

# Jesus Christ Is Lord - Lord of the Will

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging Jesus as Lord of our will and aligning our choices with God's desires through prayer and submission.*

**Duration:** 46:03

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:10, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 16:23, Mark 1:32-34, Luke 4:1-13, John 4:34

**Topics:** "Will Of Man"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a young boy who set his school on fire because his bubblegum was taken away. The speaker then mentions a famous statue of Jesus in Copenhagen Cathedral and emphasizes that seeing it from a distance does not capture its true glory. The main message of the sermon is that true discipleship involves total dedication to doing the Father's will, just as Jesus exemplified in his life. Jesus refused every alternative to the Father's will and called people to follow him without compromise, acting as Lord.

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## Transcript

Now, our subject this morning, Jesus Christ is Lord, Lord of the Will. Jesus Christ, Lord of the Universe, Head of the Church, is also Lord of the Individual. That which distinguishes the Christian from everyone else is that a Christian is a person who has come to acknowledge this.

And if you're a believer this morning, then in your heart of hearts, you acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, Son of the Living God, the Messiah, the only Savior of men. And in the acknowledgement of that, you see Him as the object of your worship and the Lord of your life. He is Lord of all, but there are many who as yet do not acknowledge Him, and may not acknowledge His Lordship until the final day of judgment, when He will judge all nations and all men, and will manifest His sovereignty in sending the just and the unjust to their own destinies.

But Jesus Christ is Lord. We have already been seeing how He is Lord of the mind, how He is Lord of the heart. And this morning, I want to confine myself to this particular aspect of His Lordship as taught in Scripture, Lord of the Will.

If Jesus Christ is truly your Lord and mine this morning, then He ought to be reigning in this territory that we speak of as the Will. He should be the one who is supreme in our choices, in our decision-making, whether we choose to do this or not to, to go there or not to go. He, the Lord of our lives, the Savior of our

souls, the Son of God, He should be Lord of our choices.

Now, there are many ways in which one could approach this subject. I have chosen this morning to refer to three particular ways in which our Lord Jesus stresses His Lordship of the Will. First of all, Jesus stresses His Lordship of the Will in the prayer that He taught His disciples to pray.

In teaching us to pray what we have commonly come to speak of as the Lord's Prayer, you remember that one thing He taught us to pray was this. He taught His disciples to pray, Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Now that is addressed to God the Father.

But Jesus said that all His disciples should learn to pray this. And don't forget, when Jesus was speaking of prayer, He wasn't simply talking about babbling. He wasn't just simply thinking in terms of being able to say the words as such.

He was telling His followers of a previous age, as He tells us today, that unless we can really pray this prayer from our hearts, we are still far from what we ought to be as disciples. Jesus Himself, let me say right at the beginning, Jesus Himself does not claim Lordship over us that He should rule over us as distinct from the Father. This can be misunderstood.

Jesus does not claim to be Lord of His people, as it were, instead of the Father, or to keep us away from the Father, but He would be Lord of His people in every area of their lives, in order that He may at last hand back His kingdom and all the territory over which He rules to God the Father, that as Paul puts it, God may be all in all. There is a passage in 1 Corinthians 15 which brings this out very clearly, where Paul says, Then the end will come when He, that is, Jesus, hands over the kingdom to God the Father, even after He has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power. For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet.

Jesus brings men and women into subjection to Himself in order that ultimately we should be subject to the Father whom we do not see, but who comes to us in Himself. Now it is against that background that we are to see this point coming from the prayer our Lord taught us to pray. When you pray, He says, see that you're able to say this, looking into the face of God Himself, your will be done on earth, my little bit of earth, where I am in my territory and in everybody else's territory, just as it is being done in heaven.

Now I guess we need to fill in the background to that just a little. We need to remind ourselves that man was originally made for God as well as by God. Man was made by God and he was made for God.

He was made to fulfill God's will in this world. That can be put in a wrong way of course. It can be represented as if God had made us just to be chattels, automator, His playthings.

