

Matthew 6:13 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Emma Radecanu, a name that will be on the lips of many people this morning. This amazing, young, talented tennis player, who took the tennis world by storm over the last three weeks, a wild card, the first person to win as a qualifier, and she made tennis history last night at eighteen.

It was a moment of sheer delight as she collapsed on the ground after the winning serve and there was a great outburst of praise.

This morning we come to the end of the Lord's Prayer, we come to the doxology, like a trumpet blast at the end – a huge Amen. We hear those words, *For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever, Amen.*

What a sublime way to finish this incredible prayer – it finishes with praise and honour to God. It finishes in victory!

It began with praise, to Him, *“Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name”* and it finishes with giving Our Father his rightful place as the King, all powerful and all glorious.

What strikes me about this ending is the way that it ends with a three-cord blast of praise.

It acknowledges our Triune God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The power of the Father, the Kingdom belonging to the Son and the glory of the Spirit.

Let us be encouraged by this ending because it is a victorious ending to the prayer.

Thine be the power.... So, let us begin with the Father.

There is no higher place than we can go to than call on the name of our Heavenly Father. He who is our Creator. He who is all-powerful. All power belongs to Him, and it is good for us to be constantly reminded of this amazing truth. He is the ultimate power behind this universe. He is the source of life. He is the one whom we are all answerable to, and He is the one who created us for a purpose.

But what does this mean for us as a Christian fellowship?

It means that in God, Our Father, we have our unity this morning.

The Apostle Paul, in our reading this morning, writes, “May the God who inspires us with strength, and gives us encouragement, grant to you, to live in harmony with one another as Christ Jesus would have you do.”

Unity is what the Lord's Prayer teaches us.

When we have our focus on God our Father, our Christian Fellowship, should be marked by harmony because when we say this prayer and truly mean it, we are praying as a family, as children of God.

Like all children in a family, we are expected to live in peace and harmony. But sadly, that always doesn't happen!

I know that only too well, when my two grandsons come to the Manse – they are only 4 and 2.

They love making jigsaws but occasionally there is a spat, if one crosses the boundary and interferes with the other one's jigsaw. It is at this point that Susan steps in to negotiate a peace deal, usually around a snack plate, so that harmony would be restored. Does the same happen in the adult world?

The Lord's Prayer reminds us of the necessity for harmony within God's church and Kingdom.

As I have said in a previous sermon, the Lord's Prayer is not *Give me* or *Forgive me...It is Our Father...Give us and Forgive us*. It is a family prayer that is said with our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is a prayer that unites and brings us closer to God.

Of course there will always be differences of opinion and it's not to say that there will be no disagreements within the Christian family, but it's how we handle them and how we cope with them, that will show how much we want to make God our Heavenly Father.

So when we say, "*Thine be the power*", we are acknowledging God's total control over our lives. We realise that there is a greater power and that we are called as a family to submit to it and to live within it.

Secondly, "*Thine be the Kingdom*" and this points to Christ, The Kingdom we live in is Christ's kingdom. He came to announce that his Kingdom had come on earth. When we submit to God and we follow Christ in our daily lives, we are living out this prayer.

For it is Christ who has died to take away our sin. We say in the prayer, "*Forgive us our sins.*" No one else can take away our sins as the old hymn says,

"He died that we might be forgiven,

*he died to make us good,
that we might go at last to heaven,
saved by his precious blood.*

*There was no other good enough
to pay the price of sin,
he only could unlock the gate
of heaven and let us in.”*

Only the Son of God, who went to the cross that we might be forgiven, can forgive our sins. *So thine be the Kingdom* is a triumphant blast of praise to God – extolling the sacrifice of Jesus and bringing him to the centre of our understanding of God.

We have been accepted into God's glorious kingdom through Jesus Christ – In the Gospels we are told, that He is the door, the gate, he is the good shepherd who has laid down his life for us. He is the way, truth and the life. God's kingdom has come in Jesus and He calls us as Christians to live within it .

