

**Sunday, Sept. 2:** Holy Communion, Labor Day Sunday

Message Title: Transformed: Praying in a way that changes you! “Amen!”

Memory Verse: “I assure you that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ... Ask and you will receive so that your joy will be complete.” John 16:23-24

Text: 1 Peter 5:11 “To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said, ‘Amen,’ and praised the Lord.” 1 Chronicles 16:36

Scripture: John 14:9-14

Blurb: Have you noticed that we often end prayers with two important phrases? One is, “In Jesus’ name I pray,” and the other is “Amen.” This Sunday, we’ll discover how these two phrases are key to praying in a way that transforms you! Prayer unleashes the saving power of Jesus, and our prayers put us in alignment with that. Come and take on this life-changing “labor” of prayer!

**Opening Song:** *All I Have Is Christ* - Sanctify

**Welcome:** -Pastor David

Holy Communion - open table

**Memory Verse:**

“I assure you that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ... Ask and you will receive so that your joy will be complete.” John 16:23-24

**Worship Music Set:** - Sanctify

*The Same Love*

*Amen*

*Because He Lives*

Worship Prayer - Andrew

**Love Moment:** Headstart Blankets - A Labor of Love! -Andrew

Homeless Shelter

Echo

**Message Bumper**

**PP#1:** Transformed: Praying in a way that changes you.

“Amen.”

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said, ‘Amen,’ and praised the Lord.” 1 Chronicles 16:36

Transformed: Praying in a way that changes your life. “Amen.” 1 Chronicles 16:36 “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said, ‘Amen,’ and praised the Lord.”

We've been learning to pray in a way that transforms our lives. If you want things to be different...then pray. But there's no magic words or formula to prayer. We've found that we don't have to pray in any special way, or say any special words. We've discovered that praying in a way that transforms us comes from praying with a mind, and an attitude, and a focus, on God. Prayer transforms us, and our situations, because when we pray, we place ourselves purposefully into God's presence, and lay before Him all that we are carrying. And by doing that, we make room in our lives for God to act, to have control, to work as God wants. Prayer invites God's involvement in our lives.

**PP#2:** *An image for the word "amen" like a send button on an email or text.*

Sometimes, we pray and don't really mean what we're saying. Or we want to stay in control, and ask God to do things our way. We find, however, these prayers really aren't transformative. Our lives stay the same. We have no inner peace. One thing I have learned about prayer, is that God doesn't listens to the words of my mouth, but to the words of my heart. And when we mean what we pray, then we have honest prayers. And these are the prayers God answers.

**PP#3:** The Biblical Prayer Outline (Max Lucado's "Pocket Prayer")

Heavenly Father,	You are good.
I need you.	So do they.
Thank you.	Amen.

We've been using a biblical pattern to develop our prayer lives. Max Lucado provides a pattern of the prayers of the Bible. They follow this simple outline. Let's try this together. "**Heavenly Father, you are good. I need you. So do they. Thank you. Amen.**"

It's a sufficient prayer on it's own. But we can also use this outline to take our prayers to the next level. After each line, stop and add prayers of your own. Last week I suggested that the thank you section perhaps should be your longest.

**PP#4:** "In Jesus' name I pray."

"I assure you that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ... Ask and you will receive so that your joy will be complete." -John 16:23-24

But before we get to that last word today, I want to stop and look at a phrase Christians often use right at the end of our prayers. Have you been taught to close your prayers with, "In Jesus' Name I pray."? I was. And I've heard many of you use it, too.

Do you know why this is commonly added to our prayers? There's one very basic reason: it's that Jesus told us to. In John 16:23-24 Jesus tells His followers, "I assure you that the Father will give you whatever you *ask in my name*. ... Ask and you will receive so that your joy will be complete." So, if we have requests we ask of God, we should ask them in Jesus' name.

**PP#5:** "In Jesus' name I pray."

We pray putting our will in Jesus' wisdom, not ours.  
 We pray putting our trust in Jesus' power, not ours.  
 We pray putting our outcome in Jesus' decision, not ours.  
 We pray putting our proclamation in Jesus' identity, not ours.

But there's a reason for this, you know. Well, I'll give you four. And they all lead to making our joy complete. Asking in Jesus' name changes things a bit.

One time, as a child, my dad sent me to the hardware store for a new blade for our lawn mower. We were in a small town, and he told me just to tell the owner to put it under his name. Well, I picked up the blade and went to the checkout. I seized the opportunity, and added a bag of licorice to my purchase, as I told Mr. Peterson to put it under my father's name. I remember Mr. Peterson putting the licorice back on the shelf, smiling at me and saying, "I don't believe your father would approve of you buying this candy." Dang. Buying under my father's name affected what I purchased.

Praying in Jesus' name does that, too, you know. When we pray in Jesus' name, and mean it, then we ask for what we know is in alignment with His character and desire for us. It means praying in a way that puts our will in Jesus' wisdom, not ours. It changes how we pray.

