

# The Lord's Prayer

## "Hallowed"

Matthew 6:9-14

Delivered at Central Baptist Church on May 15, 2022

### INTRODUCTION

- **(SHOW SLIDE 1)** *"Lord, teach us to pray."* That was the request of the first disciples and it has been the heart cry of Jesus' disciples ever since. For the past two weeks we have seen that Jesus answers that request, not by telling us to go and find our own way to pray. No, He gives us guidance and instruction. He blazes a trail for us to follow. He gives us the Lord's Prayer.
  - For 2000 years the great stress in the church has not been on hacking out your own trail of prayer but on learning what it means to walk the trail Jesus blazed for us.
    - So the question we are asking is, *"What does the Lord's Prayer teach us about how we are to pray?"*
  - Last week we saw that prayer begins not with requests, but with worship to *"Our Father in heaven."* We are invited to come directly to God, to approach him as a child to a father but we are always to do this with reverence and awe because He is *"the one in the heavens."*
- But after worship what comes next? What should be the first thing we pray about? What should be at the top of our list? Our need for a job? Our parent's health? A parking spot at the mall? Asking God to bless us? What is first?
  - Again, we are not left wandering through the jungle. Jesus marks out clearly where we should walk.
- Jesus says that the highest thing on our priority list is to pray, *"Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."* Yet, I must say that very rarely do I hear Christians making this the most important part of their prayers. In fact, in my experience this is most neglected part of the Lord's Prayer.
  - Perhaps it is simply because we do not know what it means. What is this awkward word, *"hallowed"*? Does it have to do with Halloween? And why make such a big deal about someone's *"name"*? Strange.
    - All this makes you feel like skipping over it to get to more important things, but we cannot escape the fact that since this prayer is *the* model for prayer and Jesus says this should be *the* most important thing we pray for.
- So, let's camp out on this and ask what does it mean and why is it so important?

### THREE IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS

- To understand what it means we first need to make **(SHOW SLIDE 2)** three brief **observations**. The first observation clears up something that Christians are always making a mistake out. I made this mistake for years. For a long time, I thought this line was an expression of worship to God, like saying, *"Father in heaven, we praise your*

**name as holy. We worship you as holy.** That's not wrong to pray, but that is not what is going on here.

- (SHOW SLIDE 3) **"Hallowed be your name" is not an expression of worship; it is a request.** We are asking God to do something; namely, to cause his name to be hallowed.
- Secondly, notice that the main thrust is not **"let us hallow your name"** though that is part of it. It is **"Father, you cause your name to be hallowed."** (SHOW SLIDE 4) This is a request for God to cause His own name to be hallowed.
  - Dale Bruner summarizes well, (SHOW SLIDE 5) **"We not only ask God to be God; we ask God to cause God to be God."**<sup>1</sup>
- Thirdly, and this is monumental in learning how to pray, (SHOW SLIDE 6) **Maturing in prayer means developing a deeper concern for God's glory that for our own needs.** Notice we do not begin praying for directly for ourselves. J.I. Packer puts it perfectly: (SHOW SLIDE 7) **"lesson one is to grasp that God matters infinitely more than we do."**<sup>2</sup>
  - Some years ago, this revealed to me my great need to mature in prayer because my prayers did not begin like this. Most of my prayers, like a 2-year old's requests, were very self-absorbed. Requests were all about my life. It is fine for a 2-year-old to be self-absorbed, but not a 20-year-old. Just as we mature in life, we need to mature in prayer.
    - (SHOW TITLE SLIDE 8) What changed everything was grasping that for Jesus, the master of prayer, the most important thing in all the universe that we can request, is for the Father's name to be hallowed.
- So with those three observations, let's look at the request itself and ask two questions: First, what do we mean by God's **"name"**? Second, what does this word **"hallowed"** mean?

