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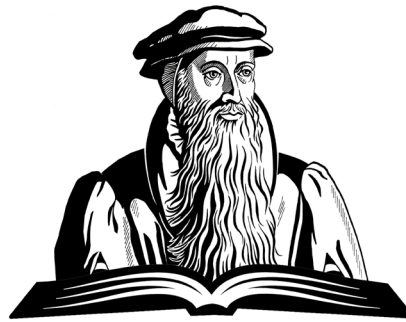
Shorter
CATECHISM

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Jonathan Mattull

Lecture #60

**The Lord's Prayer:
The Conclusion**
Catechism Question 107



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

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VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

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Lecture #60

The Lord's Prayer: The Conclusion

Question 107: *What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?*

Answer: *The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (which is, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen") teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him. And, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, "Amen."*

Well, we've seen that Christ teaches us to draw near to God in prayer by grace. We call upon God as our Father, and obviously he is our Father by grace through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ. And as we call upon him, as our Father in heaven, we seek first his glory; we also seek to have him supply all our many needs.

Now we come to what's known as the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer. As we take it up, we consider that there's much still in prayer that is beyond simple petitions. And in looking at the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer, we see this relationship. As we begin with God, "Our Father which art in heaven," we also end with God, as we testify that his is "the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever." This reminds us that prayer is about communing with God through Jesus Christ by faith, regarding all the things of his revealed will, and regarding all the things that we need physically, temporally, and spiritually as well. In prayer, we seek God's glory by his grace.

Well, the last Question, not only dealing with the Lord's Prayer, but with the *Catechism* itself, is #107: "What doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us?"—"The conclusion of the Lord's prayer (which is, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen*) teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him. And, in testimony of our desire, and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen.*"

The conclusion is found in Matthew 6, verse 13. It's giving us the reason we seek all of this from God. In some sense, it's expressing why we are seeking these things from him and not from someone else. Why do we seek these things from God? And in some sense, the answer is, Because the kingdom is his, the power is his, and the glory is his forever. From whom else should we seek it?

Well, to help us understand this a bit more, let's look at three things: firstly, *Encouragement in Prayer*; secondly, *Praise in Prayer*; and thirdly, *Assurance in Prayer*.

Well, first, *Encouragement in Prayer*. We've seen that the Lord instructs us to ask big things of

God—the advance of his praise, the daily provision for our needs, the forgiveness for our sins. All of these and all else are great things to seek from God. What confidence would we have if we went up to someone and asked them to give great things to us? If you saw perhaps someone who lived in a great house, and you thought about your desire to live in that house, would you be confident to go up to that person and say, “Please let me live in your house”? But we’re taught to ask for things that are far more important than merely the temporal house that we live in. And yet, we remember that we’re approaching our Father—not a stranger, but our Father reconciled to us through Jesus Christ.

And you’ll notice, the conclusion helps us as well. Notice the simple word “For”—“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.” This word “for” means “because,” or “here is the reason.” Here is the reason we ask such great things from you: thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. In other words, what we are asking is what you have taught us to ask. The things that we ask ultimately promote your honor, and it’s the things that only you can provide—your kingdom, your power, your glory are all before us motivating this prayer.

In one sense, we can imagine God asking us, “Why should I do these things for you?” Our response, in one sense, simply would be, “Because they are all things that would honor your name. You taught us to pray for these things, and so we seek them for your glory. They are all things that only you can provide. Only you have the power sufficient for it, and all of these things tend to your praise.” You see, our prayers are confirming our sense that all is for God and from God, and so it confirms the reality that we don’t have power to do these things of ourselves. We’re seeking them from him, because only God can do them. This is why the *Catechism* says the conclusion “teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only.” We don’t take our encouragement from a feeling within ourselves, or from circumstances surrounding us. We take our encouragement from God himself.

Perhaps we can find help when we think of what might discourage us in prayer. Surely, we would be discouraged if God did not have authority over every single thing in the universe. If there was one thing over which he had no authority, we would be worried that that one thing might overthrow God. We would be discouraged if God did not have absolute power over everything. But if we were not mightier than all else that is, something else would be stronger than he is, and this would discourage us. We would be discouraged if what we sought was seeking to promote the glory of someone else, for though he has all authority and all power, why would we have encouragement that he would provide us these things, if we’re seeking someone else’s glory. However, what great encouragement there is when we see that all we’re asking in accordance to Christ’s model here, we’re asking from him who rules the kingdom of heaven and earth. We’re seeking them from him who has all power over all things, and we are seeking them for his glory alone. Here is our encouragement, and it comes from God only. But you see, when it comes from God only, it then has a real encouragement to us. And so, if we’re to be encouraged, we need to be sure that we’re seeking God’s glory, and that we’re bringing all of our desires under him unto him that he would advance his praise, by his power, and this for the good of his people and the honor of his name.

