

Rev 1:5b-6 **To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father--to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.**

Dear Children of God Led By Our Mighty King:

Bible Trivia Quiz Question: Where in the Bible do you find the *Lord's Prayer*? It's actually found twice in the NT. If you're saying, "*Sure, it's recorded in Mt. 6 and Lk. 11,*" you'd be right!

Next Question: Is the Lord's Prayer recorded in Mt. and Lk. exactly as we speak it today? If you said "*No,*" you'd be right again. The LP as we speak it today is a compilation of the 2 NT accounts, and something has been added. It's called the *Doxology*--those words we speak at the very end: "***For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.***"

Those words were added, to the best of our knowledge, in the earliest days of the Christian church. A doxology is a statement of praise to God. And though it was added to the original LP by humans, it's not unscriptural. Everything the doxology expresses is in the Bible. In fact, the section of Revelation before us today is very similar to the doxology, and there are many other doxologies in the Bible, like this one from 1 Chronicles 29: "***Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory...***"

This very last week of the church year is called *Christ the King*. Our sermon theme comes from the doxology of the "pearl of all prayers": "***Yours, Jesus, Is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory!***" His greatness is (1) *Your greatness is seen your liberating love*, and (2) *Your greatness is seen in your empowering love*.

1

John writes, "***To him who loves us...to him be glory and power forever ever.***" There are lots of people in this world who tell us they have our best interests in mind. Unfortunately, many of them are "Don Juans." That name, Don Juan, has become synonymous for the kind of guy who tells all the girls he loves them, but his words turn out to be just "sweet nothings." He "loves 'em and leaves 'em," as the old saying goes.

Our King Jesus is not a Don Juan. He doesn't tell us he loves us and then ditches us. He proved his love by showing us his love in his actions. He committed his whole life to loving you. He's no smooth talker. He's not a taker, he's a giver. He even gave himself on the brutal cross and suffered hell itself in order to ensure your happiness for eternity! It's no wonder our hearts break forth in a doxology of praise when we think about what he's done: "***For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory!***"

His love is not only true and giving -- it's also **liberating**. John writes, "***He loved us and freed us from our sins by his blood.***"

We recently observed Veterans Day, and in the spring we observe Memorial Day. How truly blessed we are that fellow citizens, men and women, are willing to put themselves on the line, even to the shedding of their blood and the giving of their lives, so that the freedoms we enjoy might be ours. When or if we start taking that sacrifice for granted, our nation will be in deep trouble. There are some signs of that trouble already.

Jesus, our valiant King, has taken the battle to the devil -- the despicable leader of the most oppressive regime in the universe. Jesus put his own life on the cross and let his own blood flow that we might be liberated, freed from slavery that would have tyrannized us forever. May we not take his sacrifice and the liberties he gained for us for granted!

2

Our freedom cuts both ways: We are freed *from* Satan's power and, John says, we are freed *to* "***be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and Father...***" We weren't freed so we could sit around, twiddle our thumbs, and eat bonbons. There's much to do! When Abraham Lincoln issued the *Eman-*

cipation Proclamation in 1863, he declared that all slaves were free -- but that didn't mean there wouldn't be anything for them to do! When the war ended, they no longer had the yoke of bondage on their shoulders. But now they were free, truly free, to work as freedmen and to develop and use their talents to their fullest for the sake of their families and communities and society. Their gifts were unleashed to be a blessing to all!

Our King has freed us and empowers us to serve to the best of our abilities. Our King is our power source. Like a power tool plugged into an outlet, there is a steady stream of energy enabling us to serve. As Paul said, "***For Christ's love compels us***" (2 Cor 5:14) -- it energizes us to live in love for others.

Some years ago at the Seattle Special Olympics, 9 contestants with various degrees of developmental disabilities, assembled at the starting line for the 100 meter dash. At the gun they all started out. One young man, however, stumbled out of the gate, tumbled head over heels, hurt his knee, and gave out a cry.

The other 8 runners heard him. They turned around and went back -- every single one of them. One girl bent down and kissed him and said, "*There, that will make it better.*" Then all 9 got up, linked arms, and walked together to the finish line. Everyone in the stadium stood and cheered -- not a dry eye in the place.

People who were there still tell the story. Why? Because deep down we know this: *What really matters is more than winning for ourselves. What really matters is that we can help others win, even if it means stopping or changing course or inconveniencing ourselves to do so.*

Jesus changed for us. The King became a beggar, one of us. He did that so we might win, so we might cross the finish line of eternity with our brothers and sisters. And now it's **our turn** to serve in love so that others, fallen and hurting, might be winners also.

When Jesus the King rules our hearts, there are changes in our lives:

There are changes in **values**. Earthly success and personal achievements fade. Giving Christ the glory becomes our passion. As Jesus said, "***Blessed are the meek...blessed are the peacemakers...blessed are the merciful.***" (Mt. 6). Humility, kindness, and avoiding conflict. We seek to display Jesus' values.

When Jesus the King rules, there are changes in **priorities**. Someone once said the real test of a person's priorities is to observe how they spend their time and on what they spend their money. Jesus said, "***Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness***" (Mt. 6). What does the King see when he looks at our priority list?

And thirdly, when Jesus the King rules, there's also a change in **mission**. Jesus' forgiving love moves us to promote the mission of our King (and his values and his priorities). Our mission is no longer to live for me, but for him who saved me and gave his life for me. I am not the king, Jesus is. And we want everyone to know the free gift of salvation this King offers and gives.

So to our King, the Lord Jesus, be "***the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever!***"

Amen.