## THE MEANING OF THE WORDS "NAME" AND "HALLOWED"

- So first then, (SHOW SLIDE 9) what does it mean to pray about God's name?
  - John Stott reminds us that **"the name of God is not a combination of the letters G,O,D."**<sup>3</sup> **"God"** is His title. (SHOW SLIDE 10) **God's name refers to who God is and what he is like.** That is why God revealed many names for himself, each one showing us a bit more what He is like.
    - For instance, God revealed one of His names to be: **"Jehovah-shalom"** means **"The LORD is peace."** He is not a God who delights in war and bloodshed like other gods – His character is peace.
  - So when we refer to God's name we are speaking about who He is and what he is like.
- Secondly, (SHOW SLIDE 11) what does **"hallowed"** mean? (SHOW SLIDE 12) **To hallow comes from the word "holy," which means to set apart.** When we say God is holy we mean that He is completely set apart from everyone and everything.

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Christbook*, 299.

<sup>2</sup> JI Packer, *Growing in Christ*, 171.

<sup>3</sup> John Stott, *Christian Counterculture – The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, 147.

- Other synonyms are *“glorify”, “honour”, or “reverence.”*
- So, bring it all together. Jesus is teaching us that the first thing we are to do in prayer after approaching God as “our Father in heaven” is to ask him for something.
  - Our first and supreme request is that the Father would cause his own name to be hallowed. *“Father, glorify your name, cause your name to be set apart, cause who you are to be honoured.”*

### THE KEY TO UNLOCKING THIS REQUEST

- But here is the big question: why do we need to pray for the Father to make his name holy? The Bible teaches that God is already holy, that he is already full of glory. He cannot be more holy than He is, or more majestic and greater than He is. So, why should we pray that God’s name be hallowed when He is already holy?
  - John Stott helps again. **(SHOW SLIDE 13)** *“His name is already ‘holy’ in that it is separate from and exalted over every other name. But we pray that it may be hallowed, ‘treated as holy’, because we ardently desire that due honour may be given to it.”*<sup>4</sup>
    - That is why the words, *“on earth as it is in heaven”* apply to all three of the first requests. In heaven, God is hallowed; He is glorified, revered, and honoured. But on earth God’s name, God’s essence, God’s being, is not honoured or revered. God is not glorified. Therefore, this request is asking God to cause who he is to be hallowed on the earth as already is in heaven.
- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 14)** Now every Christian will affirm what we have just said. Why then do our prayers reflect so little of this when in Jesus’ mind the entire earth and universe is bound up in this request? If this is the most important request, why is not coming off the lips of Christians in every prayer?
  - I think a big part of that answer is that most Christians have simply not seen the big vision that lies behind this request; this vision defined Jesus, motivated Jesus, and guided every step he took. What is that vision?

### COKE AND PEPSI

- So, what is this vision that is behind this greatest of all requests? It has to do with this: (take out can of Coke). In 1886 a company came onto the market called, *“Coca-cola.”*
  - Coke is one of the best-known trademarks on the planet and is worth around \$265 billion. In the last five years Coke has spent \$20 billion in advertising.
    - Now why would Coke spend almost \$20 billion dollars on advertising? Answer: The goal of advertising is to convince the whole earth that Coke is the ultimate and best soft drink. If people are convinced, they will quench their thirst on an icy Coca-Cola.
- In a sense, this is *the* theme of the whole Bible. What I want to show you is that everything God has ever done in the history of the universe is to advertise the beauty, the glory, the greatness of who He is.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

- I want to show you that *the* theme of the universe is God’s passion to hallow His own name, to glorify His name. Let me walk you through the scriptures on this.

### THE GLORY OF GOD IN CREATION

- Go back in time in your mind to a time before there were stars, moons, planets, and earth. What was it that motivated God to create the universe? Why did he create hammerhead sharks with that bizarre shape? Why created crabs whose knees only enable them to walk sideways?
  - Why create the blue whale? The largest recorded blue whale is 33.5 meters. That is the height of an 11-story building. And then why create the fairy fly whose heart is .2 millimeters long. Why are flamingo’s pink? Why create black holes or blackberries?
- The Bible teaches that everything was created for one reason.
  - What does Psalm 19 say? **(SHOW SLIDE 15) The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.**
    - God created the heavens and the earth to show how great He is. From slugs to snails, birds to bobcats, atoms to archangels, they all exist for one reason – to advertise the great name of the infinitely glorious God.

