

HALLOWED BE THY NAME
Matthew 6:9
The Lord's Prayer – Week 3
By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Did you know that prayer is good for your health? Scientific studies point to several medical benefits of prayer:
 - i. Improves attention and planning.
 - ii. Reduces depression and anxiety.
 - iii. Decreases sleepiness.
 - iv. Protects the brain from cognitive decline.
 - v. Reduces feelings of stress.
 - vi. Lowers cholesterol levels.
 - vii. Improves sleep.
 - viii. Decreases headaches.
 - ix. Relaxes muscles.
 - x. Increases life span.
 - xi. (Source: Rick Warren, *The Daniel Plan*.)
2. Prayer has many benefits, so in this sermon series we are learning how to pray more effectively by studying the Lord's Prayer.
3. Let's begin by quoting it together: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."
4. The Lord's Prayer is essential for two big reasons.
 - i. First, to pray effectively, you must have a correct view of God (Heb 11:6). The Lord's Prayer teaches us that by leading us to address God as "Our Father which art in heaven." He is our Father, so He loves us and wants to hear from us. And He is in heaven, which means He is almighty God and can do anything. "Our Father" means no problem is too small for God. "In heaven" means no problem is too big for God.
 - ii. Second, to pray effectively, you have pray according to God's will (1 Jn 5:14). How do we know what God's will is? The Lord's Prayer tells us exactly what to pray so that we pray according to God's will. It is the prayer that never fails; the prayer that always works.
5. The Lord's Prayer is divided into three parts:
 - i. The preface: Our Father which art in heaven.
 - ii. The petitions: Six in number.

- iii. The conclusion: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.
- 6. So far we have studied the preface. Today we will start looking at the petitions.
- 7. One time a mother asked her daughter, "What is God's name?" She replied, "Howard." "Who?" "Howard," the girl said with confidence. The mom asked, "How do you know His name is Howard?" "Because. Our Father, which art in heaven, Howard be Thy name."
- 8. God's name is not Howard. But the first petition in the Lord's Prayer is "Hallowed be thy name." Let's take a look at it means by asking a number of questions.
- 9. By the way, this is the most important of all the petitions, so it is vital that you understand what it means.

II. FIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FIRST PETITION

1. Is this a petition or a declaration?

- i. **Matthew 6:9 (KJV)** "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
- ii. Is this saying, "Our Father, your name is hallowed"? or is it a request, "May your name be hallowed?"
- iii. This is a request. A petition. In fact, it is the most important petition of all, which is why it comes first.
- iv. **R.C. Sproul** wrote, "I can't emphasize too much how important it is that we grasp that this line of the Lord's Prayer is not just a part of the address but a petition... Jesus is not saying, 'Father, Your name is holy,' but, 'Father, may Your name be hallowed.' That is, He is teaching us to ask that God's name would be regarded as sacred, that it would be treated with reverence, and that it would be seen as holy." (The Prayer of the Lord, p. 31.)
- v. So, "Hallowed be thy name" is a request. It is crucial that we ask for it, and that we ask for it first.

2. What is meant by God's name?

- i. **Matthew 6:9 (KJV)** "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
- ii. What is meant by God's name? In the Bible, God's name refers to two things:
 - 1. God Himself.
 - a. It refers to God, and His character, and all God revealed Himself to be.
 - b. God doesn't just have one name. In the Scripture, He revealed many names for Himself, because each name reveals something about His character, His nature, His personality. God's name refers to God Himself.

- c. **A.W. Pink** "The name of God stands for God Himself, calling to the mind of the believer all that He is... the Divine name sets before us all that God has revealed to us concerning Himself."
 - d. The following verses illustrate that God's name refers to God Himself.
 - e. **Psalm 20:1** "May the LORD answer you in a day of trouble; may the name of Jacob's God protect you."
 - i. God's name doesn't actually save; God does. God's name refers to God.
 - f. **Proverbs 18:10** "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are protected."
 - i. The righteous aren't merely running to God's name for protection, but to what God's name represents, which is God Himself.
2. God's reputation.
- a. **Proverbs 22:1** "A good name is to be chosen over great wealth; favor is better than silver and gold."
 - i. "Name" in this verse refers to your reputation. In the same way, God's name refers to His reputation.
 - iii. So, when we pray, "Hallowed by Thy name," what we mean is...
 - 1. May You be Hallowed.
 - 2. May Your reputation be Hallowed.

3. What does the word hallow mean?

- i. **Matthew 6:9 (KJV)** "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
- ii. The word Hallow (Greek, hagiazo) comes from the Greek word that means holy (hagios). It means to set apart for sacred use. It means to make something holy, or consider something holy, or exhibit something as holy, or to set it apart as something special.
- iii. When we pray, "Hallowed be Thy name," we are praying, "May your name be kept holy; may Your name be set apart as something special; may Your name be treated as holy."
- iv. An interesting example can be found in the Old Testament. The Israelites were traveling through the wilderness and there was no water, and the people grumbled against Moses and Aaron. So, God told Moses to speak to the rock, and it would yield water. But Moses didn't speak to the rock, he took his staff and struck the rock twice. As a result, God punished Moses by not allowing him to enter the promised land. That story is told in numbers 20. Years later when the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, God reminded Moses of this and said, "You can't enter the Promised Land, because back at the waters of Meribah, you failed to treat

me as holy in their presence (Dt 32:51). The Septuagint uses the word “hagiozo.” By disobeying God in front of the people, Moses failed to hallow God; He failed to treat God as holy, as special.

