

The Lord's Prayer

For the next month or so, we are going to be looking at the Lord's Prayer.

With Pastor Tak and his family joining us in the summer to serve alongside us in the area of evangelism, I have been praying... what would you have me preach on Lord... and the answer came to me on Monday. As I was praying, the Lord lead me to preach on prayer.

You see.. while Pastor Tak is with us, we are going to learn a LOT from him about outreach BUT one thing that God has personally been reminding me of as of late is the importance of prayer.. You see... we can learn lots of methodology, we can insist our friends come and persuade them with the expectation of good food and exercise together.. BUT at the end of the day, at the end of EVERY DAY... ask yourself... have I prayed for my friend? My neighbour? My co-worker? My brothers and sisters in Christ?

I was very encouraged on Tuesday - Sherry.. of all people.. SHERRY, texted me early in the morning and said I prayed for you! Not I WILL PRAY for you but I PRAYED for you!

Too many of us underestimate the important role of prayer in the unfolding plot of God's redemptive story.

To give you a snapshot from the Bible of just how PARAMOUNT prayer is in the Christian life.. I'll read you some quotes from Tim Keller's book on prayer....

"Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray, healed people with prayers, denounced the corruption of the temple worship (which, he said, should be a 'house of prayer'), and insisted that some demons could be cast out only through prayer. He prayed often and regularly with fervent cries and tears (Heb. 5:7), and sometimes all night. The Holy Spirit came upon him and anointed him as he was praying (Luke 3:21-22), and he was transfigured with the divine glory as he prayed (Luke 9:29). When he faced his greatest crisis, he did so with prayer. We hear him praying for his disciples and the church on the night before he died (John 17:1-26) and then petitioning God in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Finally, he died praying." (27)

"We know God will answer us when we call because one terrible day he did *not* answer Jesus when *he* called. . . . Jesus' prayers were given the rejection

that we sinners merit so that our prayers could have the reception that he merits.” (237 Keller, Prayer).

The only reason that our prayers are not rejected is because God the Father rejected the prayer of God the Son.. in order that we might approach the throne of God as sons and daughters.. Our prayers are heard... by God!!! But we do not pray nearly as much as we ought... and it could be said.. now this is going to be very blunt.. but your relationship with God can be measured by what you pray about and how you pray... if you are praying at all.. We like to say nowadays that Christianity is not a religion.. it is a personal relationship with God.. Well, prayer is the means by which you evidence that RELATIONSHIP is real and vibrant...

So it is hope that in the following weeks we will come to a deeper appreciation of prayer and ALSO become a more prayerful people and in that way we will cultivate a deeper relationship with God... a greater passion for His name.. and then out of that, we will do everything else. And just as a heads up. since we are going through the Lord's Prayer, I think it is only appropriate that we actually take the time to pray as well.. and so we aren't just going to LEARN about prayer... we are going pray together... in small groups after my sermon..

And so.. turn with me now in your Bibles to Matthew 6:9-13...

The Bible is by all standards.. the Greatest Story ever told...and within the greatest story.. we find the greatest prayer.. and by the way.. if you haven't done so already.. take the next few weeks to memorize the Lord's prayer... It's like the true north that gives direction not our life...

A compass for our souls that helps us navigate through life's twist and turns.. I cannot tell you how many times I have prayed the Lord's prayer to re-orient my life when I felt lost...

ANYWAYS.. Matthew 6:9-13.. Why don't we all stand up and read it aloud together.

By the way... before we begin.. this is not a proclamation. Its not like we are praying .. YAHOO! HIP HIP HOORAY! God your kingdom has come and is coming.. Your name is holy and your will is being done!

IT is a REQUEST... Its what you call in the Greek a third person imperative.. which is best translated in the english as a soft-command if you will... That's why we translate it ... let your kingdom come.. let your will be done... it's like when Peter preached on Pentecost.. Let all of you be baptized... for the forgiveness of sins that you may receive the Holy Spirit.. That is a command... but it is a soft command ... So we are in a sense giving a soft command... a request of sorts.. to God.. saying.. cause your kingdom to come.. cause your will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.. which ultimately finds its purpose in the return of Jesus Christ... But more on that next week.. For now.. lets just look at the first verse...

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Our FATHER in heaven.. who can pray our Father? Some people will say - well everyone in the world is intended here.. Since God is the creator of all and therefore, the father of all... But we know from John 8:42 that Jesus said to the Jewish leaders... if God were your Father, you would love me... which means.. If you loved me, God would be your Father... so the fatherhood that Jesus has in mind when He says this is the relationship we have with Jesus.. God is our Father if we LOVE Jesus.

Look it. JESUS died for this! He took on our sins and bore the wrath of God so that God would no longer be for us an ANGRY judge... that we should wait in fearful expectation of judgement.. but rather that God would be OUR FATHER... we in the church have grown so familiar with calling God as our father.. but just let that hit you... GOD - our FATHER? All WRATH has been removed and ALL that remains is dirty sinners like you and me being clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus CHRIST?

So that everything that happens to us is either the loving discipline that a father shows to His children (Hebrews 12:7) or the kind tenderness of the a father towards his children... And if God is OUR FATHER... that means we are SONS and DAUGHTERS... of the King of Kings...