Well that's not how the Bible puts it. God made us in order that we should be co-workers with Him. Or better still, God made us in order that out of fellowship with Him, communion with Him, out of a community of heart and mind with Him, out of a sympathy with Him, we should do what He wants us to do.

So that with all our hearts, not just by subjecting the will to His will, but out of our hearts, out of the innermost being, we should do what we do because we do it with God. We do it in fellowship with God. That is the Edenic pattern.

When God made our first parents, He made them to rule and He made them to multiply and He gave them dominion over all things. But that dominion over the world and over the cosmos was to be exercised as in

fellowship with God, as living in the paradise of God. That was the intention.

You and I should be living in the paradise of fellowship with God. And if we are in Christ, that is our privilege. Already we are in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

And out of that sweet, sustaining, life-transforming fellowship with God in Christ, we should be prepared and we should daily be concentrating upon this. That with a whole heart and unquestioned allegiance, we should be able to say, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Man was made by God, man was made for God.

Yes, but that's not the end of the story. Man rebelled against God. That is the story of Eden and that has been the story of all men and women ever since.

We have preferred our own way to God's will. If I'm not mistaken, that is the, that is the tragedy of each one of our lives to some extent this morning. We prefer our own wills and we set up our own wills in arrogant defiance of the will of God.

And this is where we go wrong as believers. It's the moment we set up the standard of rebellion and we say, Well, God may want me to do that. His word may require that, but, but I want this.

It's not many years ago that there was a case that came before a court in the United States. A little boy who was described as shy, second grader, eight years old, a little owlish in spectacles. That's the quote.

That's not my ex, uh, my attempt to describe the lad because I didn't know him. But he was guilty of committing a crime in a New Jersey school. It was Valentine's Day.

He brought a Valentine card for the teacher. He put it on the desk and immediately afterwards he excused himself. He went downstairs, he got hold of some paper, he put the school on fire and that deliberately the fire was traced to him.

And finally he was asked, Why did you do it? Well, he said, They took away my bubble gum yesterday and I had to do it. See what that little boy was saying. If I want bubble gum, I must have bubble gum.

And if I don't have bubble gum, well, bubble gum to you. I'll tear everything to pieces if I don't get what I want. You know, brothers and sisters, there's a lot of that spirit that is still abroad in the hearts of God's people.

If we don't get our bubble gum, we'll set the house ablazing. But now, man saved by Christ and brought back into his proper relationship by God means this, he's not only forgiven and reconciled, that in itself is precious, but when God saves a man, when God saves a woman, he does more than forgive his sins, more than reconcile us to God. He brings us into the family of God.

We are adopted. He gives us the Spirit of God and now he transforms us and he puts the bias straight. The bias towards rebellion is countered by the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit in the heart.

Now if that's happened to you, if the Spirit of God has come to dwell in you and the Word of God is your food and your delight and you read it because it is the Word of God and not your own nor anybody else's, then you and I should know something of a constraint daily to be doing God's will. We should be able to pray this prayer, you see. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven and it's being done in heaven with all perfection and always done in heaven consistently, constantly, day and night.

Nothing else happens in heaven save the doing of God's will. Says Jesus, that's what you should pray for. Now that's the first thing.

Jesus taught his disciples that they should pray that way and if he taught us to pray that way, he means that we should live that way. Secondly, Jesus further expounds the theme of his lordship of the will by the pattern that he has set for his people to follow. Our Lord is not only the procurer of everlasting life, of pardon and new life, he is also the pattern for the living of that life.

If you want to see what the Christian life is like, then you and I have always to look back beyond all men, the best of men, ultimately to our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only example for us in the last analysis. Men are our examples only insofar as they're true to him.

Now I want you to notice this pattern this morning because we really have to take this seriously. First of all, I want you to think of the pattern that was central in Jesus' own consciousness as a man. I'm going to dare this morning to pose a question and try to answer it.

