

Untitled (33)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 03 March 2021

Preacher: Dan Jones

[0:00] Are you ready? Hit it. Thank you, sir. But it is good to be with you all. And this is just a very sweet and warm fellowship. As we were discussing earlier, some of you know this, but Albany is real different from Syracuse. And it's been a while since we've really been in a fellowship with the church like that, isn't it, Debbie?

We haven't. Our church has been just kind of fractured this past year, and it's unfortunate. But I won't say more about that except to say it's good for us to be with you. And let's pray before we look at God's word.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the church, the church that Jesus loved and purchased with his own blood, gave himself for the church.

Lord Jesus, this is about you. It's not about us. This is not to please us, to entertain us, to satisfy us. It's about the glory of God. It's about the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's about his purposes in this world. And may we do our part to fulfill your purpose, Lord Jesus, to spread your gospel in our in our Jerusalem and our Judea into the uttermost parts of this earth.

[1:22] So be with us tonight. Open our hearts to your word. In Christ's name we pray. Amen. God bless you. Amen. Of course, every Sunday, I assume you do this. Do Anglicans say the Lord's Prayer in church every Sunday?

Yep. Good. Good. We say that every Sunday. And it starts out, as you know, Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. And what does that mean? You ever think about what the Lord's Prayer means?

What did he mean? Hallowed be thy name? I think a clearer way to say that would be to say, Father, let your name be honored.

Let your name be honored. Now, name means reputation. Reputation. That's what that word means.

As in, Proverbs says, a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. Your name, a reputation. Now, how often do you think about God's reputation?

[2:28] I bet you don't think about it that much. God's reputation. But we should think about it. According to Jesus, apparently, in the prayer that he gave us, God's reputation is the basis of prayer.

We start out saying, Father, let your name, let your reputation be held in high esteem, be honored. Let's look at an example in the Bible that illustrates this.

In Exodus chapter 32, you remember, Moses is up on the mountain having a great time with God. The people of Israel are down at the bottom of the mountain and they get impatient, wondering what is going on up there with Moses.

Maybe God vaporized him or something. Maybe he will never see him again. Who knows? So they decided we need new leadership. And so at Aaron's instigation, they made a golden calf, as you know.

And really to our amazement, they said this. These are your gods, O Israel, that brought you up out of the land of Egypt. They made this golden calf. They said, hey, this is your gods that did all these things for you.

[3:42] And instead of saying, wait, stop, that doesn't make sense. People just went with it. And don't know where they got the crazy idea like that. I suppose probably it was lingering Egyptian influence.

They had been in Egypt for 400 years. And so they were pretty Egyptianized. And so that may be where the calf thing came from. I don't know. But wherever it came from, it was bad.

It was not a good thing. Well, meanwhile, up on the mountain, God is, Moses is talking to God and God says, hey, Moses, I need to tell you something. Those people down there have corrupted themselves.

He tells Moses about the apostasy going on down in the valley. Listen to what God says to Moses. He says, I have seen this people and behold, it is a stiff-necked people.

Now, therefore, let me alone that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them in order that I may make a great nation of you. Now, I don't know about you, but when I read that, the words, let me alone are striking.

[4:55] It was like God was saying, look, Moses, don't pray for these people. Just let me wipe them out. That's what God was saying to him. Just stand aside, Moses, and I will get rid of them.

But however you interpret that, I think it's obvious here that God works through us. He's talking to Moses and he's saying to Moses, hey, Moses, let me alone.

So he's kind of negotiating, you might say, discussing it with him. God works through prayer. God works through people. God works through intermediaries, both angelic and human.

Well, what does Moses say? What is his response? You would think, hey, God, you're going to make a great nation out of me instead of the Israelites will be the Mosesites. That sounds great.

You would think that would be his natural response.

But Moses is not tempted by that. Listen to what Moses said to God. He says, oh, Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power?

[6:06] And with a mighty hand. Why should the Egyptians say with evil intent? What did he bring them out? Did he bring them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth?

Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants to whom you swore by your own self and said to them, I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and all this land that I have promised.

This I will give to your offspring and they shall inherit it forever. And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

Now, do you understand what the ground of Moses' prayer was? Look at what he did not say.