Well, second, *Praise in Prayer*. The very way we are taught to close our prayer, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever,” is an expression of delight in God. We aren’t saying it reluctantly, but rather, with delight. Oh Lord, we seek these things for thine is the kingdom, the very kingdom we’re asking to come. And thine is the power, and there’s no power like yours. Your power is able to bring all of this to pass. And thine is the glory forever, which glory indeed is most glorious. You see, it’s an expression of delight. In effect, we’re praising him as well.

We're showing that we want only to promote him and his cause forever. In other words, true prayer finds its greatest delight in knowing that God's cause is being sought, and if he answers our prayer, that God's cause is being promoted.

It's right for us to be much in making our specific petitions known to God, everything brought to God. However, we should also be much in praising him. As the *Catechism* explains that when we pray, we are, "in our prayers, to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him." Notice, it doesn't say, "Yours *will be* the kingdom," or "Yours *will be* the power," or "Yours *will be* the glory," but, "Thine *is* the kingdom, and power, and glory for ever." We're ascribing it to him. It's his already, and so it is we acknowledge it with praise.

We can be impressed by men in this world who have authority—maybe a king, maybe a mayor. We treat them with respect, and we would count it a privilege to be favored by them. We do the same with men who have great power, and men who show themselves honorable and stir our hearts. Yet how much more with God, who reigns over all the kingdoms of the earth, who possesses all power, such that none is his equal, and indeed, who is most glorious. Yet, it's worth considering, this being so, are we much in praising him? It's right for us to come near with our requests. To do otherwise would be to sin. However, the one we come near in prayer is the glorious God who reigns over all. Surely then we should be much in praising him.

To help you with that, I encourage you to look at the great prayers of the Bible. We don't have time even to mention all of them, much less to look at all of them. And as you look through the Scriptures, and you come to extended prayers, you'll see that they're filled with many petitions, earnest petitions, specific petitions. But you'll also see that they're filled with many praises as well. Notice just two examples, for you are encouraged to search the Scriptures and see the same.

Nehemiah, when he was told of the afflictions that remained in Jerusalem, turned himself to the Lord to pray, and he did so with fasting, with earnestness, abstaining from food and drink so that he could more earnestly seek the Lord, humbling himself in seeking God. But notice Nehemiah 1, verse 5. Nehemiah tells us, when he records for us his prayer. We read, "And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments." And then he goes on to notice his petitions and lift them before the Lord. But you'll see that, in approaching God, he's ascribing praise to him. He's the great and the dreadful God. He's the God of heaven, the King over all the earth. He's the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy, and so on. And so, what's he doing? He's praising God. He's ascribing these glorious truths to God. Even though his soul is gripped by the miserable condition of Jerusalem, yet his soul was still mindful that God is glorious.

We see the same in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. There's much for which he prays and petitions God. But notice, 2 Chronicles 6, verses 14 and 15. We read, "And said, O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts: thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and spakest with thy mouth, and has fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day." Notice that Solomon is mindful, not only to ask blessings, which you'll see in the rest of that chapter, but he's also mindful to praise God. "There's no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth...faithful," and so on, and even faithful in the specific mercy which we here before us today.

And what you see both in Nehemiah and Solomon, you'll see through many prayers in the Scriptures. Well, God's people come with earnest and specific petitions, they also come with their praise. And the conclusion reminds us to do the same, that as we petition him for all of these things,

the full beauty and the spectrum of the things the Lord teaches us to pray for, we also come to praise him.

Well, third, *Assurance in Prayer*. The word “amen,” is one we hear and perhaps use regularly. Perhaps we close every prayer with it. Certainly, we read it in the Bible, and hear other people use it in their prayers. But it’s worth asking what it means. The word itself means “firm,” and thus, means “truly,” or “so let it be.” If something is firm, it’s fixed and immovable. It’s sure, dependable. The word itself is often translated “verily,” or “truly.” You can see this in the following examples. In Matthew 5, verse 18, Jesus says, “For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” There’s the word, “amen,” but it’s translated “verily.” So, in other words, we could say, “For amen, say unto you”—“Verily, surely, I say unto you.” The Scriptures will remain, Christ is telling us. Every mark of the Scriptures will be preserved till all be fulfilled. It’s sure. Notice Luke 23, verse 43, “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” What an assurance it was to that thief dying on the cross next to Christ. Christ is saying, “Amen, truly, firmly, verily, I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Great assurance given. John 6:47, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” There’s that word. “Amen, amen, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” What a precious passage it is to see how much Christ is wanting to assure us that all who trust in him have everlasting life.

Now, we look at these to understand this word “amen.” When we see this word, we have this word of assurance, just as Christ used it so as to assure the people of what he was saying. He’s essentially saying, “It’s firm, it’s true, it’s certain. Well then, when we close our prayers with “amen,” we’re expressing assurance as well—sincerity. We’re both saying that it’s our desire, what we’ve just presented to you is truly our desire, surely our desire. We’re also expressing our assurance that God will faithfully do as he’s promised. And why would we have any assurance that God will do these things? You’ll remember 1 John 5, verses 14 and 15. We’ve made mention of this in several lessons. John writes, “This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” If we’re praying according to this prayer that Christ is teaching us, and if we’re asking these things which are according to his will, and we’re sincerely asking them as they are according to his will, well, may we not then embrace this promise that John gives us, “He heareth us”? And if we are assured that he hears us, shall we not be assured that he will answer according to his wisdom and grace? The assurance then to trust God in prayer is before us, and it’s found in God alone. Just as we take our encouragement from God only, so then, we’re able, with firm assurance, because of God only, to say, “Amen.” Remember, we have this assurance because he is faithful, and he is our faithful Father through Jesus Christ.