If you and I were able to look into the mind of Jesus, what would we see there? What would we find there? If we could somehow invade the privacy of Jesus of Nazareth and get right inside his mind as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, as he did this, as he went there, what kind of reasoning would we discover? What was he thinking about? How was he thinking? Within his consciousness, what were his thoughts? Let me just give you two or three illustrations. Now I can only do that not because there isn't much more to give, but time doesn't allow it. But let me just give you two or three illustrations.

Take this one from John 4 verse 34. My food, he says, or according to the King James, my meat, which means really my food, is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Jesus had lost interest in ordinary food for a moment.

And his disciples have been buying food and they've come back, he's not interested in food. And they said, well, what's happening? Has somebody given you anything? And then he explains it. Look, look, look.

He says, I have food to eat that you don't know anything at all about. My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Your physical frame is sustained by food, and if you don't eat over a period, you'll soon know what it is to be wilting.

Jesus says what sustains me is the doing of my father's will. That is my food. As I do my father's will, I am sustained and I am further instructed and inspired.

And the zeal of God lives on in my soul, and it will until I finish that work. This is what I live by, as well as live for. Take a word like this, John 5:30.

By myself, says Jesus, I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself, but him who sent me. What he's saying is this.

Now, you don't like my judgment, he says. You don't like my assessment of things as I've given them to you. Well, now look, I want to assure you, he says, my assessment is accurate because it's not really my own.

When I judge anybody or judge anything, I just do so because of what I hear. Hear where? From my father, of course. So that my assessment, my judgment is not purely, not simply, not personally mine.

It is the judgment of my father, and I speak out of fellowship with my father. And look, he says, you can depend upon it being right because I seek not to please myself, but him that sent me. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, in speaking about the birth of our Lord, about the incarnation, comes and he says, he quotes a psalm which he says came onto the lips of our Lord Jesus at that point in time.

Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me. With burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, here I am.

It is written about me in the scroll. I have come to do your will, O my God. If you could invade the mind and the heart and the consciousness of the Lord Jesus, I believe that's what you would hear.

Day in, day out. Night in, night out. Summer and winter.

Throughout his life. I have come to do your will, O my God. This is why I'm here.

This is what I've come to do. And this is what I'm going to finish. And the work of grace has not come to a completion in any man or any woman's heart until you and I can somehow or other reflect that consciousness of Jesus.

Oh, come again. Let's go beyond that. The pattern that was central in Jesus' own consciousness as a man, the pattern that was central in his consciousness as man was also clearly exemplified in his ensuing conduct.

Briefly, we may summarize the facts of the case by saying that Jesus' life shows certain negative and positive features which exemplify his total dedication to do the Father's will. Negatively, our Lord refused every alternative to the Father's will. Whether it was suggested by man or by demons or by Satan, by good men or bad men, it made no difference.

He said no, if it's not my Father's will, if it's not written in the word, if it's not communicated to me as the Father's will, then he says I'm not doing it. I guess one of the first illustrations of this, not the most glaring, but one of the first illustrations you have in our Lord's public ministry was when he came to John the Baptist to be baptized of him at Jordan. You remember John tried to deter him, tried to hinder him saying, I need to be baptized by you, he says, and do you come to me? Now all that was very well meaning.

John was aware of the great dichotomy between him and the Savior, the Lamb of God as he called him just a little later, and he says it should be the wrong way around, I should be coming for you to baptize me and you're coming to me. He put his hands up in horror, it's not right. Jesus replied, let it be so now.

It is proper for us to do this in order to fulfill all righteousness. Then John consented. Now the fulfillment of all righteousness, of course, is just another way of referring to God's will, what is right in the sight of God.

And what Jesus told John is this, John, you don't understand it, but never mind. This is right in the sight of God. It is God's will.

Therefore, John, let it be so now. And, of course, the ensuing events of Jordan and beyond Jordan made it perfectly clear that that was the Lord's will and it brought pleasure to the Father. The heavens were rent.

And the dove came down and rested upon him and the voice from the heavens said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. He brought pleasure to the Father because he was determined to do the Father's will. And you find this same principle later on.