It also means that what we have lifted up to God, we surrender to Jesus. Praying in Jesus' name means that we trust and believe in Jesus' power to bring help, and we don't just trust in our own power. It's placing Jesus back in Lordship of our lives, especially in what we are praying about.

And that means that we let go of the outcome, too. Praying in Jesus' name means that we don't demand that He answer our prayers just the way we choose. We let Jesus—because we trust Him, because we know He is wise, because He knows more than we do, because we know He loves us—we let Jesus decide the outcome. Praying in Jesus' name is an act of faith. We pray, lift it to Him, and then let it go.

Praying in Jesus' name is a great release for us. It's like we're lifting to Him a prayer package, and just like how the U.P.S. guy makes us sign for a package received, praying in Jesus' name means that we sign off in His name, and trust Jesus to receive, and take ownership and control, of what we have prayed.

Can you see again just how transformative praying like this is? It completely changes us! Time and time again, prayer relinquishes our control, puts us back in right relationship with God, restores our faith in Jesus, and calls us to practice a life that trusts in Jesus for whatever we pray for.

**PP#6: John 14:9-14 (CEB)**

9 Jesus replied, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you all this time? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I have spoken to you I don't speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me does His works.

Let's look at John 14. This is the place where Jesus is teaching His disciples about heaven. He tells them that He is leaving soon, and He is going to prepare a place for them, a place in His Father's heavenly mansion. Then He says that some day He will come back and take them to be with Him, so they can be where He is, forever. John 14 is amazing. I try to read it at every funeral I do. It's promise is so crucial. Hang on to it, always! Please read it all sometime later today, and again and again!

But right now, look at verse 9. After Jesus made His amazing promise, Philip asked where He was going, where was His Father's house? How will they know the way? Show us the Father!

Verse 9, "Jesus replied, 'Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been with you all this time? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I have spoken to you I don't speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me does His works.'"

Jesus and the Father are one in the same, Jesus says. Yes they are different. But they are also the same. So, you know Jesus. And because of that, you have that amazing, personal, direct access to God the Father.

**PP#7:** John 14:9-14 (CEB)

11 Trust me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on account of the works themselves. 12 I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father. 13 I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father can be glorified in the Son. 14 When you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.

Verse 11, “Trust me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or at least believe on account of the works themselves. [The miracles I’ve done show that I have power that only God has.] I assure you that whoever believes in me will do the works that I do. They will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father. [And I will then give you my power to do on earth, too.] I will do whatever you ask for in my name, so that the Father can be glorified in the Son. When you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.”

Do you see what Jesus says? When we ask in Jesus’ name, the Father is glorified. We pray in Jesus’ name because that means we trust in His wisdom, rely on His power, trust in His outcome, all because we can trust in His identity. And then God is glorified, we have joy, and we are transformed.

**PP#8:** “In Jesus’ name I pray.”

“Salvation can be found in no one else. Throughout the whole world, no other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved.” -Acts 4:12

Some years ago I was part of an inner faith discussion. Then, at the end, the leader wanted to demonstrate how we could all get along, how we share so much in common. So, he suggested that we all pray together. But then he asked that we all pray to God, and in God’s name, rather than any other particular name for God.

Now, I value inner faith dialogue. I see people of other faiths as God’s children. But I also believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior. So I raised my difficulty, explaining that as a Christian, I pray in the name of Jesus. That caused quite a stir. I looked to be stubborn and ungracious.

Now, I don’t *have* to pray in Jesus’ name. I pray in God’s name, too. I also pray in the name of the Holy Spirit. But in this case, there was an important issue at stake. Not praying there in Jesus’ name would mean that I would be purposefully choosing to not lift up Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

I respected all the people there. But we also needed to respect our differences, too. Watering down our faiths to the level of no division is not true to Jesus’ identity, or mine. I was unable to pray with them. I will never give up praying in Jesus’ name.

Praying in Jesus name, you see, is also a radical, offensive, and stubborn stance on our part. One time, when Peter was dragged in front of the Jewish officials, he was told to just pray in God’s name, and not use Jesus. But Peter said he must pray in Jesus’ name, after all, because “Salvation can be found in no one else. Throughout the whole world, no other name has been given among humans through which we must be saved.”

Praying in Jesus’ name is what makes Christians distinct, different. It is core to our faith. Jesus taught us to pray to our Heavenly Father, but as followers of Jesus, we must never budge from

praying in Jesus' name. For it is through that name alone by which we are saved. Prayer, not in Jesus' name, is pointless. I challenge you, begin to add "In Jesus' name I pray" to the end of all your prayers. Without it, your prayers will not change you or your life!

**PP#9: Amen!**

So, it's time for getting the last word. And usually, the last word in our prayers is, what? [Amen.] Yes! Amen! It's a powerful word, *because* when we say it, we are saying that we really and truly mean what we've said. "Dear God, please help. Take control." And then, saying "amen" is like hitting the "send" button in your email or texts. It means you commit to it, and mean, what you've just said.

**PP#10: Amen!**

"So be it." "Truth." "Certainty." "I affirm this."