- v. So, the word “hallow” means to keep something holy, or set it apart as holy, or to set it apart as something special.

4. What is the meaning of the petition, “Hallowed be Thy name”?

- i. **Matthew 6:9 (KJV)** “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”
- ii. I think the most helpful explanation of the meaning of this petition is found in the **Westminster Larger Catechism**, a Protestant document written in 1647. “Question 190: What do we pray for in the first petition? Answer: In the first petition (which is, Hallowed be thy name), acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, works, and: Whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed: that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and: Whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and, by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.”

- iii. Accordingly, the first petition can be broken down into **FOUR REQUESTS**:
 - 1. **“Hallowed be thy Name” is a request for God to be highly esteemed.**
 - a. “... we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly esteem him...”
 - b. To “esteem” means “to set a high value on: regard highly and prize accordingly (Merriam-Webster).”
 - c. The first petition is that everyone would see how awesome God is and treat Him accordingly – with the love, reverence, adoration, worship, and obedience that He deserves.
 - d. **Al Mohler** writes, "By asking that the name of God be 'hallowed,' Jesus is asking God to so move and act in the world that people value his glory, esteem his holiness, and treasure his character above all else... that God's glory and holiness be known and loved as it deserves." (The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down, p. 64.)
 - e. What does this high esteem look like?
 - i. **Highly esteeming God means giving God preeminence in everything.**
 - 1. Several authors used the word preeminence, which means “having paramount rank, dignity,

or importance (Merriam-Webster).” In other words giving God preeminence in everything means giving God first place in our hearts. He is our first priority, and we love Him more and before anything or anyone else.

2. **A.W. Pink** wrote, "For us to hallow or sanctify His name means that we give God the supreme place, that we set Him above all else in our thoughts, affections, and lives."

ii. Highly esteeming God means offering God our heartfelt praise and gratitude.

1. **J.I. Packer** wrote that hallowing God’s name includes the following (*Praying the Lord’s Prayer*, p. 42):

- a. An attitude of gratitude for the goodness of creation (food, beauty, fun, sex, nature, etc.).
- b. Praising God for the goodness and greatness of his redemptive work.
- c. Worshiping God for ordering all things for his people's ultimate good.
- d. Not living in fear as if God has lost control of His world, or uncertainty.

iii. Highly esteeming God means giving God the highest reverence.

1. The dictionary (Merriam-Webster) defines reverence as “profound adoring awed respect).
2. **William Barclay** writes that 'to hallow' means 'to hold in reverence.' He adds, "If we, then, pray, 'Hallowed by Thy name', the prayer means, 'May you be given that unique reverence which your character and nature and personality, as you have revealed them to us, demand.'" (*The Lord's Prayer*, p. 41.)
3. So, this high esteem includes giving God the highest reverence, and that includes the way we speak. We should only speak of God and the things of God with the highest reverence.
4. **R.T. Kendall** writes, "I must be careful never to abuse or misuse the name of God (Ex 20:7)." We misuse God's name when we use it as a

curse word, when we claim to have God's backing in what we stand for, or when we claim that God told us to do something that He didn't tell us to do. (The Sermon on the Mount, p. 227.)

5. But there's more to reverence than simply not taking God's name in vain.
6. One commentator (August Tholuck) studied how scholars have applied this first petition, and he said it comes down to three options (William Barclay, *The Lord's Prayer*, p. 45):
 - a. Some scholars say the first petition means that God's name should never be profaned but always named with reverence. This is too narrow because it only refers to a man's words.
 - b. Some scholars say the first petition means God must be praised and glorified in words. This is too narrow because it is confined to a man praising God in church.
 - c. Some scholars say the first petition means God must be revered in the heart, and our outward walk and conversation should continually show this inward reverence, since from such a life others too are moved to reverence God. **William Barclay** concludes, "There is no doubt which is the correct interpretation. The reverence which is demanded cannot be confined to words; it cannot be confined to the liturgy and praises of the Church, however splendid they may be; it must be lived and demonstrated in every moment of our lives, both in the Church and in the real world."

iv. The prayer for God to be highly esteemed is also an evangelistic prayer.