Well, this is the key to all, to be assured that we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. And may it be that he gives us this grace, and strengthens our assurance in him. But you’ll notice that in order to do this, we must have faith. Faith is not just being assured that this is true. It’s also trusting in him. There’s a personal reliance upon God. And so, the conclusion helps us to see, prayer is not just the right words spoken. It’s not just getting the right language down. It’s not hearing others use elegant phrases and then incorporating those into our prayers. It’s not even searching the Scriptures and taking phrases from them, though that’s helpful. It’s not even memorizing this prayer and reciting it, though that is helpful. But rather, true prayer is the seeking of God through Christ for things according to his will, with faith. If ever we’re going to pray, we must have faith, which is the gift of God. So true prayer is a gracious gift that God gives, and he giveth to us all.

Well, as we close, notice how true prayer both begins and ends with God. We draw our confidence from God by his grace—“Our Father which art in heaven.” We petition God according to his revealed will. And we also conclude with encouragement from and desires for him—“Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.” So here, prayer is seen to be this communing of our souls with God through Jesus Christ. What a blessed privilege prayer is. When we are given opportunities to pray, we should keep this in mind. Though we don’t see God with our physical eyes and our senses, yet we surely draw near to God through Christ to commune with the God of heaven and earth, that we may indeed enjoy his blessed and gracious presence, and to know the blood of Christ cleansing us and reconciling us to him. Oh, what assurance then we may have, as we ask for things according to his will.

There also some things for us to examine. We can ask ourselves first, “In my prayers, do I really seek God’s glory alone?” This is worth thinking about. We can pray the right things, but sometimes, twisted in them, is a desire for our glory. Well, this helps us remember, prayer is not seeking our glory, but God’s glory. Do I seek his glory alone?

Another thing to examine, second, “Do I praise God when I pray?” Oh, yes, I must come to him with specific requests, and God is pleased for us to bring those to him. But is it accurate that I also praise him? We shouldn’t be like, remember, those nine lepers healed by Christ, who did not return to give thanks. But rather, the one who, receiving mercy, comes back and gives thanks. And we also should not be those who pray much but praise little. But rather, as we pray, we should also praise, and be sure to remember God. To do that, we have to know God, and why he’s worthy of praise. So do I praise God when I pray?

And another thing to examine, third, do I pray confidently. Confidence, as the conclusion helps us see, is not something that we manufacture. It’s not a personality trait. Rather, confidence is a gracious exercise of faith. And for faith to be exercised, we both need to know the God to whom we’re praying; we must know him, as well, as reconciled through the blood of Christ; and we must also know that what we’re asking is for things agreeable to his will. When we have those three things—we know the God to whom we’re praying, we know that we’re reconciled to him by the blood of Christ, and what we’re asking is agreeable to his will—then we may say, “Amen, truly,” and with assurance, leave it with the Lord, who is faithful.

Well, not only are we at the end of our lesson, but we’re at the end of our lessons through the *Catechism*. And as we’re at the end of our lessons through the *Catechism*, I surely hope that your study has made you more familiar with the precious and saving truths of the Bible. What a helpful resource the *Catechism* is to aid us in our learning of the Scriptures. Always remember, the *Catechism* is a tool to help get the truths of the Bible into our minds, by the blessing of God; and by that blessing, not just into our minds, but into our hearts. I hope that you’ll be a lifelong student of these truths, because they’re the Bible’s truths.

If you haven’t done so, I hope that you’ll commit to memorizing these Questions and Answers. They’ll serve you well in all stages of life. If you learn from the Bible and truths of the Bible as a young person, it will carry on with you throughout your life, until you take your last breath in this world.

I’ve given you some assignments in various lessons, that as you go through life you might continue them. You’ll remember, one is that you’ll make a list of the attributes of God, and as you read the Bible, you pay attention to where those attributes are found and displayed, and you can document those, and you’ll start to see how the Bible is a revelation of God. Well, there are others as well, all of which you can continue to do all of your life. And as you do, I hope it makes you

know God better. But above all, I hope that by God's grace, you have come to see more clearly and experience more fully your chief end—to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever. Remember, the only way you can do this is by his grace, as you receiving and rest upon Jesus Christ alone, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel. And may it be that the rest of your days in this life will be with faith in Christ strengthening you unto holiness. And it is my desire that you and I will experience that glorious truth at the resurrection, when believers, being raised up to glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity. Indeed, truly, amen! May God bless for Jesus' sake, and that to his glory alone.