Moses did not say, Lord, they can't help it. I mean, they've spent 400 years in Egypt. You really can't blame them for making this idol because it's all they know.

[7:19] He didn't say that, did he? He didn't say this either. Lord, I understand why you're mad. The people who made this idol, especially my big brother who should know better.

But God, there's a lot of little kids down there. You can't wipe them out. That just wouldn't be fair. He didn't say that, did he? He said, Lord, if you wipe out these people, the Egyptians will say that you are cruel.

And the only reason that you delivered them out of Egypt is so you could kill them out in the desert. That's what the Egyptians will say if you do this thing. God, you don't want the Egyptians to say that about you.

Because that's not who you are. You see, Moses appealed to God. That's what prayer is, appealing. Counselor, you know something about appeals, right?

Lawyers make appeals and have appeals courts. Well, prayer is an appeal to God. The ground of his appeal was his concern for God's reputation.

[8:35] He said, God, you can't do this because if you do, here's what your enemies will say about you. You see, Moses wanted the name of God to be honored.

He wanted the name of God to be honored, not only among the Israelites, but among the heathen. And isn't that what we want? We talked some upstairs about outreach.

We want God's name to be honored in our culture today, which is not being honored. We want that. We want God's reputation to be honored.

It's not about us. You know, one of the big problems with the church in America today is we think it's about us. We want the right kind of entertainment. We want music that pleases us.

You know, I'm a musician and I have been a music director in churches, part of my ministry in my lifetime. You may know this already, but, you know, I think in some churches I could get up and preach rank heresy and it would be less controversial than if I sang a song that somebody didn't like.

[9:42] Music. I know there's something about music that people just go ballistic about it. If everybody would just like the kind of music I like, the world would be a better place.

I don't know where that came from. It's certainly not in the notes, but it's not about us. It's not about my preferences. It's not about me being pleased with the way things are.

The church of Jesus Christ was purchased with his blood. You were bought with a price. You are not your own.

It's about Jesus. It's about his kingdom. It's not about us. You know, I've said many times. And, you know, it's nice coming to preach to some people who never heard me preach before because you haven't heard me say the same things a hundred times like some churches where I was at a number of years have heard me.

But I've said many times that I believe this is my opinion that if anybody and everybody, if they ever could really once know what God is really like, who he really is, who he really is.

[11:01] If they could really see this amazing, unfailing love that brought God's son to the cross, if they could see that, anybody that saw that would become a Christian would follow Jesus Christ.

If they really knew what God was like. But the problem is people don't know who God really is. And it hasn't that been the devil's modus operandi from the very beginning to make us think God is not really on our side.

What did he say to Eve? He said, God knows, you see, that if you eat this fruit, you'll be like him. And he doesn't want any competition.

He kind of implied that, you know, God got in his position by eating this fruit and he didn't want you to have it because he didn't want anybody else to be like him. See, he lied about God's motives, about God's will for Adam and Eve, about the nature of God.

He's a liar. And he wants to besmirch the reputation of God. And sadly, even in church people and some Christians, Satan has been successful in deceiving us about what God is really like about his nature.

[12:14] But you see, since we are called by his name. We are the ones who affect God's reputation in this world by our lives.

There's another story in the Old Testament that I'm sure you're also familiar with. After King David was firmly established on the throne of Israel, apparently, like so many of us do, he got tired of fighting.

You know, fighting gets old. And so he decided to stay home. He just sent his generals out. You guys take these people aren't so tough. You can take them. I'm going to stay home. And so, you know what happened?

He got up one night, couldn't sleep. And he sees a beautiful woman named Bathsheba, who was married, by the way. And David lusted after her. And because he was the king, and when you're the king, you can do pretty much whatever you want to.

He brought her into his bed. And then when she turned up pregnant to cover it up, he tried to arrange it so people would think that the child was her husband's.

[13:27] He brought Uriah home from the battle. Uriah was fighting his battles out there, risking his life for King David. He brought him home and tried to get him to go home and spend the night at home. So, you know, people say, well, that was Uriah's.

But as you know, Uriah wouldn't do that. He was too loyal to his fellow soldiers who were out in the field, sleeping under the stars. He says, I'm not going to go home and sleep with my wife when my brethren are out there.

