

Lord's Prayer 7 - The Father's Glory

09/08/2026 – CSP

Heb 1:1-13; Rev 5:6-14; Mark 13:26-37

For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever & ever. Amen!

So – here we are at the last phrase of the Lord's Prayer. I hope our summer series has brought this foundational Christian prayer into sharper relief for you. Because to be honest, we've said it so many times - it's always in danger of fading into the background of everyday life. We do the same things, in our familiar homes, struggling with our normal challenges – coming here week by week for our humdrum ordinary Sunday services.

But just stop and think for a moment. Can you remember a time when you've had an experience of astonishment and awe – overwhelmed not with dread and horror – but with power and wonder?

Perhaps listening to the chords of Salisbury cathedral organ – playing Widor or Boellmann? Perhaps the sound of bells when you're right up near them? Perhaps the crash of thunder in the mountains, or the flash of sheet lightning?

I've had a couple of experiences like that. Standing above the Victoria Falls, for instance – seeing and hearing the relentless crashing of that huge volume of water pounding the rocks below and billowing up in plumes of spray.

Or again, and perhaps more potently, long ago at the dress-rehearsal of a mediaeval morality play, when the producer revealed his visual effect for the presence of God! While we weren't looking he'd slowly released CO2 smoke, then suddenly switched on 24 Aircraft Landing Lights which blazed into us. Solid light drove us backwards hitting us with an

almost physical force. And then he projected two bright spotlights onto the stage, picking out the silhouette head of a man wearing a mitre – visible, yet not distinguishable – a person, yet powerfully glorious!

I think that's the kind of experience John is trying to describe when he sees the great throne in Revelation Chapter 4. *"There before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder."*

There's nothing humdrum or ordinary about this. John is filled with fear – not the terror caused by malevolence – but the overwhelming awe of being confronted by God in all his power.

Think of what fills you with awe – the hugeness of space, the volume of sound, the glory of light, the roar of falling water, the burning of fire. And think of God Almighty enthroned in power & purity calling you before him in all your smallness.

Finally John understood the true impact of the words his Lord had taught him to pray:

Our Father which art in heaven *-thine is the Kingdom, the power & the glory, for ever & ever. Amen!*

How could he not be afraid? At the beginning of Revelation, John says:

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

And yet, this vast & overpowering God chooses to hold us in mercy and kindness – so we are not destroyed.

John's Lord places his right hand on John and says: "Do not be afraid."

For there is one who can approach the throne of glory on our behalf.

As we heard in our first reading:

in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

For, (Back to Rev 5v9) with his blood he has purchased us for God from every tribe & language & people & nation.

And so this overwhelming experience of God's presence surrounded by a hundred million angels expressing the vastness and brilliance of pure worship - is opened up to fragile humanity.

We who cannot look at the brilliance of the sun without blinding ourselves, also cannot gaze on the purity of God without destroying ourselves. To see an eclipse we need specially darkened glasses – or a colander! To bear the glory of God, we need Jesus - 'The Lamb who was slain'.

But Jesus **is** worthy to approach the throne – and he draws humanity with him in worship. And so the 24 Elders – the symbolic leaders of God's people in the Old & New Testaments can encircle the throne. They can sit and bask in the presence of God. They fall on their faces before the one who sits on the throne. They get back up unscathed and lay their crowns before the throne. They worship in a human way, with human words.

And every member of the people of God in all times & places, and every creature in heaven & earth cries out:

Praise and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever, you who sit on the throne of glory - and you who have died for us to bring us safely here!

Which makes it possible to imagine us too standing there, purified, in the presence of the eternal one – and saying the words our Lord taught us to pray:
Our Father which art in heaven *-thine is the Kingdom, the power & the glory, for ever & ever. Amen!*

And this is what our Sunday gatherings attempt to enable us to do. In all too human, and sometimes even banal ways, we stand in the presence of the Almighty, and are not consumed.

Despite our unworthiness, our sinfulness, our shameful meanness – we nonetheless turn our eyes towards the fearful splendour of God's face and offer our praise. Week by week.

Let us not be deceived. As Scripture says: It's a fearful thing to fall in to the hands of the living God. And yet through the Sacrifice of Jesus, God makes it possible for us to come yet again into the presence of His majesty and to worship him.

So 'Be on your guard, be alert!', as Jesus says in our Gospel Reading. It is as if a man went to church week after week, but did not realise that the King was coming back, and would want an accounting! The King has left his house and put his servants in charge – each of us with our share of the tasks he has given to us - and He has told us to keep watch. When he comes back, let him not find us sleeping, but keeping watch for him.

Because of Jesus, because of his sacrifice for us, because of his resurrection, his intercession for us and his advocacy for us with the Father, our routine

Sunday worship creates a space where we **can** keep watch - by daring to enter the presence of the Glorious majesty of the Almighty God... and yet not be consumed. We can keep watch by joining the elders and those first disciples, and all the saints and martyrs who have gone before us, and all Christians across the world and offer our own songs of praise. And to this end, Jesus has given us a daily prayer: Our Father which art in heaven *-thine is the Kingdom, the power & the glory, for ever & ever. Amen!*

Well – we’ve come to the end of our exploration of The Lord’s Prayer. Before I finish – may I offer you two last encouragements.

Firstly – ours is a God who answers prayer. In Birmingham, the UK’s largest Christian landmark is being built as a testament to answered prayer. Look up EternalWall!

Each of the million bricks used will be linked to a different answered prayer over the ages. And of course there are so many more that no-one has ever heard about.

Secondly – as we struggle with the reality that so many of our prayers seem to go unanswered – hold on to the very first words of the Lord’s Prayer – Our **Father**. As children, we knew how to trust, even when we didn’t understand – but now we are older, it is so much harder. But God, as our heavenly father, is always glad and moved when we surrender ourselves to his love in our disappointment and release to his faithfulness the questions we still carry. One of the greatest triumphs of prayer, as we find with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane – is the choice to submit ourselves to the Father’s will once again.

So. Let's finish our series by praying The Lord's Prayer together. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught to us...

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in
heaven.*

Give us this day our daily bread.

*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who
trespass against us.*

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

*For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for
ever and ever. Amen.*