot provide ourselves with spiritual nourishment

There is no generic equivalent, no substitute, no knock-off brand, no other source

The words 'us' and 'our' make clear that this is bread for God's communities

It is not only a request that God would provide for me, it is a commitment to be part of how He answers that same request for others in need

Jesus is showing us that God's blessings are to be asked for, and when received, shared

It's daily bread, made fresh each and every day and given to God's children

But what is this bread?

**PP** It is the physical sustenance that we need to live-both food and those necessities in



life that enable us to live in God's will

**PP** But this daily bread is also-in the opinion of Augustine- '*spiritual food, namely, the divine precepts which we are to think over and to put into practice each day*'

In praying for daily bread we are asking that God would fulfill all our needs-physical, life's necessities and spiritual-so that we can best follow His will

**PP** Nowhere is the need for this greater than forgiving those who sin against us: ***"and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."***

An unforgiving spirit is one of most common short circuits of grace

It is one of the biggest threats to God's communities

We learned that asking God to forgive us our debts, isn't a prayer for salvation

For the Lord's prayer is a prayer that only a believer can meaningfully pray, it is for one who has already received God's pardon sin

Debts are the continuing sins that all believers continue to commit

We see this when Jesus bent down to clean Peter's dirty feet in that upper room

Although Peter's body was clean-he was justified by faith-he walked in this world and was dirtied by sin

***'Forgive us our debts'*** is confession, and ***'He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'*** **1 John 1:9**

But shockingly, Jesus guides us to pray that God would forgive us in the same way we forgive others which is why Augustine said this is ***'the terrible petition'***

**PP** It's why Spurgeon wrote '*Unless you have forgiven others, you read your own death warrant when you repeat the Lord's prayer.*'

It is foolish to confess sins and ask God to cleanse us from unrighteousness if we refuse to forgive the debt others have incurred with us

If we will not forgive others, if we hold onto our grudges and bar them from our grace and fellowship, then we will be barred from the sweet fellowship of our Father

The proof of our adoption as God's children is the glad willingness to give the same grace and mercy to others that we have received in such large quantities from our Father

**PP** Temptation comes in all shapes and sizes

An important part of prayer is asking our heavenly Father for help to resist it

We are to ask for protection from our enemy who roars like a lion, seeking to devour us

***"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."***

**PP** The Greek word for ***'temptation'*** can either mean *a difficult trial, or a solicitation to do evil*

God is holy and will never, can never, solicit us to do evil

He allows and sometimes sends tests to prove our faith genuine

He wants us to succeed through the trial, while Satan seduces us to evil, in order to prove our faith weak and false

God helps us by delivering us, which means more than to rescue or save someone

**PP** It means to draw to oneself

Ironically, the name Satan means *one who separates*, and God's rescuing takes the form of strengthening our relationship with Him

God draws us away from Satan and to His side where we are safe and secure

**PP** Finally, last week we looked at the doxology and saw that we need to learn to live the Amen of Scripture

We praise God for His sovereignty, His explosive power to bring about His will, and His glory and fame that comes when He displays Himself

We give God that glory when we live out the Amen of Scripture

The word 'Amen' means *it is so*

It is the affirmation that all the promises of God have been fulfilled in Christ

Therefore we can pray the truths and principles found in this prayer with faith-filled confidence, because we know that all the promises of God are already ours

**PP** *"I used to think the Lord's Prayer was a short prayer; but, as I live longer, and see more of life, I believe there is no such thing as getting through it. If a man, in praying that prayer, were to be stopped by every word until he had thoroughly prayed it, it would take him a lifetime."*