You only turn the page and you come to the first continuous period of temptation of Jesus by Satan in the wilderness. But with reiterated insistence, he refused the threefold alternatives proposed by Satan to God's known will. And in each case, you remember what Jesus said was this, God has made his will known in his word.

And when Satan suggested an alternative, he says it is written and it is written contrary to what you suggest. Therefore, God's will, according to God's word must be done three times over. It is written, it is written, it is written.

And finally, in Matthew's record of it, Jesus said to Satan, away from me, Satan, for it is written, worship the Lord your God and serve him only. You got the point. Jesus will accept nothing else.

There are no alternatives as far as he's concerned to the Father's will. You have another classical illustration later on at Caesarea Philippi, and a more subtle one really, because Peter has only recently confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, the son of the living God. It was a moment of elation for Jesus as well as for Peter.

Here is the first open confession of Jesus' messiahship on behalf of the disciples by Simon Peter. And then Jesus began to tell them how as the Messiah, the son of the living God, he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the scribes and the Pharisees and be killed. And Peter took him aside and said, Lord, he says, this, this, this kind of thing can never happen to you.

This must never happen to you. You die. Do you remember our Lord's words to him? Out of my sight, Satan.

That's the NIV. Out of my sight, Satan, you are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.

And you see, for Jesus there was no alternative but the will of God. The will of God was perfect and the will of God was his pleasure and the will of God must be done. Let's turn from the negative to the positive.

Jesus consistently and persistently moved forward to do his father's will, whatever that might be. That positive dedication to obey the father at each turn of the road is expressed in a number of places. For example, right at the beginning of Mark's gospel, you remember after that great day in Capernaum, beginning in the temple in the morning, casting out demons, being challenged as to whether he was doing it in the power of Beelzebul and so forth.

There to the very end of the day, the day sets with people from all quarters bringing their sick around the Lord Jesus and he heals them all, we are told. From morning to evening he was giving and giving and giving of his energy and Luke tells us that energy went out of him. He was giving of his life, giving of himself.

Next morning he was up early in prayer. Nobody knew where he was but at last they found him and there he was in prayer and one of the disciples said to him, Lord, everybody is looking for you, come back, the people of Capernaum want you. No, he said, let's go into the next villages also that I may preach and the

King James puts it like this, for therefore came I forth.

I came not to stay in one place but I came to move and on God's program for me today is not Capernaum but something else and because God has ordained it I must do it. Men and women, this is the vision that so many of us lose because God has planned it, we should be doing it. Supremely of course we encounter our Lord's most graphic act of self-submission in favor of God the Father's will in the Garden of Gethsemane.

That's why I read from that passage today. Let the record speak for itself. I'll just quote to you these three crucial verses here.

Going a little further, Jesus fell with his face to the ground and he prayed, My Father, if it is possible may this cup be taken from me, yet not my will but yours. He went away a second time, verse 42. He went away a second time and prayed, My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken unless I drink it, may your will be done.

Then verse 43, when he came back he again found them sleeping because their eyes were heavy so he left them and he went away once again and prayed the third time saying the same thing. Three times over Jesus asked, Father if it is possible let this cup pass from me. You see there was no attraction in suffering for the Son of God.

There was no attraction in suffering as such and especially the kind of suffering that he was going to engage in. A kind of suffering as he foresaw was eventually going to mean that he would have to cry to the Father, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? There was no attraction I say in that. There was nothing in that that he wanted.

His own will did not want that in and of itself. No but wait a moment. If the Father in his inscrutable wisdom saw that there was no other way to redeem sinners, if it was the Father's wisdom that required it and the Father's will that required it, then Jesus said not my natural will to keep away from suffering but your will be done for my will is to do your will.

He was predisposed you see, he was predisposed at every turn to do the Father's will. Now that's the pattern Jesus has set for his followers. Our wills are not to be allowed to rebel against God but they are to be geared to serve him over against all conceivable alternatives whether they be suggested by men or by Satan, by saints or by sinners, by Peter or by the devil.

