

The Lord's Prayer

Hallowed be Thy Name

Part 4 - October 26, 2008

A pattern is beginning to emerge as Jesus describes the appropriate way to approach and address God in prayer. We shouldn't be so formal *or* so focused on our own desires.



Imagine how I'd feel if my daughter called and said: "Mr. Wersen, pick me up at work ... fix my flat tire, and bring money for McDonalds." [CLICK] Was that a request ... or a ransom notice?!

- God wants to be greeted and engaged!

Jesus is teaching us that *our desires* shouldn't be the focus of our prayers, even when we're praying for trials and tragedies. The foremost purpose of prayer isn't about getting *from* God, but about giving to God His rightful place in our lives.

And so, before we start making our own requests ...

- A. We should first, reaffirm our relationship with God as an intimate, loving "Daddy" or "Papa": "Our Father"
- B. And we should reinforce (or reestablish) our recognition of His fierce and majestic authority: "Who art in Heaven"
- C. And reverence His perfect purity: "hallowed be Thy name"

And that's where we are today. "Hallow" isn't a word we use much anymore. It means "holy". *Hallow'een* means *Holy Evening (the night before All Saints Day)*.

But Jesus doesn't say to pray, "Hallow is Thy name". He says to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name". That's slightly more complicated. It signifies an honoring of and devotion to His holiness.



If a fire engulfed your house, what possessions would you try to rescue as you hurried out? These are your "hallowed" belongings.

- Hallowed things are cherished and treasured.

We refer to Pearl Harbor as "*hallowed ground*" meaning that it was made sacred by sacrifice and is honored because of it.

So, Jesus isn't telling us to simply state the fact of God's holiness, but to honor and cherish and treasure Him for it.

That's why many translations say: "May Your name be kept holy"

This is a familiar theme in the Psalms:

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name ... - *Psalm 29:2 NIV*

... let us exalt his name together. - *Psalm 34:3 NIV*

Sing the glory of his name ... - *Psalm 66:2 NIV*

... holy and awesome is his name. - *Psalm 111:9 NIV*

Q: But what *is* His "name"? God? Father? God Father?! God has dozens of descriptive names in the Bible, but His three primary Old Testament names are:

- A. Elohim *[EL oh heem]* "Mighty Creator"
- B. Adonai *[ad oh NIGH]* "Master"
- C. Yahweh *[YAH weh]* "Covenant-keeping One"

But Jesus, like the Psalms, isn't referring to one of His titles. In scripture, "God's name" implies and refers to His person, His power, His authority, His character, and His reputation.

That's what Jesus meant when he declared to His detractors:

I have come in My Father's name ... - *John 5:43a NIV*

Jesus came to model God's character and heart and holiness.

Listen to this prayer at the end of Jesus' ministry:

O righteous Father ... I have known You; and these [disciples] have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them ... - *John 17:25-26a NAS*

Of all the things Christ accomplished, among the most crucial was putting a face on the *name* of God.



And now His children carry on His name. When we pray, "Hallowed be Thy name," we are both reverencing His person and pledging ourselves not to misrepresent His name.

When the waitress brings you well-done instead of medium-rare ... "hallowed by Thy name"?

When the driver in front of you goes five M.P.H. *under* the speed limit ...
“hallowed be Thy name”?



When you're alone and anonymous in the airport magazine shop, or cruising covertly through the internet ... “hallowed be Thy name”?

- We have a reputation to uphold: God's!

When a man or woman of character has a good reputation we say that they've made a “good name” for themselves.

Q: Do you know the difference between character and reputation?

- Character is what you are.
- Reputation is what others *think* you are.

God's character is perfect; His *reputation* ... not so much. That's because He's adopted *us* and given *us* His good name.

We are God's *children* – God's *people* - and He's left us in charge of hallowing His name, whether at the gym, in the office, on vacation, or at your son's little league game.

Q: What's it gonna be? “Hallowed be my anger” ... “Hallowed be my lust” ... “Hallowed be my greed” ... or, “Hallowed be Thy name!”

In Jesus' day, the Jews so magnified and revered the name (Yahweh) that they wouldn't even speak it for fear that they might malign it, misuse it, or misrepresent it.



When Jewish scholars copied scripture, they used a new pen to write God's name and broke it after. And they wouldn't even print all of the letters; just the consonants: YHWH

- How careful are you to hallow His name?

The third commandment says, “You shall not take the *name* of the Lord your God in vain,” Or as the NIV translates it:

You shall not **misuse** the **name** of the Lord your God ... - *Deuteronomy 5:11 NIV*

Our culture uses the name “God” to represent God's fullness. And it's very common to hear it degraded and defiled in common cursing and coarse jesting and crude exclamations.

Q: Do you misuse His name this way?



I always cringe when people flippantly say “Oh my god!” Not because *I’m* offended ... or even that *God* is, but:

- Using His name carelessly “un-hallows” it.

It tarnishes and common-izes God’s name, which actually makes us less capable of cherishing and honoring Him. It does the *opposite* of worship.

- Worship magnifies His name; misuse diminishes it!

Something happens when we take the time to magnify His majesty and hallow His holiness when we approach Him in prayer. All of a sudden I’m not the center of the universe ... He is ... again ... as it should be.

Q: Remember Isaiah’s reaction when he *saw* the Lord exalted?

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King ... - *Isaiah 6:5 NIV*

In the presence of His purity, Isaiah became intensely aware of his need for cleansing, and the contamination of his culture.



It’s only as we routinely, *privately*, praise His holiness (and absolute separateness from sin) that we begin to recognize in ourselves that which is unpleasing to Him.

- If it’s not pleasing to Him, it’s poison to us.



The British Humanist Assoc. is running 60 ads on London buses which read: "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life".

But there’s a flaw in their logic: truly enjoying life without hallowing God is a contradiction.

There is a God. And He has designed us for Himself. Therefore, our hearts can find no lasting peace until we come to Him.

- To *not* worship Him is to live in conflict with *ourselves*!

The hallowing of His name (as opposed to the glorification of our own), is the highest created purpose for all mankind.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us but to **your name** be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness. - *Psalms 115:1 NIV*