"Amen" is an ancient Hebrew word, first recorded in the Jewish Scriptures. It means "truth" or "certainty." When people say it, they are saying, "What I have said is true," or "I personally attest this is so."

In the Old Testament, it's used in two different ways. The first is at *the beginning* of when someone speaks. It's a way of affirming what someone else has just said. Someone says, "This year the crops are abundant and the harvest looks good." I can begin by saying, "Amen, Yes, this is certainly true, and my own fields are heavy with the best crop in years."

**PP#11: Amen!**

Old Testament

At the beginning: Affirming what the previous person just said.

At the end: Affirming what the speaker has just said.

The other way it's used in the Old Testament is when it comes *at the end* of what someone says. It's like saying, "This is true, believe me!" Or "I'm telling the truth, I swear it!" Or "I really, really mean this from the bottom of my heart!"

It's a verbal signature, a way of saying that you put your whole being behind what you just said. Saying "amen" says, "I'm just not saying this. I really mean it. This is my will, and I stand behind it."

That's why it's customary, when someone else is praying out loud, that the listeners repeat the "amen" at the end. It's a way for us to say, "Yes, this is my prayer, too."

**PP#12: Amen!**

Old Testament

At the beginning: Affirming what the previous person just said.

At the end: Affirming what the speaker has just said.

New Testament

Jesus uses it at the beginning, but NOT after someone else has spoken!

Jesus is introducing His own authority and truth!

One thing I want you to know. In the New Testament, Jesus shockingly uses “amen” in a new way. He often begins what He is going to say with the word, “amen.” It’s new, because Jesus is doing this when no one else has spoken first, and there is nothing to affirm. He uses it in a new way that shows He is declaring truth by His own authority.

In many of our Bibles, it’s translated, “Verily, verily, I say unto you,” or “Truly, I say to you.” Now, this is no big deal for us, because in English we can start by saying, “The truth is . . .” But in Judaism, one would never declare authority in oneself. You always base your authority in someone else, someone greater or wiser, or more learned.

But here comes Jesus, claiming His own authority. Clue: there is no greater authority! In fact, He goes so far as to say, “You may have heard it said from old, from others, from respected teachers and authorities, but *amen*, I say to you, this....”

Wow...this caused a stir. People said, “Jesus does not speak with the authority like others speak, but He speaks with His own authority.” He says *amen* when others haven’t spoken first!

For us, “amen” comes at the end, and only after we pray in Jesus name. We mean it. We put our whole selves behind it. But it is not our authority, or someone else smarter or more important. It is in Jesus’ name that we claim the authority.

**PP#13: Amen!**

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said, ‘Amen,’ and praised the Lord.” 1 Chronicles 16:36

Deep in the Old Testament, there is a description of God’s people gathering in God’s presence, and praying. David had just brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. There is a huge worship service. David led the prayers by saying a psalm. And look how it all ended.

David prayed, saying things like, “Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make His deeds known to all people!” “Give praise to God’s holy name! Let the hearts rejoice of all those seeking the Lord!” “Give thanks to the Lord because He is good, because His faithful love endures forever.” and finally, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.”

All the people were agreeing with this prayer. Their hearts were totally into it. They meant these words that David was praying. So, the people responded, erupted, by shouting back, “amen!” And they joined in praying prayers of praise and thanksgiving.

**PP#14: Holy Communion**

When receiving the elements,  
respond by saying, “Amen.”

We’re doing to have Holy Communion, when we celebrate that our God came to save us, that His very presence is here among us. We have our own ark, our communion table, here, with bread and juice. We hear the words of our God’s mighty deeds. We remember that all we pray, we pray in Jesus’ name, because He won our salvation for us, and gives it to us as a gift.

And as God’s people, gathered together here, we proclaim “amen,” and praise the Lord.

When it comes time for you to receive the elements of Holy Communion, when you’re handed the bread and juice, I want you to respond by saying, “amen!”

**PP#15:** Father, [Prayers.] Amen.  
You are good. [Prayers.] Amen.  
I need your help. [Prayers.] Amen.  
So do they. [Prayers.] Amen.  
Thank you. [Prayers.] Amen.  
In Jesus' name I pray. [Prayers.] Amen.

We're going to say "amen" a lot, actually. We're going to go to God in prayer. And let's pray this prayer we've learned, line by line. After each line, pause and pray in your heart. Then together we'll affirm our prayers by proclaiming "Amen!"

Let's pray. We begin with just the first word. "Father." ...

### **Holy Communion**

Great Thanksgiving  
Words of Institution  
Prayer for the Holy Spirit  
Receiving of the elements  
Offering  
Song: Solo piece

**Closing Song:** *The Lion and the Lamb* - Sanctify  
[Begin with *Star Wars* series preview]

### **Memory Verse:**

"I assure you that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. ... Ask and you will receive so that your joy will be complete." John 16:23-24

### **Announcements:**

St. Andrews Family Shelter Signup  
Next Sunday: Wear Star Wars Garb!!  
Potluck

**Benediction:** -Pastor David