1. The first petition is also a request for more and more lost people to be found so that they can come to know and worship God.
2. **“Hallowed be thy Name” is a request for God to be glorified in thought, word, and deed.**
 - a. “... and to glorify him in thought, word, and deed...”
 - b. What does it mean to glorify God? It means to make God look good; to advance God’s reputation; to help others see how awesome God is.
 - c. The first petition is that Christians everywhere would live in such a way that it would make God look good and advance God’s reputation and attract others to Him.
 - d. Al Mohler calls the church the steward of God’s name (*The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down*, p. 65). In other words, the church determines in large part what the world thinks about God. Therefore, this is a prayer for the church, for Christians everywhere, to grow in holiness so that we enhance God’s reputation.
 - e. Another way to think about glorifying God is with the word magnification. For God’s name to be hallowed, we must magnify His name. To magnify means to enlarge, to make something look bigger. **Warren Wiersbe** writes, “To most people, Jesus seems very far away, so we should be like telescopes that bring him closer so people can see him in us. Jesus seems very small and insignificant next to the media celebrities and sports heroes that people adore, but we should be like microscopes that make him larger and very important (On Earth as it is in Heaven, p. 54).”
 - f. To glorify God means that your life attracts others to God.
 - g. **William Barclay** adds, "The name of God can only be hallowed when every action of our life is a witness to our faith in him, and when we continuously bring credit to the name we bear... And, if the Christian is just as likely to collapse under sorrow, if his life is just as frustrated and unsatisfied as the life of the non-Christian, if he is just as worried and anxious, just as nervous and restless, just as guilty of petty dishonesty, of self-seeking, of measuring everything by material values as the man who makes no profession of Christianity, then quite clearly no one will want Christianity because the obvious conclusion is that it makes no difference anyway."

3. "Hallowed be thy Name" is a request for whatever is dishonorable to God to be removed.

- a. "... that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and: Whatsoever is dishonorable to him...."
- b. In the first petition, we are not merely praying for something, but against something. We are not just praying for more of something, but for less of something. Not just for something to start, but for something to cease.
- c. We are praying for the elimination, the removal, of everything that might dishonor God. The catechism mentions five things:
 - i. Atheism. Unbelief.
 - ii. Ignorance. Of God's truth.
 - iii. Idolatry. The worship of creation rather than the Creator.
 - iv. Profaneness. Taking God's name in vain. Any speech that implies irreverence towards God.
 - v. Whatever is dishonorable to Him. All forms of sin.

4. "Hallowed be thy Name" is a request that in everything, God would be glorified.

- a. That God would use everything that happens to advance His reputation; to draw people to Himself.

5. Why is this the first petition?

- i. Before we close, there is one more thing that must be pointed out about the first petition.
- ii. It is no accident that this is the first petition.
- iii. In fact, the Lord's Prayer has six petitions. The first three are for God's concerns, and the second three are for ours.
- iv. **Andrew Murray** wrote, "While we ordinarily bring our own needs to God in prayer before thinking of what belongs to God and His interests, the Master reverses the order. First Thy name, Thy Kingdom, Thy will; then give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us." (With Christ in the School of Prayer, p. 31.)
- v. Why is the hallowing of God's name the first petition?
- vi. Because hallowing God's name should be our top priority and ultimate desire. It should be the thing we desire most, and every other request that we have should be made subordinate to it.
- vii. In other words, hallowing God's name is the first petition because it should be our greatest desire.
- viii. As well, anything else we pray for must be subordinate to that request. So, if I pray for a new car, I only pray for a car and the kind of car that would

contribute to the hallowing of God's name. I only want God to answer my prayer if it will glorify Him.

- ix. **A.W. Pink** wrote, "Our primary duty in prayer is to disregard ourselves and to give God the preeminence in our thoughts, desires, and supplications. This petition comes first, for the glorifying of God's name is the ultimate end of all things. All other requests must be subordinate to this one and be in pursuance of it." (The Lord's Prayer, p. 17.)
- x. **Kevin DeYoung** writes, "When we pray in this way, we not only rightly acknowledge our place in the world -- God is at the center and we are not -- we also align ourselves with God's ultimate purposes... In all things, the end design in God's actions and plans is that His name would be glorified." (The Good News We Almost Forgot, p. 220.)
- xi. J.I. Packer writes that the first lesson of the Lord's Prayer is that God matters infinitely more than we do. So 'thy' is the keyword of the opening three petitions. Hallowed by Thy name; Thy kingdom; Thy will. (*Praying the Lord's Prayer*, p. 41.)
- xii. The first petition teaches us that it is more important to seek God's face than to seek His hand. To seek His hand is to ask Him to do this or that, but to seek His face is to seek to know Him more, and to seek the advancement of His agenda. In other words, the first petition teaches us to be God-centered instead of self-centered.

III. CONCLUSION

1. The first petition of the Lord's Prayer reminds me of the Rick Warren's best-selling book, *The Purpose Driven Life*. The first sentence of the first chapter says, "It's not about you." God loves you. You are infinitely important to Him. But He is infinitely more important than you, and His desires, and His agenda is infinitely more important than ours. The hallowing of God's name is the first petition because it is more important than anything we could ask for ourselves.
2. When you pray, before rushing to ask for things, start with God's agenda. Pray sincerely, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."