Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

You may have noticed that I have not yet uttered the words, “This passage is the text for our sermon.” We usually read 1 or 2 *accompanying* passages, and then the relevant Catechism Lord’s Day, and then the text for the sermon. But today we have not read a text passage. And if you will turn in your Bibles to Matthew 6:13, you will see why.

* In your ESV and NIV Bibles, Matthew 6:13 includes the words that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ preached about last Sunday, “*Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil*,” but it does not include the words that we are considering today: “*For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen*.” They are in a footnote, but they are not in verse 13.
* They are in verse 13 in the King James Bible.
* And if you look at the Lord’s Prayer in the front of your hymnbook, which we often use in our worship services, those words are included.
* And they are included in the Heidelberg Catechism’s consideration of the Lord’s Prayer.
* And if you were taught to memorize the Lord’s Prayer as a child, you will have been taught to end it with the words: “*For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen*.”

So, why are they not in modern Bible versions? Why do we not seem to have a text for this sermon?

Well, in the 16th and 17th centuries, when the Heidelberg Catechism and the King James Bible Version were published, all of the Greek New Testament manuscripts that were available included “*For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*” in verse 13. But a couple of hundred years later, several Greek manuscripts were discovered that did not have those words in verse 13. And most Bible scholars today believe that those few manuscripts are the oldest and therefore the most accurate manuscripts that we have. And so, that is why these words have become a footnote in modern Bible versions.

But having said that, what that means is that you have five manuscripts that do not contain these words and around 6000 (that’s right, 6000!) that do.

And let me quickly say that there are just a handful of verses or words or passages in the Bible that end up in this footnote situation and none of them take anything away from or alter the message of the Bible.

So, we could say that we have around 6000 reasons to view these words as the end of the prayer that the Lord Jesus taught us to pray.

But you know, they are also **the end of our prayers** in another way: Question 1 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, “What is the chief end of man?” And ‘end’ here means purpose for existing. And the answer is: “To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” We were created to give God all the glory that He deserves, and to do that is our greatest joy!

So, both as the last part of the prayer that the Lord Jesus taught us to pray and our greatest desire, “*For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen*.” is **the end of our prayers**. And we want to see that praying about God’s **Kingdom**, God’s **power**, God’s **glory**, and **Amen** is a message of great comfort and hope for believers And these will be our four, brief points this afternoon.

