

SERMON

Amen (various texts)

Nunawading and Waverley, 7-11-21

Dear friends in Christ,

Amen is such a powerful little word. We say it after receiving the body and blood of our Lord. **Amen, amen, amen** appears three times in a row at the end of the liturgy. Of course, at the end of every prayer, we say **amen**.

The **amen** is the gift of the gospel to us because it literally means, **let it be so**. It comes from the Hebrew, to be true. We are saying: "I am sure about this. It is going to happen as I prayed. It shall be so." We affirm the prayers of others by saying **amen**. We are saying, "This is my prayer, too. Please answer because this is a good and true prayer and I know you are going to act on it." Amen is our confession that all the good things of the kingdom belong to us and we have a right to ask for them. The apostle Paul underscores this by saying: **All the promises of God are "Yes" in Christ. And, so, through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.**

How confident are we in our praying? If we are certain of being heard, wouldn't we be doing more of it? It is clear then, that we are not as sure about prayer as we should be.

Before I go on, you may be surprised that the words: **For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen** are not there in the gospels. Our Lord Jesus gave us an opening, **Our Father in heaven**, but no conclusion. Perhaps that was deliberate so that we would make the prayer ours and add our own petitions then end it with praise and amen. Something like that did happen. The earliest liturgy we have, The Didache, written between 70-90AD, contains the doxology that the Eastern churches continued using, which was adopted later by the Protestants. People jumped in to fill a gap; fair enough.

Our prayers are God's actions. I wouldn't give my assent to anyone's ideas, fancies or thoughts. But once a person prays about the sort of thing the Father does, then I can say, **Amen. This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.** The apostle John is urging us to have this confidence.

Jesus said, **And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**

If we are to pray with confidence and say **amen** boldly, then we need to get inside God's head and pray according to his nature. Are we sure about God's nature? Yes, we can be, in Christ. We know he is our Father and being born of the Spirit, we are his children. Christ has redeemed us and freed us from fear, guilt, loneliness, greed and addictions. Hatred and anger against others and the world have been taken away. So, now we know his will, his thinking and purposes for us and his church. Praise belongs to him; we say **amen** to that. The saving of others is his desire, so we say **amen** to that. He wants us to be healed, for us to be comforted and at peace, therefore, **amen** must be said. Justice for the world, care for the environment, sound politics and a stable economy, of course he wants these things, too. A growing church; we say amen because he wants this. Therefore, we say "yes please, carry out these great works of yours. **Amen.**"

Finally, **amen** is the joyful, praise-filled response we make at the end of our prayers. Let me read a few New Testament doxologies.

Rom 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 counsellor? 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. Amen.

Gal 1:3–5 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen

Eph 3:20–21 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, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

1 Tim 1:17 To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Tim 6:15–16 He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honour and eternal dominion. Amen.

Jude 1:24–25 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Don't they give us the feelings of joy and power? Our **Amen** is a statement of joy in the Lord Jesus who his dominion over all things.