



The Lord's Prayer

Part 3 – “Holy Is His Name”

Matthew 6:9-13

Holy and awesome is his name!

Psalm 111:9c

The very first petition of the Lord's Prayer is “hallowed be your name.” Or, to put it another way, “Lord, may your name – that is You – be recognized throughout the world as holy.” To hallow something is to treat it as holy, that is, as something set apart and uniquely precious. In the Bible there is a correspondence between persons and their names. In the same way God teaches us in his word to see a close connection between his name and his essence.

That is why the Bible so often calls the name of the Lord

holy or for his name to be glorified. To pray for God's name to be treated as holy is to pray for God himself to be seen and treated as holy.

Before we make any personal petitions for our own well-being, the Lord directs us to set our perspective on things eternal. Specifically, we are directed to establish our priorities in view of the great and blessed vocation of showing forth God as holy throughout the world. Certainly we do not make God holy. His very essence is holiness. But we are to proclaim him as holy. Likewise, we are to demonstrate by our very lives our conviction that God is holy and give public witness to that fact.

As we learned earlier in this series of messages, the Lord's Prayer is not to be seen as the sole form of Christian prayer. Many times our prayers come quickly and spontaneously as the needs and griefs of this fallen world press in upon us. But even then, though we may not form the words “hallowed be your name,” the concern they express is to linger in our hearts. By calling us to pray, “hallowed be your name,” the Lord invites us into the *rightest* thing in all the universe.

Main Idea: It is the great joy and responsibility of Christians to pray for and labor toward the world-wide praise of God.

Two Key Questions:

Matthew 6:9 – “...hallowed be your name.”

1. What is meant by God's name?

- Though not thought of in these terms so much today, in the days of the Patriarchs, prophets, and apostles there was a correspondence between one's name and one's self. As John Stott writes, “The name stands for the person who bears it, for his character and activity.” Of course one name cannot fully disclose the enormity and perfections of God. And that is why the Scriptures reveal various names and titles attached to God. So, to speak of God's name is to speak of God as he is in himself.

2. What is meant by “hallowed”?

- To “hallow” something is to set it apart as uniquely precious. In this sense we can hallow a family heirloom, a photograph, a person, or even a memory. In those cases, the things are not holy in themselves but are treated that way by the one who treasures them. In contrast, God is holy in himself. Holiness belongs to his nature; his essence. Therefore, it is right and appropriate for all people everywhere to acknowledge and respond to God as holy; to treat him as holy. When Jesus called us to pray for God's name to be hallowed he was calling us to pray for the simple acknowledgement of the fact that God is holy. To pray for God's name to be hallowed is to pray that all humanity would render acceptable worship to God.

Theology in Application:

How God's people hallow God's name...

1. Worship

Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! (Psalm 115:1)

For you have exalted above all things your name and your word (Psalm 138:2).

Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name (Psalm 96:8).

- The first and most obvious way that God's people hallow his name is through worship. When the church gathers for worship we do so to direct all glory to God. The church's worship is to be a public witness to the holiness of God.
- We worship God for his redemptive purposes accomplished through the dying and rising of Jesus. "Salvation, first to last, is of the Lord, and the hallowing of God's name requires us to acknowledge this, and to praise and adore him for the whole of it" (J.I. Packer, Growing in Christ, 173).

2. Reverence

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. (Exodus 20:7)

Holy and awesome ['terrible'] is his name! (Psalm 111:9c)

- Worship and reverence are closely related though not synonymous. Reverence has to do with how we treat God's name. Our treatment of God's name is reflective of our attitude toward him. Treating the name of the Lord carelessly reveals a lack of reverence for God himself.

3. Obedience

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:12)

- We hallow God's name; we treat him as holy when our lives grow in obedience to him. God-glorifying lives lead to the hallowing of God's name.

4. Joy

Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice! (1 Chronicles 16:10)

For our heart is glad in him because we trust in his holy name. (Psalm 33:21)

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name. (Psalm 97:12)

- "God's chief end, purposed in all that he does, is his glory (and what higher end could he have?), and he has so made us that we find our own deepest fulfillment and highest joy in hallowing his name by praise, submission, and service. God is no sadist, and the principle of our creation is that, believe it or not...our duty, interest and delight completely coincide" (J.I. Packer, Growing in Christ, 174).

5. Witness

And my holy name I will make known in the midst of my people Israel, and I will not let my holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. (Ezekiel 39:7)

Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise. (Psalm 106:47)

- God has never been a local or tribal deity. He is God the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. It is fitting, therefore, to pray that all the earth should praise him; that his name be hallowed in all creation. When we gather for public worship, proclaim the gospel, share Christ with a neighbor, and send missionaries around the world we are functioning as God's chosen means to gather from every nation and tribe those who will praise his holy name.