1. So firstly then, let’s think about **God’s** kingdom as the end of our prayers.
	1. In 2005, my family and I had the opportunity to visit **Gettysburg**, the site of a famous battle that was part of the United States Civil War. And several months after the battle, President Abraham Lincoln returned to Gettysburg and delivered a speech that has come to be known as ‘the Gettysburg address.’ And we stood on the exact spot where he delivered that address. And in that speech, Lincoln said, “that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that *government of the people, by the people, for the people*, shall not perish from the earth.”
		1. And the idea behind those words is what is known as the **social contract of government**, which states that people voluntarily agree to surrender some rights to an elected government for the benefit of social order. You see, prior to that time, most countries were ruled by a king or queen. And you didn’t vote for kings and queens; they ruled because, in their view, God had placed them on the throne. And this form of government was known as the divine right of monarchy. And so, what Lincoln and America were celebrating was the people choosing their government rather than government imposing its rule on the people.
		2. And so, here in New Zealand also, every three years, we get to elect our government.
	2. But while that might be all well and good with earthly government, when we pray, “*Yours is the kingdom*,” we are recognizing that this is not how it is with the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not of the people, by the people, or for the people. God is not the King of creation because we voted for Him or because we consent to His rule; He simply is the King of creation!
		1. **Psalm 10:16**, “*The Lord is king forever*.”
		2. **Psalm 47:7-8**, “*For God is the King of all the earth … God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne*.”
		3. **Psalm 95:3**, “*For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods*.”
		4. **Psalm 99:1**, “*The LORD reigns*.”
		5. **Psalm** **145:13**, “*Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations*.”
		6. And because of this, in **Psalm 145:1**, the Psalmist sung, “*I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever*.” And in **1 Timothy 1:17**, Paul said, “*To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen*.” And when you pray, “*Yours is the kingdom*,” you are doing the same; recognizing the truth that God is the King of kings and Lord of lords; that He reigns supreme over all things and that His kingdom shall have no end.
	3. And we need to remember this, every day, because there are many out there who believe that Allah rules the world, or that there is no God, but they are all wrong. **Philippians 2:9-11** says that “*God has highly exalted [Jesus] and given Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord [ or King], to the glory of God the Father*.” So, whether it be now or on Judgment Day, everyone will recognize Jesus as King. But it is only those that do so *in this life* who will be welcomed into His eternal kingdom. And this is the urgent message we need to share with unbelievers.
	4. But we need to remember this also because the power of government can seem so strong at times. But kings and queens, Prime-ministers and presidents, will come and go. Governments will rise up and topple over, and be voted in and voted out. But there is one King who is above all and who rules over all, and whose kingdom shall never pass away. And one day, Jesus Christ will return and bring in the fulness of His kingdom. And this is what we confess and proclaim when we pray, “*Yours is the kingdom*.”
2. But secondly, what do we confess and proclaim when we pray about God’s **power**?
	1. Perhaps you have heard before that the Greek word translated as power is ‘**dunamis**.’ It is the word from which we get the word dynamite. And dynamite is a powerful explosive. You might have a very heavy stone that you just cannot budge even a centimetre. But put a stick of dynamite inside it, attach some det cord and roll it out to a safe distance and attach it to a plunger, and there will be no more stone! Boom! So, God’s power is dynamite power!
	2. And it wasn’t that long ago that you heard me illustrate God’s power in this way: Light travels at 300,000 km/s! And if you could put a saddle on a beam of light and start flying through space at that speed, it would take you just **a second and a half** to reach the moon. In **nine minutes**, you would reach the sun, 150 million kms away. In **four years**, travelling at 300,000 km/s, you would finally reach Alpha Centauri, which is next closest star in our solar system. But it would take you **100,000 years** to get from one end of our galaxy to the other. And there are over 100 billion galaxies in the known universe. And how did it all come into existence? Well, psalm 33:5 6 tells us: “*For [God] spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm*.” And the Bible tells us that the heaven of heavens can’t contain Him, and that He spans the universe with His hand. So, the power of God is power to create!
	3. But the power of God is the power to sovereignly rule over all things and all people:
		1. **Psalm 62:11** says, “*Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God*.”
		2. **Psalm 66:3**, “*Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you*.”
		3. **Psalm 93:1** says, “*The LORD reigns; He is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; He has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved*.”
		4. **Psalm 147:5**, “*Great is our Lord, and abundant in power*.”
		5. And it is God’s power that led David to pray, as we read earlier, “*Yours, O 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, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth 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*.”
	4. But the greatest demonstration of God’s power is the **resurrection** of Jesus. And Paul prayed, in Ephesians, that we might know that that same power is at work within all those who belong to Him. He described it as “*the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe*.” And he prayed, “*Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us.*”
		1. So, the power of God is the power to save those who were dead in sin and the power to help us live the Christian life.
	5. But also, as we heard in our earlier **Jude** **reading**, it is also the power to preserve us in faith and bring us to glory: “*Now to Him who is able [same word – dynamite!] to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy*.”
	6. The rulers of earth think they have power. Billionaires think they have power. Social media influencers think they have power. Celebrities and athletes and musicians think they have power. Climate change advocates and scientists and politicians think they have power to control the climate. And politicians and epidemiologists think that they have power to control a pandemic. But what do we read in Psalm 2? “*He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision*.” So, when you pray, “*Yours is the power*,” you are reminding yourself and declaring to the world that God possesses all the power and that He is *able* to do all that He has purposed and promised to do!
3. But thirdly, what do we confess and proclaim when we pray about God’s **glory**?
	1. Well, way back in the Garden of Eden, the temptation that the serpent put to the woman was to usurp the glory of God; to be like God; to enter into the divine; to enjoy the glory that only God deserves. And he did this by saying to her, “*For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God*.” And you know, ever since then, this has been a constant temptation of the devil – don’t listen to God! Be your own god! Seek your own glory!
	2. But as we heard this morning, the first question and answer of the Westminster Catechism asks: “What is man’s chief end?” And the answer, “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” We were created to glorify God; to live for Him and to bring Him the worship that He deserves. And we do this, first of all, by believing in the Son that He sent. And then we submit ourselves, each day, gladly and willingly, to His rule; we offer ourselves as living sacrifices of love and obedience and praise.
	3. In Romans 9-11, the Apostle did his level best to explain the doctrine of election. And there never has been nor will there ever be a more masterful attempt to explain that pretty complex and wonderfully mysterious doctrine. But do you remember where he ended up? Do you remember how he concluded his explanation? We find it in **Romans 11:33-36**: “*Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to Him that he might be repaid?" For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever*.” You see, Paul was prepared to let God be God. Paul was satisfied with what God had revealed and what he could understand, and he was prepared to leave the rest with God and to worship Him!
		1. And do you know what we call words like these words from Romans 11? A doxology. And doxology means glory-word.
		2. And imitating Paul, we end each worship service with doxology. We want our last words in worship to be a glory word
	4. And in terms of our prayers, in **John 14:13**, Jesus said, “*Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*.” And so, having brought all the requests of the prayer that the Lord Jesus taught us to pray before the Lord, it is fitting that we remind ourselves and declare to the world that the name of God “should receive all the praise, forever.”
4. And that brings us, fourthly and lastly, to the **meaning** of “Amen.
	1. The word ‘Amen’ means ‘sure’ or ‘truly’ or ‘let it be so.’ And so, having brought all of our requests to God, we end our prayers by saying, Your word is trustworthy and reliable, and let all that we have asked be so!
	2. In **John 16:23**, Jesus said, “*Truly, truly, I say to you,* (or literally, “Amen, Amen, I say to you…) *whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He will give it to you*.” And this promise of Jesus is why the catechism says, “It is even more sure that God listens to my prayer, than that I really desire what I pray for.”
		1. Isn’t that incredible! Do you always truly mean and absolutely desire everything that you pray for? I don’t. Sometimes when other people are praying I am thinking about the next part I will fit on my car or last night’s rugby game. Sometimes my own prayers are just a bunch of words rolling off my tongue, because I am not truly concentrating on what I am saying. Is it the same with you? And sometimes even as I am asking for something, even if it is a good thing, I am doubting that it will happen.
		2. But brothers and sisters, young people and boys and girls, if you truly trust in Christ for your salvation, and you are praying because God commands you to pray, and you are asking for the things that you need and that God has promised, and you end your prayer with an “Amen,” “it is even more sure that God listens to [your] prayer, than that [you] really desire what [you] pray for.” What a gracious God we serve!

So, in view of all that we have considered, there seems no better way to end this sermon than to do so with the end of our prayers: “*For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen*.”