

At the end of the Lord’s Prayer,
we recite a line that is not found in the gospel accounts of the Lord’s Prayer.

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Some churches have even removed this line from the Lord’s Prayer.

But I do not think that such a conclusion is wise or proper.

Because while it may not have been what Jesus said on that particular day,
it *is* an integral part of our Lord’s teaching on prayer.

(Probably, what happened is that when people started praying the Lord’s prayer
they added a line from 1 Chronicles 29 –
one of David’s prayers in the book of Chronicles –
as a fitting conclusion for the Lord’s Prayer).

And indeed – it is a fitting conclusion!

Psalm 145 speaks of God’s kingdom three times in verses 11-13,
and addresses God as King in verse 1.

Psalm 145 is another acrostic Psalm –
in this case each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

But while there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet
(or 23 if you count the *sin* and the *shin* as different letters),
there are only 21 verses in Psalm 145.

Why is this?

There is a textual problem in the middle of the Psalm.
You may see in your Bibles in Psalm 145:13 an extra couplet in brackets.
This is because in *most* Hebrew manuscripts the “n” (nun) is missing.

Either there was originally a “nun” verse or else the author left out the nun intentionally.
One Hebrew manuscript includes this “extra” verse,
and scholars debate whether this was in fact the “missing” verse,
or whether it was a later addition by a scribe who sought to remedy the omission!
I don’t know, but it doesn’t change the meaning of the Psalm,
so I don’t think it really matters.
But I think that it is important for you to understand that there are places like this

where we don't really know what the original text of the Bible says.
None of them are particularly important,
and none of them affect the meaning or teaching of the scriptures as a whole,
so many pastors tend to ignore them.
But often these textual matters can be used by the unscrupulous
to undermine the faith of the unwary,
so I try to mention it from time to time so that you will understand.

But what does Psalm 145 teach us about what it means to pray,
"Thine is the Kingdom"?

Not only does Psalm 145 has an alphabetical structure –
but within that acrostic, there is also a secondary pattern.

First, the Psalmist says that *I will bless you*.
Then, the Psalmist says that *your works and your saints* will bless you.

And within each of these two sections,
there is an initial focus on God's *greatness* –
followed by a focus on God's *goodness*.

We often think of "great" as the superlative of "good."
How ya doin?
I'm doing good.
No, I'm doing *great*!

But that is *not* how "good" and "great" relate to each other.
Goodness is a moral quality – a virtue.
The one who does *good*
is one who is characterized by kindness, mercy, righteousness.
You don't have to be "great" to be good.

Greatness is not so much a moral quality as it is about *status*.
The one does *great* things
is one who accomplishes mighty deeds, wondrous works.
And in the same way that you don't have to be "great" to be *good* –
you also don't have to be "good" to be *great*.

Can you think of someone who accomplished *greatness* without being good?
Nebuchadnezzar is an obvious example from Bible history!
There are plenty of examples from the world of sports, politics, entertainment –
people who achieved greatness –
but who were moral disasters!

In the same way, we all know people who are *good* – and who *do good* –
but they will never amount to anything in world history.
They will not achieve any mighty deeds – any wondrous works.

Psalm 145 wants us to see that the intersection of goodness and greatness
is found first and foremost in God himself!!

The title of Psalm 145 is
A Song of Praise. Of David.

This is the last of the “David Psalms” in the psalter.
The first person singular of the Psalm takes on the voice of David –
the voice of the Anointed King –
as the Messiah declares the greatness and the goodness of God,
and calls all God’s works – and all God’s saints – to join him!

1. I Will Praise You, O LORD (v1-9)

*145 I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.*

*² Every day I will bless you
and praise your name forever and ever.*

There are lots of repeated words in Psalm 145.

One word that is used over and over again is the word “all” or “every.”
It is used 18 times in these 21 verses!

*Every day I will bless you.
The Lord is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.
All your works shall give thanks to you...
and all your saints shall bless you!*

When you repeat the same word 18 times in 21 verses
you start getting the idea that there is something very consistent about our God!