And so finally, David said, okay. And he sent a note to Joab, the general, and said, fix it where Uriah gets killed. And that's what happened. And then he took Bathsheba into his harem.

But God was not pleased, of course, with that. And so God sent a mighty prophet, a fearless man of God named Nathan, to rebuke David for his sin.

And to his credit, David repented. He could have said, somebody chop Nathan's head off. I don't want to listen to this stuff. But David was a man after God's own heart. And he repented of his sin.

[14:25] He didn't justify himself. Or he didn't use his kingly power to get Nathan out of his face. But the damage was done. And Nathan said to King David, listen to this.

By this deed, you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. You see, when the word got out, as it certainly did, the pagan nations around, especially some of those nations that David had subdued, they were still around.

I'm sure they said, look at this great king of Israel. This guy who said the Lord put him on the throne. Talks about the law of God and sings praises to God.

Look at this guy, what he's done. I mean, we don't even do stuff like that. David hurt the reputation of God, of Yahweh.

The God who had indeed delivered him from all his enemies and put him on the throne of Israel. What about us?

[15:36] We say this prayer, as we said, let your name. Oh, God, let your name be honored. So how are we, you and I here in this room tonight? How are we either honoring or not honoring God's reputation?

Paul said to the Corinthians, he said, you are our epistle, our letter. Written in our hearts, known and read by all men.

Clearly, Paul said, you are an epistle of Christ. You're a message writ large to the world about Jesus Christ. What kind of letter of recommendation are we for God?

Do people look at us and say, I want to, I want what they've got. I want to be like these people. I'm going to turn to God because I've seen these Christians at Holy Trinity. I want to be like them. Or do they look at us and say, I don't want to get involved with those people. Years ago, I was pastor of a church in Western Washington State.

[16:47] Now, this church had had some squabbles for sure. They had had some turmoil in the church and so forth. While I was there, I think it was a locksmith we were having to tell you something about this church and what went on.

Some people left, among whom were the lady that worked at the office every day. And I had to have the locks changed on the church because this one person who no longer worked at the office, I found that she was sneaking around in there and looking through some of the records after she wasn't working there anymore.

So anyway, there was a locksmith there and I was talking to this guy. He was a nice fellow. And so, you know, naturally he's there at the church. I'm the preacher. We kind of talked about some spiritual things.

I said, you know, you would be more than welcome. Apparently he didn't have a church home. I said, you would be more than welcome to worship with us here. You know what he said? He knew about the church, the reputation of the church.

He said, I've got enough problems without coming to church here. I was sad. That was so, so sad. You see, he wasn't drawn to the church.

[18:00] He was repelled by it. He wasn't a bitter atheist. He was not generally not disposed toward Christianity or religion. It's just that that particular fellowship, he knew there had been trouble there and fighting there.

And he said, I don't need that in my life. You know, the Bible gives us a picture of what the church should be like.

After Pentecost, the primitive church there in Jerusalem made quite an impact on the people there in the city. I want you to listen to what Luke writes just after the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. I think I'm sure most of you know who they were and why they died, but I won't go into it. It says, now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem.

[19:11] And more than ever, believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women. Remember also that that was from chapter five.

I messed up something here. Here we go. That was chapter five. Back at the end of chapter two, the very last verse of chapter two says, And the Lord added to the church daily.

Did you catch that word? Daily. Those who were being saved. You see, because of the evident presence of the power of God, the holiness of God, the fear of God, nobody dared to just associate himself with the church.

That was the wholesome fear of God. And I imagine that that fear of God greatly increased after the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira.

If you remember how they died, lied to the Holy Spirit, fell over dead. That would make me want to not lie to the Holy Spirit. I don't know about you. I have known people in my life who have joined a church.

[20:24] It's usually a big church. Because maybe, and if you're in this business, I'm not knocking. Maybe they were in real estate, let's say. You make a lot of contacts in a big church.

I, when I was a teenager, I went to a church that, when I first started going there, they had 11 or 1200 every Sunday morning in Sunday school. And that's a good place to meet people, right? If you're in business. But that didn't happen in the Jerusalem church. People were afraid to do that. And yet, it says the people on the outside, the non-Christians, held them in high esteem. They had respect for the church. The unbelievers admired them, even though they were afraid to join up with them. And even with this, the Lord added to the church.