### HUMAN BEINGS WERE CREATED TO BRING GLORY TO GOD

- This is also why God created human beings. Listen to Isaiah 43:6-7. **(SHOW SLIDE 16) bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, <sup>7</sup> everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.**
  - So, in the first place, God created everything to advertise himself but He did not leave it at that. In the second place God has caused, and will cause, all of history to advertise his greatness, to reveal to us who he is and what He is really like.

### THE EXODUS AND THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

- You remember He began by creating a nation for himself. Jeremiah 13:11 says he formed Israel to be a people **(SHOW SLIDE 17) that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise, and a glory.**
  - That nation was enslaved in Egypt until God sent Moses and the ten plagues against Pharaoh in order to force him to let the people go. Now have you ever stopped to ask, *“why did God sent 10 plagues instead of one cataclysmic plague? Why did God harden Pharaoh’s heart so that he would not let the people go dragging out the process?”*
- **(SHOW SLIDE 18)** <sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. **(SHOW SLIDE 19)** <sup>14</sup> For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. <sup>15</sup> For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth.

- God says he could have sent a plague so great it would have wiped them out but he did not. Why? **(SHOW SLIDE 20)** <sup>16</sup> **But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.**
  - God did all of this to gain for himself a worldwide reputation. To show the world who He is, and what He is like, to reveal his greatness and power.
- And we see this all through the OT. The chief thing that motivates God to act is a passion for the glory of his own name. Why does he free Israel from Babylon? It certainly is not because they are holy people who deserve it. Listen to Isaiah 48:11.
  - **(SHOW SLIDE 21)** **For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.**

### THE COLLOSAL PROBLEM

- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 22)** The greatest demonstration of God's passion for His glory is the cross. You see God faces a major problem. If God's fundamental allegiance is to the glory of his own name then he must oppose anything that seeks to defame his name. There is nothing in more opposition to God than sinners who turn their backs on God, worship other gods, and refuse to attribute to the worship that is due Him.
  - Yet God loves sinners. The question is then, ***"How can God remain just and uphold the glory of His name and also love sinners who are in opposition to the glory of His name?"***
- That is the point of the cross. You see the cross is not first of all about you. The cross is first of all about God repairing the damage done to his glory. At the cross God fully punishes sin and upholds his justice. But the glory of the cross is that instead of punishing us, God punishes Jesus in our place.
  - **(SHOW SLIDE 23)** **"He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him...the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."**<sup>5</sup>
    - So, God's glory is upheld. God is just and sinner get to go free further showing the glory of God in His love, mercy and grace.

### THE REST OF HISTORY

- Do you see it? Everything that God does, all of history is for one grand reason – to display the infinite glory, the great name, of the majestic and Almighty God.
  - God created the world to show forth his glory. God created a nation to be for his renown and praise and honour. He freed them from Egypt that the world might know that He is the Lord. He did not destroy them when they grumbled against him and worshipped other gods for the sake of his glory and his name.
    - God sent His only Son into this world to restore his damaged glory and ransom back blasphemous sinners to himself.
- And one day Jesus is coming back. Why?

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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 53:5-6

- II Thes 1:7-10 speaks of that future day (**SHOW SLIDE 24**) “. . . when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels <sup>8</sup> in flaming fire . . . when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed.
  - In that day Habakkuk 2:14 says that (**SHOW SLIDE 25**) For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.
- God is working all of history around to the great day when Jesus will return to be glorified among his people.
  - When people from every tribe nation and tongue will cry out in worship, (**SHOW SLIDE 26**) To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!
    - When as Philippians 2 says, (**SHOW SLIDE 27**) every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