But this is why it is important that we understand this as a *David* Psalm.
Because when you sing this simply as a song of the Jews, restored from exile,
it doesn’t make much sense!
How can we bless God forever and ever?
when we are beaten down and oppressed –
when we are a tiny minority in a world that hates us –

when – from all earthly vantage points –
we are pretty much a nobody and a nothing!

But Psalm 145 must be sung from the vantage point of *David* –
and of God’s promises to David!

Because God promised David that he would never lack a man to sit on his throne.
And the throne of David was designed from the start to be a picture
of the throne of God.
David’s kingdom was an earthly model of the greater Kingdom of Christ.

So when we sing Psalm 145, we are joining our Lord Jesus Christ – the Son of David –
we are fulfilling what *he said* we would do –
as *he sings* of God’s greatness and goodness,
and calls us to do the same!

a. Because You Are Great (v3-6)

³ *Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and his greatness is unsearchable.*

God is great!

But only is he great.

His greatness is *unsearchable* – *unfathomable* – so immense
that there is no way we can wrap our minds around it!

What does it mean that God is *great*?
That’s what verses 4-6 expound:

⁴ *One generation shall commend your works to another,
and shall declare your mighty acts.*

Already the Psalmist is drawing future generations into the praise of God!
He’s drawing *you* in!
One generation shall commend your works to another.
Notice the generational connection.

It’s not just “parents” telling “their children.”
There’s a stronger sense of community here.

In our day, a “generation” refers to a particular cohort born in a 20 year period.
So, for instance, Generation X are those born from the early 60s to the mid 70s –
The Baby Boomers are those from the mid 40s to the early 60s.

Millennials are from the late 70s to the mid 90s.

But that way of talking about “generations” is a very recent phenomenon.

When the Bible talks about generations

it is generally talking about all those alive at this time.

So when one generation commends God’s works to another –

the idea is that *this generation* embodies the sorts of practices and habits that will form the next generation.

We are *so* fixated on the present!

At best we can only think about how to train our children...

and that’s assuming I can tear myself away from my game long enough to do that!

What habits and practices are we engaged in that will form future generations?

I do not pretend for a moment to be very good at this.

But as I look throughout the scriptures –

and as I look throughout the history of the church –

there are certain habits and practices that consistently characterize the best sort of Christian formation.

There are corporate worship patterns –

singing psalms is one of the most obvious.

Hymns are fine too – and by hymn I mean any uninspired composition.

But the church’s hymnody must be *guided* by the Psalms –

if what we sing is not rooted in the Psalter,

then it will become a mirror of the culture –

rather than a reflection of the Word of God!

In the late 19th century the practice of Psalmody

pretty much dropped out of the Presbyterian church.

Not surprisingly, the hymnody that replaced it

grew increasingly vague and sentimental –

until there was very little left of the gospel!

And so today, there is very little in the singing of God’s people

that can fortify them against the onslaught of the spirit of the age.

Likewise, catechesis is one generation teaching another!

If every generation draws up its own catechetical material,

if every generation “starts over” –

then there will be no “one generation teaches another.”

It’s why we use the Westminster Shorter Catechism with our children.

It’s why we use Augustine’s plan of catechesis with our catechumens.

We don't need to "start over" –
we need to draw on the best of the best of all ages –
in our psalmody and hymnody –
in our catechesis and liturgy.
If we wish to have anything worthwhile to say to the next generation –
then we need to be formed and shaped by previous generations!

But now notice how that plays out in verses 5-6

⁵ *On the glorious splendor of your majesty,
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.*
⁶ *They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,
and I will declare your greatness.*

Jesus includes us in his ministry of praise!

What was it that sustained Jesus in his earthly ministry?
Meditating on the wondrous works of God!
You hear a portion of that in John 17 – when Jesus prays to his Father –
“glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world existed!”

And we are called to join with Jesus in meditating on the wondrous works of God!
Because we are called to speak of the might of God's *awesome deeds*.

God's awesome deeds are reflected in the Exodus from Egypt –
the plagues – the crossing of the Red Sea –
the manna in the wilderness – the conquest of the Promised Land –
the deliverances in the time of the Judges –
the establishment of the kingdom of David –

and again in the return from Exile.