It makes no difference. You see my friends, to come down to the nitty-gritties of our Christian experience and of our Christian disciplines, unless your reading of scripture and your fellowship with God day by day and unless our worship together in the house of God is bringing us consistently back to this and encouraging us and inspiring us to do the will of God irrespective of all consequences, then something's wrong somewhere. Either with a ministry of the word in this place or with you good people who are receiving it.

Either with a minister or with a people or with both. Unless we are a people whose minds and whose wills and whose hearts are being harnessed exclusively more and more for the will of God, then something's wrong. If we can read the word and if we can sit under the preaching of the word and still want our own sweet thing and go our own sweet ways and will battle with other people because we've got a strong will and we are self-willed, then there is something radically wrong in our lives.

But when once we've come to terms with this and we only want the will of God, you know, there is a kind of peace that comes to a person who's arrived here that you do not have anywhere else. You believe that God is sovereign and you only want to do the will of the sovereign God in whom you can trust. You know, you can trust Him.

You don't need to be involved in intrigue. You don't need to try and persuade other people unduly. You don't need to get people along to vote for you.

You just don't need that. You can trust God who is sovereign to bring about the circumstances in His own good time and you yourself, your whole heart's pleasure is to do God's will and do it in God's way. That should be, that should be the innermost spirit in our consciousness this morning.

It's to do the will of God however it may appear. Now lastly, Jesus finally expounds the terms of His lordship of the will by means of the clear prerogative He claims from His own. Jesus' whole attitude to His own is in terms of His requirement of this kind of lordship over us.

He requires to be king. In order to rescue us from sin and to predispose us to do the will of God, He, our Redeemer, our Savior says, now you must yield to me in order that I may transform you so that you're predisposed to do the Father's will as I am predisposed to do the Father's will. And ultimately I will hand back the kingdom in its totality to the Father that God may be all in all.

That's the plan. Jesus' claim to lordship of man's will is evident in some of His announcements of the terms of salvation. How did Jesus, how did Jesus declare the way of salvation? Have you noticed these sovereign terms of His? He doesn't argue.

He declares with authority. Repent and believe the gospel. John the Baptist had just been put into prison and John, remember, had been put in prison and had lost his head just because he preached repentance to Herod.

That immoral man couldn't take it. And Jesus launched out on His public ministry and He stood where John had stood and He preached what John had preached, the same emphasis, repent and believe the good news. He claims lordship.

He's telling men what to do. Turn around. Change your minds.

Believe in me. He's commanding, you see. But not only that, take the much more familiar words.

I, somewhere this morning along the journey of this service, I don't now remember where, referred to that lovely passage in Matthew 11, 28-30. Jesus said, come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

Now notice those commands. Notice those imperatives. Come to me, says Jesus.

Come to me. Take my yoke. Be a partner with me in which I am the senior partner and the Lord.

And learn of me. Come, take, learn of me. I am the central one.

I am to determine everything. Come, take, learn of me. You see, he's assuming the place of lordship.

He's not arguing with people. He's calling men and women. Oh, come again.

He tells another, go sell your possessions and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. You notice the emphasis? Look at the verbs.

Look at these great imperatives. These categorical imperatives of his. Go sell.

You see, this man was worshipping his possessions. Go sell your possessions. Give to the poor.

Come, follow me. He's not arguing. He's stating the terms.

He's acting as lord. He's not here to strike a compromise either with the people of his day and age or with any other day and age. He sets the terms.

He's lord. You know, he's never changed. Jesus requires the same kind of lordship over men's choices in the ensuing life that they live.

And I come to a conclusion with this. Let me just give you one illustration of it. Our Lord, our Lord believes that he has the right to tell his disciples something of this order.

If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell where the fire never goes out. Now, that's not me.

That's not me. That's Jesus. Well, let me give you another verse.

That was from Mark 9, 43. Let me read to you a little later on in the chapter. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off.

It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.

Now, that's not the fiery preacher of Acts. That's Jesus of Nazareth speaking. That's not me.