#### PRAYING THIS IS TO JOIN GOD IN HIS PASSION

- After all this it should be no surprise why Jesus says this is the most important thing we should pray. So, when we pray this prayer we are joining God in His greatest passion. We are not asking God to do something that he is disinclined to do. We are praying that which is dearest to His heart and that which He is already at work doing.
  - As author Nicholas Ayo says, (**SHOW SLIDE 28**) **“We ask God to tend to God’s own cause and interest.”<sup>6</sup>**
  - Or as Bible scholar Dale Bruner writes, (**SHOW SLIDE 29**) **“Our main concern in life should be that God be treated as God.”<sup>7</sup>**
    - So that is the vision behind Jesus’ thinking. That is why Jesus taught us that this is the most important thing we can ask for.

#### HOW AND WHEN DO WE PRAY THIS?

- So let’s get practical now and ask, **“how and when do we pray this?”** (**SHOW SLIDE 30**) **First, pray “hallowed be your name” when you encounter anything that opposes God’s honour.**
  - When you see God ignored, when you hear people ridicule him, or when you just see all the ways people live in ways that dishonor him then pray, **“Father, your name is trampled underfoot, your name is not treated as holy, you are not revered in this city. Cause your name to be hallowed!”**
  - Or pray, **‘Father hallow your name by reconciling this marriage, by ending abortion, by bringing this wayward child home, by freeing me from this sin in my life, by igniting a love for prayer in your people’s hearts.’**
    - You see this is all about God. Let me ask you this question: if God answered every prayer that you have prayed over the last 30 days, would

<sup>6</sup> Nicholas Ayo, “The Lord’s Prayer, pg 36.

<sup>7</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, “The Christbook” pg 297.

anything change in *the* world or just in *your* own world? That is a good question to see if you need to mature in prayer. Jesus teaches us here that our supreme request would be to see God's name honoured wherever it is dishonoured. This is for our good and for his glory.

- **(SHOW SLIDE 31)** Second, pray ***“hallowed be your name”*** when you think of those who do not know Christ.
  - God's name can only be hallowed if people know of Him and his greatness. So pray something like, ***“Father, reveal yourself and the glory of Jesus to Jim. Father, if you reveal yourself and save Him, His new life will forever point to your mercy and grace and so you will be glorified. So, hallow your name by revealing yourself to Him.”***
- **(SHOW SLIDE 32)** Third, pray that His Church would hallow His name.
  - Pray something like this: ***“Father, your people, your church, represents you on earth. If your people are not strong and healthy they will not show your greatness to the world and you will not be glorified. So Father, because you love your name, so act in this church that we will be fully devoted to you, loving you with all our heart. Father, if you do this, your people will reflect your glory to the world and you will be glorified.”***
    - So pray for that God would cause His name to be hallowed here.
- **(SHOW SLIDE 33)** Fourth, pray that God would cause His name to be hallowed in your life.
  - If this is always your first request you will be forced to look at your own life. When you do you will see that you do not fulfill I Corinthians 10:31 – ***“Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”*** What should you do then when you are discouraged by how little you glorify God?
    - Come back to ***“our Father”***. Do not run away from God in discouragement. Confess your sin. Recall that through Christ you are a child of God. Then plead with God cause His name to be hallowed in your life.

## CONCLUSION

- **(SHOW TITLE SLIDE 34)** Let me conclude by asking you this question: does this request excite you and burn in your heart? Does your heart leap to cry out, ***“Yes Father, hallow your name on the earth!”***
  - I can think of no better test to see if you truly born again, that God has truly given you a new heart. You see there are many people who are outwardly religious but inwardly they are no different from anyone else.
    - The way you can determine if you truly are a Christian and not just a religious person is if your heart burns to see God treated properly in your own life and in the world, that you are grieved when he is not.
  - Only the child of God will ache to see their Father's name exalted and lifted up. To the world this request means nothing. To the child of God, it is everything.

- This week practice this line of the prayer by putting every event and every moment through it. Go ahead and stumble your way through learning how to pray it. Ask how every situation comes under this request.