And most gloriously in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus –
and in the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon the nations –
so that over the last 2000 years the gospel has spread to all the earth!

And as this generation speaks of the might of God's awesome deeds –
Jesus continues to declare God's greatness!

Here am I and the children God has given me! (Isaiah – quoted in Hebrews)

Verses 7-9 then set forth the *goodness* of God.

b. Because You Are Good (v7-9)

⁷ *They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.*

As we noted earlier,
you can be great without being good!

You can be the greatest athlete of all time –
and be a lousy human being!

In the same way, a God who can create the universe is an amazing being!
But most religions have that sort of deity.

What is amazing about our God is that he is both *great* – and *good*.
And so the people of God will “pour forth the fame of *your abundant goodness*” –
which is connected with singing aloud “of your righteousness.”

In most religions, the gods mingle good and bad (just like people).
And you can understand why!

When you look at the world around you,
it sure looks like the world is a mix of good and bad –
and so you can understand why people thought that the creator of this world
must himself be a mix of good and bad!!

It never entered the minds of the peoples
that God might have allowed evil into the world
in order that he might accomplish
the most stupendous work of salvation imaginable!

But that is at the heart of the message of God’s goodness in verses 8-9

⁸ *The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

This is echoed from God’s message at Sinai to Moses –
when God made his glory pass before Moses.

There is a very real sense in which the Kingdom of God began at Sinai.
The Promise of the Kingdom can be found in Genesis,
but the Presence of Kingdom only begins when God takes a people for himself
and rules them.
God said to Pharaoh,
“Israel is my son, my firstborn, let my son go that he may worship me.”

The son of God cannot rule as God's vicegerent as long as he is a slave.

And so it is at Sinai that God said,
"you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation."

And David reflects on this when he remembers what God revealed to Moses at Sinai:
*The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. (v8-9)*

This, you might say, is the central affirmation of God's kingdom.

It was originally stated in the context of Israel's rebellion.
Israel had sinned at Mt. Sinai, by making a golden calf.
And not only had Israel made an egregious theological error,
but their practice, both liturgical and moral, followed.
Idolatry and adultery were both rooted in their failure to worship God.

And yet the LORD was gracious and merciful.
He did not destroy Israel, but listened to the voice of Moses,
and when he caused his glory to pass by Moses,
he declared these words:
The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The kingdom of God is founded upon that statement.
Our King is just – but he is also merciful,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.

⁹ *The LORD is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

2. All Your Works and All Your Saints Will Praise You, O LORD (v10-20)

¹⁰ *All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,
and all your saints shall bless you!*

And so in part two of the Psalm, David says that all of God's works will give thanks to him –
and all of his saints shall bless him.

And again we see the same two-fold depiction of the *greatness* and the *goodness* of God –
now particularly focused on the *kingdom* of God:

a. Because of the Greatness and Glory of Your Kingdom (v11-13a)

¹¹ *They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom
and tell of your power,*

¹² *to make known to the children of man your^[b] mighty deeds,*

and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
¹³ *Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,*
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Note that the language of verses 4-7 continues to echo through the remainder of the Psalm.

It can be a useful practice for you in your prayers.
Pick a theme – like God’s mighty deeds, the glorious splendor of his kingdom!
And weave that theme throughout your prayer,
praising him and magnifying his holy name at first –
and then praying that God’s glorious kingdom
would indeed be made splendid in us –
and that we might make known to our children God’s mighty deeds.

David weaves together the theme of God’s kingdom
(which has a very definite Israel-centered focus)
with the theme of God’s universal dominion
(which of course is the point of an Israel *centered* focus.
Israel is the center – but the center of what?
God’s universal dominion!)

The kingdom of God, after all, is not primarily a territorial designation
–as in the Roman Empire–
Rather, it refers to the reign and rule of God.
David confesses that the kingdom of Yahweh is an everlasting kingdom.

It is when God hears the prayer of the King that his dominion – his kingdom – comes.

O God, hear the Son of David when he prays!

God’s purposes for Israel are focused upon David.