J. I. Packer - one of the world's leading theologians... In fact.. if you are doing an ESV or an NIV bible in your hand... you are indebted, in part - to this man for its EXCELLENT translation.. AND he also lives in Vancouver... Anyways. Packer says that Christian maturity can be measured by how much one APPRECIATES the fatherhood of God..

THAT is what we have been saved to! The CROSS RECONCILES us the loving embrace of God the Father. In other words, if you do NOT stand in awe and wonder at the fact that you have God as your Father, you are not truly growing in Christian maturity.

...HALLOWED be your name... HALLOWED.. this is a strange word - an OLD word... What does it mean... well.. this word is an attempt to transliterate the Greek word -hagiazó, which means to make holy - or to SANCTIFY... SO... Our Father in heaven.. make holy your name? Sanctify your name? What does that mean? Isn't God ALREADY perfectly holy? Sanctification is what WE go through to become more holy so what does it mean to MAKE holy God's name?

It means... LET your NAME be TREATED as HOLY!

But what does that mean? Our Father in Heaven... let Your name be treated as holy?

It means at least 4 things.. and 4 passages in the Old Testament shed light into this... Props to John Piper for this insight...

First is from Numbers 20...

1. Numbers 20:12

Numbers 20:12. During the wilderness wandering of the people of Israel, there was a time when they had no water. And the people grumbled against Moses. But God tells Moses to speak to the rock and to bring forth water for the people. But Moses' spirit is bitter, and he speaks rashly and strikes the rock twice with his rod. And God rebukes Moses by saying in Numbers 20:12..

"Because you did not believe in me, to sanctify me (or: hallow me) in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

Notice the words: "You did not believe in me to sanctify (or: hallow) me." The first way to treat God as holy is to trust what he says. Instead of a peaceful confidence in the power of God to respond to a mere word, Moses was bitter and impulsive. God is not HALLOWED when we do not have a spirit of settled confidence and peace in his word.

John said, "He who does not believe God has made him a liar" (1 John 5:10). When you make somebody a liar, you profane that person's name. This is the opposite of treating the person as holy. Not trusting God is the exact opposite of hallowing his name. The first thing we mean, then, when we pray for God to cause his name to be hallowed is that He would cause people to believe him. "Hallowed be thy name" means IN GOD we TRUST. Let the nations put their TRUST in YOU!

2. Isaiah 8:12–13

A second text that explains what it means to hallow the name of God is Isaiah 8:12–13. God speaks to Isaiah and warns him not to be like the people of Israel. "Do not call conspiracy all that this people call conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, him you shall regard as holy (or: hallow); let him be your fear, let him be your dread."

How do you hallow God according to this text? You hallow him by not fearing what men fear but fearing God. Very practically it means that when God commands you to take your stand for him in a hostile situation, you fear displeasing God more than you fear the hostility of man.

Don't fear losing your house or your wife or your children or your bank account or your job! Instead, fear saying no to God. He will compensate you for all your worldly losses when you obey him. But when you set yourself to oppose his will, no one can compensate for the eternal consequences of that.

So when we pray, "Hallowed be thy name," we mean, "Father, let your name be feared." Or, more fully, "Father, cause people to have such a high view of you that it is a much more dreadful thing to lose your approval than to lose anything the world can offer."

3. Leviticus 22:31–32

The third text that sheds light on what it means to hallow God's name is Leviticus 22:31–32 which writes... you shall keep my commandments and do them: I am the Lord. And you shall not profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the people of Israel; I am the Lord who sanctifies you."

In other words.. we hallow the name of God when we keep his commandments. We profane the name of God when we break his commandments. So when we pray, "Father, let your name be hallowed," we mean, "Father, cause your commandments to be obeyed." "Hallowed be thy name" means "Obeyed be your commandments."

4. Leviticus 10:3

A final text to illustrate the meaning of hallowing God's name is Leviticus 10:3.

"Moses said to Aaron, 'This is what the Lord has said, I will show myself holy among those who are near me, and before all the people I will be glorified.'"

This text seems to say that God's showing himself holy and his being glorified are virtually the same thing. So when we pray, "Hallowed be thy name," we also mean.. "Glorified be thy name."

To tie together all 4 texts... what we mean when we pray the first petition in the Lord's prayer is... "Lord, cause your name to be hallowed!" Cause your Name to be believed in... cause your displeasure to be feared, cause your commandments to be obeyed, and cause yourself to be glorified. You hallow the name of God when you trust him, fear him, obey him, and glorify him.

Now.. I am going to end my sermon here today because I want to spend some time as a church praying for one another... Next week, we will look at how the rest of the Lord's prayer flows out of the first petition - Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name... But for today... as you pray outloud for one another. spend 2-3 minutes briefly sharing the things on your heart and what you would like prayer for.. And PRAY for each other.. not just today but throughout the week. But more than anything.. Pray the Lord's prayer for them. Pray what you have learned today...

Father.. may your name be treated as HOLY in Sherry's life... Father... may your name be treated as Holy in Hyun's life. may Sun continue to trust in you throughout all of life's difficulties.. May Jun learn to fear Your name more than He fears man. May we obey your commandments! Whether we eat or drink or do anything.. may we do it ALL for the glory of God! HALLOWED be your name, Father!

And so.. I'm not forcing anyone to do this.. but if you would form groups of 2-3.. and take the next 5 minutes or so to pray for one another. And I'll wrap our time up by praying a benediction.