And he's telling men and women, he's looking them eyeball to eyeball and he's saying, look fellows, I expect your submission. I expect to be Lord to this extent. If your hand is a hindrance to you, it's better for you to pluck it off rather than go to hell with two hands.

If your eye is a hindrance to you, pluck it out rather than go to hell with two eyes. And the same with your foot. Now, this kind of lordship the modern church is not aware of, hardly reads the New Testament that speaks of it, certainly doesn't ponder it and does not proclaim this cardinal truth of our Lord's lordship.

Jesus demands such radical sacrifices from his followers. John 21, I suppose, is the other example. You remember when Jesus told Peter to follow him, he said, when you were young, you were able to choose where you went.

When you'll get a little older, you won't be able to choose. Other people will bind you and they'll carry you somewhere and you won't want to go, indicating how Peter would die. Jesus was calling Peter to lay down his life physically for him at a point Peter knew not at that time.

When? And then to cap everything, Peter saw John, his friend, lifelong friend. He saw John coming there somewhere and he thought to himself, well, all right, Lord, are you calling John to this kind of thing too? What about him? He said to Jesus. Very natural.

What about him? You're calling upon me to lay down my life. What about him? Says Jesus to him. If I want him to be alive when I return again, that's got nothing to do with you, Peter.

You follow me. Gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Huh? Brothers and sisters, he's the Lord.

He's the Lord. Do you acknowledge him as such? You know, when Our Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth, was crowned, her then, her grandmother, Queen Mary, was still alive. The great old lady, Queen Mary, sent her a personal letter written in her own handwriting, a letter of congratulations and best wishes for her reign.

I don't know the contents of that letter, so don't let me suggest that I've got some inside information, but I know the end of it. She signed it in this way. Now, I'm going to lose it.

Let me see. I've got it down here. I don't want to give you... Yes, that's right.

Your loving grandmother and devoted subject, Mary. Have you got that? Here is the Queen of England until this stripling comes onto the throne. And now, she's writing to her granddaughter and she's saying, I am your loving grandmother, but also your willing servant, subject, Mary.

In Copenhagen Cathedral, there is a very famous statue of the Lord Jesus Christ. Millions pass it every year. It's the center of great attraction.

Some of you may have seen it. If you have, then you will remember that the significant thing about it is this. Though it's worth seeing from a distance, it's a marvelous piece of art, and probably it is worthy of crossing the Atlantic and going to Copenhagen to see it, even from a distance, but that's not how you see the glory of it.

There's a secret. If you want to see that which is altogether unique about it, namely the face and the eyes of Jesus, you've got to bend down because his face is bent. And the glory of the whole thing is to be seen in his eyes and in his face, but you don't see it until you bend.

Brother and sister in Christ, I tell you this morning, there is a glory in Jesus Christ that cannot be seen from the distant view. It is only visible to those that have bowed the knee and the neck and look up into his face then and call him Lord, my Lord and my God, Lord of my will. We shall be closing in a moment and one of the words we shall be singing is this.

My will is not my own till thou hast made it thine. If it would reach a monarch's throne, it must its crown resign. It only stands unbent amid the clashing strife when on thy bosom it has lent and found in thee its life.

If you have not acknowledged this before today, acknowledge it now. And if you have, then still humbly bow at the Savior's feet and reiterate in his presence your acknowledgement of his lordship of your will. Let us pray.

Our Father, it is true of us that like sheep we have turned each one to his own way or her own way. Like all our fathers before us, we too have wandered from known truth and from the known will of God. What you

have said in your word has not been the law that has always guided and directed our lives.

We have placed other things over and above the doing and the performance of your gracious will and good. Forgive us, we pray. Enable us this morning in the quietness of this sanctuary to realign our wills that they may synchronize with yours as we go out into a workaday world.

O Spirit of God, teach us now so to do. To the honor and the glory of your name, the extension of your kingdom, and the ultimate privilege of being at last among that throng of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus that will be given back to the Father that he may be all in all. Amen.

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