Israel had failed to live as the kingdom of God.
And so God called David to succeed where Israel failed.
If the Davidic kings are faithful, then God’s blessing will come upon Israel.

But you know the story!
How did they do?
Not so good...

A thousand years later,
when John the Baptist declares, “repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”
he is announcing that everything promised to Israel in the OT is about to happen.
The universal reign of Yahweh is at hand.

And the coming of the kingdom is seen in its full light as “the coming of God himself as king.”
And this is what happens when Jesus announces that the kingdom of God is in your midst
The King himself has come.

And now God has elevated Jesus to his right hand.
We’re not talking about an earthly shadow anymore.
The Son of David is now sitting at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly temple.

This means above all else, that God will hear Jesus when Jesus prays on our behalf.
This is no excuse for our lousy practice of prayer!
But it is a great comfort that we have an Advocate with the Father,
even Jesus Christ the righteous.

But it also means that we have no need of praying toward an earthly temple.
Indeed, if we would face Jerusalem when we pray,
then we should lift up our eyes unto heaven,
because Paul tells us that the Jerusalem above – she is our mother!
We lift up our eyes to the heavenly Jerusalem,
where the Son of David now sits in glory at the right hand of the Father,
and we pray toward that heavenly temple with full confidence!

And we pray:

b. Because You Are Good (v13b-20)

*[The LORD is faithful in all his words
and kind in all his works.]^[c]*

Again we see the greatness of God revealed in his goodness!
And we see the goodness and kindness of the LORD in three ways in verses 14-20:

i. The Kindness of God to Those Who are Falling (v14-16)

¹⁴ *The LORD upholds all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.*

¹⁵ *The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food in due season.*

¹⁶ *You open your hand;
you satisfy the desire of every living thing.*

God’s goodness is seen in the way that he treats those who are weak and helpless.
He is not only *great* – he is also *good* in how he raises up those who are bowed down.
Indeed, the same incomprehensible God – whose greatness is beyond searching out –
is also the kind and merciful God who humbles himself to take our form –
to join himself to our bowed down humanity,

in order that he might lift us up in him!

And secondly, we see

ii. The Kindness of God to Those Who Call on Him (v17-19)

¹⁷ *The LORD is righteous in all his ways
and kind in all his works.*

¹⁸ *The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.*

¹⁹ *He fulfills the desire of those who fear him;
he also hears their cry and saves them.*

He is righteous – and he is kind.

He is just – and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Because *in Jesus* the second person of the Trinity joined himself to our humanity –
he drew near to us in our weakness – in our frailty –
and so truly he is near to all who call on him!

And he hears the cries of those who fear him – and he saves them.

He's great – oh yes!

But he is also *good*.

And we see this as well in the third point in verse 20:

iii. The Kindness of God in Destroying the Wicked (v20)

²⁰ *The LORD preserves all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.*

Why is it *kind* for God to destroy the wicked?

Well, if you are walking in the park,
and you see a man drowning a boy in the pond –
what is the kind thing to do?

Rescue the boy!!

What if the man resists you and tries to continue drowning the boy?

Then you do whatever it takes to rescue the boy!

It is a kindness to the *boy* to save him.

It is a kindness to the *man* to prevent him from killing the boy!!

When God destroys the wicked, he is being kind to them –

because he is preventing them from doing any more harm to others.

You might say, “But wouldn't it be better if they were saved?!”

Only if they want to be saved!

If they hate God and want nothing to do with God –
then it is no kindness to save them!
For the man who hates God,
there would be no greater punishment
than to be forever in the presence of the one he hates!
Sending the wicked to hell – in that sense – is an act of kindness!

Why do I say that?

Because the LORD is good to *all* –
and his mercy is over all that he has made (v9)
And the LORD is faithful in all his words,
and kind in all his works (v13).

Even in his judgment of the wicked!

And so therefore, our Lord Jesus declares:

3. Let All Flesh Bless the LORD Forever (v21)

²¹ *My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD,
and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.*

Because Jesus speaks forth the praise of his Father,
therefore all flesh now blesses his holy name forever and ever.