

Pentecost 10: A study of the Doxology of the Lord's Prayer

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

"So Shall it Be!"

1 Chronicles 29:10-13: ¹⁰David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. ¹¹Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. ¹²Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. ¹³Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name."

In eastern central Ohio, Chad Somers climbs up an extension ladder, not on top of a building, but up from underground. He's about 25 feet down, emptying pails of dirt back on the surface. Why? He's searching for something he is convinced will be down at the bottom: The long-hidden gold treasure buried by the larger-than-life famous gunslinger Jesse James. He knows there is substantial evidence that this outlaw had amassed an enormous fortune and buried it but never found it. Many think he's a little nuts since there's little evidence of James spending time in Ohio.

But recently, he's called in experts who have double-checked his decoded maps; he's scoured the forest for symbols on the maps like an Indiana Jones movie. He's even used High tech ground penetrating radar, which has found a sizeable chest-sized object beneath that is full of metal. All signs are pointing that this might be a chest of treasure.

Today, we conclude our study of the Lord's Prayer. For eight weeks, we have taken apart this treasure of a prayer and plumbed the depths of what it asks of God and the things God can grant. But even as we have heard from Scripture the promises God makes in granting the requests that come before God's throne in heaven, have you ever felt like Chad Somers? Throwing your words up before God and hoping that you'll find that treasure. If you choose the right words, have the right attitude, have behaved well that day before offering your prayer, and ask for precisely the right thing, then perhaps God will open up his arms and grant those requests. Give you the metaphorical treasure you seek.

Well, it's vital for us to close our study of the Lord's Prayer with the closing word of the Lord's Prayer: "Amen." It's a word that you have heard so many times in your life and already a few times in this service; we listen to it so often that we can treat it as the punctuation of our prayers. A sort of "I am now done praying, and here's your signal." But the frequent use of this is not one of insignificance but one of importance.

The word “Amen” is one of those words that has been spoken even since the Old Testament, recorded first in your Bible in the book of Numbers. Its significance means that it wasn’t even translated into Greek and was just transliterated, put into Greek letters, and we still use it to this day.

“Amen” is a word of affirmation. In the Old Testament, it’s used after things like a blessing, a promise, or praise to God, saying: Yes, this is true. It comes from a verb meaning to be faithful. Yes, I will do this. Yes, this is going to happen. Yes, this is going to be. And this affirmation of certainty is carried on into the new. Jesus uses the word frequently, 99 times in fact, as an acknowledgment of the truth and authority of the words that he speaks. You will hear it often from our lectern whenever you hear: “Truly I tell you.” Amen, Amen, I tell you.

Whenever we say that word “Amen,” it states a number of things. It’s stating that you agree and that you trust in God and all of the things he has told you. It means that you have been led to trust and believe that the promises God has made to you are trustworthy and will come to pass.

As one commentator described it, Amen is at the heart of faith. It is God-worked confidence that we are acceptable to our Father in heaven. It is a certainty in the grace of God that is manifested in the sacrifice of Christ Jesus. It is a conviction that God hears us and answers our prayers and will answer them according to his will.

And what does that mean when you say Amen, at the end of a prayer? Perhaps, without even realizing it, you are confessing that you trust that your prayer has gone up to heaven and is heard by the eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing Father in heaven, like the bowls of incense carried by the elders in John’s Revelation. It also means that you trust that through Jesus Christ and the atonement he won for you, your prayers as believers will be answered according to God’s gracious will. Like in our Gospel, when Jesus says whatever you ask in my name, I will grant it.

This Amen, at the end of a prayer that God himself taught us, means an awful lot. Because this prayer is God’s will spoken, because God has commanded you to pray this to him, you can look at each of those petitions and confidently say: Amen, so shall it be. Not a wish, not a hope, but a confident statement of, yes, it will be.

1. Is God really looking out for me? Our Father in Heaven. Amen, so it shall be.
2. God, will you strengthen me through the Holy Spirit to stay away from sin? Hallowed be your name. Amen, so shall it be.
3. God, will you really strengthen my faith? Your kingdom come. Amen, So shall it be.
4. God, will you really work even through my suffering? Your will be done, Amen. So shall it be.

5. God, are you actually going to provide for my physical needs? Amen. So shall it be.
6. Are my sins really forgiven? Amen, so shall it be.
7. Will you keep me from the temptations of the devil himself? Amen. So shall it be.
8. Will you keep me from evil? Amen, so shall it be.

The Lord's Prayer is a treasure. Prayer itself is a treasure by which we can ask from God himself for the riches and blessings that he can grant. But these blessings aren't don't require a secret code to figure out how to ask for. You don't need any crazy materials or secret formula to unlock them. You need simply to pray and ask. God has promised you that he ruler of the kingdom, the all-powerful, the all-glorious Lord, hears you. And because of your status, he answers those prayers and grants things you couldn't possibly imagine. This is always the case when you pray the Lord's Prayer. It shall be so.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.