

Here is the text of Jeff's reflection – Aug 22

When it comes to praying the Lord's Prayer, we can pray the prayer and experience the prayer in several different ways, depending on how we emphasize or don't emphasize any particular word.

That's true for many things we say. For example, if we were engaged in a discussion about football teams and which one is the best, we might say: "THE WINNIPEG BLUE BOMBERS are the best team in the league."...but if we were just wanting to state our opinion about our favourite team we might say, "The Winnipeg Blue Bombers are the BEST team in the league." It matters where we put the emphasis.

Unfortunately, we recite the Lord's Prayer so often, and so often recite it so routinely, that by the time we reach the end of the prayer, we may not be concerned with any emphasis, just with getting to Amen.

So we might pray: **"For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN"**

Or we may choose to emphasize one of those words or several of those words...or even, all of those words:

**FOR...THINE...IS...THE...KINGDOM...
AND...THE...POWER...
AND...THE...GLORY...
FOREVER...AND...EVER....AMEN**

Scholars are divided in their opinions as to whether these words were originally part of the prayer Jesus taught, or were later added by church communities as a kind of doxology or ending of praise.

Whether original or addition, the words provide a summary of the prayer and each word is a significant statement about God and the world.

We begin this ending phrase with the word 'for'. For – the words carries the meaning of 'because' 'this is why this is so'...We reach the conclusion of the prayer with a word that says 'now we are about to say why it is that we can and should pray this pray:

'For' – for all reality and life is grounded in God.

'For'..."thine' ...thine, this is yours, God, what we are to name in this prayer belongs to God, not to any other, If this is 'thine' it is not 'mine' ...nor is it the Roman Emperor's!

What is 'thine' ...three words that will begin with the article 'THE'. "The" says that what we are to name in this prayer is not 'A', not one amongst many. What we are to name is

the most real, and it is God's alone.

Three words...for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory!

'Kingdom'...'power'...'glory'...

In the world of Jesus those three attributes belonged to only one reality – the Roman Empire; belonged to only one person – the ruling Roman Emperor. The kingdom was Rome's, the power was Rome's – the power of the most intimidating army and the power displayed in statues, colosseums, aqueducts, and the impressive physical constructions glorifying the world's preeminent power...the glory was Rome's!

But not to those who prayed as Jesus taught them to pray. To those people, the kingdom, the power and the glory, belonged to God.

It was not a new understanding. The Jewish people knew the story of the confrontation between Pharaoh and the God of Moses – a confrontation of the power of empire against the power of this unseen and obscure God, power that played out in plagues and eventually in the deaths of Egyptian children, power that played out as Egyptian soldiers tried to pursue the pilgrim slaves across the pathway that had appeared in the Red Sea.

It was a story played out through the life and faith of this people and this people's prophets and priests.

It is the story that says over and over again, 'This is God's world. This is God's creation. Thanks and praise be to God.'

Kingdom...power...glory...

Yet, in praying these words as taught by Jesus, those early disciples and we contemporary disciples, are praying ourselves into a new and alternate understanding of those words.

Because Jesus now defines for us what kingdom, power and glory mean when grounded in God.

The kingdom of God is the way the world looks if we organize our societies and relationships according to God's agenda – according to God's spirit, God's grace, God's blessing.

Jesus shows us a kingdom in which the lame, the blind, the tormented, the poor are not only welcomed, but their well-being is tied to the well-being of the world. Jesus shows us a kingdom governed by spirits of compassion, generosity, sharing, healing.

Jesus embodies the God who does not rule over people but lives amongst people. This is a kingdom in which first become last, and last become first, until the terms first and last lose any significance and we have a community of beloved neighbours and children of God.

The one who taught this prayer was the one who would be executed on a cross. The power of God is not the power of military conquest, nor that of super-powers that protect one from any danger or loss.

This power is somehow embodied, displayed in a vulnerable, trusting, courageous, loving, healing, bread-breaking, cup-blessing, meal-sharing child of God.

Power is the spirit of God flowing through one to being healing and hope.

Glory is not self-accomplishment but is the light of God shining through us to allow others to see God in our lives, and in this world.

We come to the end of the prayer Jesus taught, and we pray:

“For thine is the kingdom, **and** the power **and** the glory...and we are encouraged to add more ‘ands’ ...and the wisdom, and the hope, and the peace and the truth, and the reconciliation, and the ...and the...

Because this kingdom, this power, this glory does not serve just a term or two in office...they are for ever and ever...God is not going away. God is going on and on with the work of creation and healing and loving; and Jesus is inviting us to go our way by going in God’s way...

...for God’s is the kingdom, and the power and the glory...for ever and ever.

AMEN!