Of course, we have a choice of two kingdoms, the kingdom of the world and the Kingdom of Christ and daily we have this choice of which kingdom we want to live in. Do we want to live for ourselves and serve ourselves or do we want to live for Christ and serve others and share what we have in God's Kingdom? That's what our reading also asks of us this morning...

¹ “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbours for their good, to build them up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself...This is what it means to live in the Kingdom.”

Thirdly,

Our reading this morning from 1 Chronicles 29:11 is David's great prayer of dedicating his resources to the building of the Temple for his son Solomon to continue.

“Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.”

The Holy Spirit points people to Christ and to God's glory.

Yes, men may try to set up their own kingdoms – with capitals in Washington, London, Brussels or Kabul! But the Kingdom of Heaven has its capital in Heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ is the King! And the Holy Spirit points us to this.

Yes, men love to bask in the glory afforded them by other men. The shapers and builders of technology and research sing, “Glory to men upon earth who are so clever, sophisticated and advanced that they will soon make God redundant.”

Yet all glory belongs to the God who spoke and life came into existence, life that can be seen in something so small as a monarch butterfly – this little creature which from a tiny egg laid in Canada grows into a caterpillar 2,700 times bigger than when it was first hatched – in 20 days; then it turns into a chrysalis. 8 days later it emerges as a beautiful butterfly able to see all the colours of the rainbow with its complex eyes – and within 2 hours is able to fly as far as 3,000 miles away to a place it has never seen, but to exactly the same place, to the same tree its parents had migrated to in the mountain forests west of Mexico City. No man or men can do that! Only a glorious creator God who is worthy of true glory!

The Holy Spirit opens our eyes to the glory of God in Creation and Salvation.

In conclusion, the Lord's Prayer gives us hope. It gives us hope that we have a loving Heavenly Father who is interested in our welfare and believe me, when our lives are finished on earth, that's all we will want to know, do I have a Heavenly Father?

It gives us hope that we have a God who will bring his will and Kingdom into this present world. It is a Kingdom that has arrived in Jesus, and will find its fulfilment when he returns. So, we have much to hope for, in fact, we have this life and the whole of eternity to hope for.

But in the interim, we who struggle here on earth can find strength and comfort in the God of hope. The prayer encourages us to pray for our basic daily needs – our daily bread - and to pray for our spiritual well-being – forgiveness and acceptance.

Our Christian fellowship should always be marked by hope.

In the stained-glass window to the left of me, we have the words of the Apostle, from 1 Cor 13, "Faith, hope and charity" and if you look closely at the window, hope has been depicted by a woman holding a caged bird and she herself is in chains but her head is held high, she has a confident and calm look on her face, as she looks upwards, hoping in a God who knows her and loves her.

It's interesting that this window was installed in October 1914, just months after the beginning of the First World War. Oh, how the world needed hope at that time, and the designer of the window, Alf Webster, was called up to serve his country, and tragically lost his life in Flanders a year later.

But he left this wonderful legacy of a window of faith, hope and charity for future generations to reflect on.

Where did he get his idea about the woman? Who inspired him? Could it have been the English painter George Frederic Watts, who completed the first two versions of his famous painting Hope in 1886, it shows a lone blindfolded female figure sitting on a globe, playing a lyre that has only one single string remaining. The background is almost blank, its only visible feature a single star.

Webster's design certainly has traces of this in it – when all human hope has gone, what have we? but to look up and praise the Lord and believe that He is with us and say to him, Thine be the Kingdom, Power and Glory.

Today we dedicated our Guild for another year of service and activities and their theme this year is look forward in faith – a great theme – Yes, it's important to look forward in faith with a positive attitude, but when we look forward in faith trusting in the God of the Lord's Prayer and really believe that for Him, thine is the Power, Kingdom and Glory for evermore, then it begins to transform our world and our lives, and our grief becomes joy, our loneliness is filled with his presence, and our pain in this life becomes bearable because we know that have Our Heavenly Father walking with us.

Amen