You know, let me be honest with you. Sometimes I'm too honest, maybe. I don't know. But I've been in the ministry a long time. And people have expectations.

[21:34] And sometimes when people, when they bring in a minister, they think he's going to fix everything. And he's going to just, he's just going to bring multitudes of new people into the church and do all these kind of things.

But, you know, the Lord adds to the church. The Lord adds to the church. Those who get saved. The Lord does that.

The church in Jerusalem greatly enhanced God's reputation among all the people inside and outside the church.

What do you think the average non-church goer thinks about the church in America today? We don't even have to talk about it. I think most people probably, especially the famous millennials, the younger generation.

And, you know, I was listening to a sermon on the way over here on my phone. We were playing it through the car speakers. And my wife and I were listening. And this minister was talking to young preachers.

[22:37] And at first I thought, you know, yeah, that's, no, that's not me. I'm not. I used to be. I can remember when I was young and I would hear about, I want to speak to the young people. I would think, yeah, okay, this is the message for me. But I'm not young anymore, you know.

But the young people nowadays. And it's funny to be old and to remember when you were young. And I'm the youngest in the family.

I'm the baby. That's what they call me. Danny's the baby. When I was a kid, even when I was like 15 or 16, Danny's the baby. And on top of that, my birthday is December the 27th.

And I started first grade when I was five. And so for half the year, every year that I was in school, I was younger than, you know, when I was, you know, seven, they were all eight. When I was eight, they were all nine.

And so, you know, I was, I just always felt like I'm a baby. But now I'm 65 years old. Holy cow. Well, how'd that happen? You know, I guess I'm not a baby anymore. I don't know. I still feel like one.

[23:33] So it's funny to think about the younger generation from the standpoint of somebody who's old. But I think it's safe to say that probably among, you know, people under 30, there's very little regard or esteem for the church at all.

If they even think about us. I mean, the church in Jerusalem could not be ignored. They could not be ignored. The power of God was there. People were being healed and delivered.

And people in large numbers were being saved. Their lives transformed and becoming part of the church. They were a force to be reckoned with. And as I was sharing with the group that we met with earlier upstairs, one of my, one of the verses in the Bible that just always grabs me is in Acts chapter 17 when the apostles came to Thessalonica in Greece.

And these words did not come from, from, from their PR firm. They didn't hire somebody to come up with this slogan. They didn't make it up themselves. The enemies of the church said this. These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also.

I don't think we're turning the world upside down right now. I don't think the world even cares about us. So what are we going to do about it?

[24:58] Peter said this. For it is time for judgment. To begin at the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

You know, we just, you might've heard, we just had an election and many Christians, I'll tell you the YouTube profits. I wouldn't, I'm glad I'm not a YouTube profit because a lot of them don't, are not looking very good right now.

But everybody seems to think that the answer is, is, is, is better, you know, political organization or we need to change. And a lot of stuff needs, don't get me wrong.

A lot of stuff needs fixing in that sphere and the election laws and all that kind of stuff. But I'm here to tell you that the answer for the United States of America is a return to the Lord Jesus Christ. And it starts, it starts up here in the pulpits. You need to pray for whoever ends up being your priest, your ministry here. We need to pray for the people who stand before the people of God, because that's where the revival needs to start.

[26 : 11] There needs to be repentance from the top down, in the pulpit and in the pews. The answer for America is not in, in, in some political realignment.

The answer is repentance in the church of Jesus Christ. It's easy for us to sit inside of our churches and think about those filthy sinners, those wicked, perverted, wicked heathen out there doing all that stuff out on the street.

Oh, aren't they terrible? And, well, we're in here, we're safe and sound inside the walls of Ecclesia and, and it's all good in here. But, boy, those people out there, they're terrible. That's wrong to talk like that, folks.

Jesus said, you're the salt of the earth. And in his day, salt was a preservative. They didn't have deep freezers back then. They would rub salt into the meat to preserve it from rotting.

He said, you're the salt of the earth. You're here to keep the, the culture, the society from decaying and rotting. But he said, if the salt loses its saltiness, it's good for nothing but to be thrown out and stepped on by people on the street.

[27 : 24] You know, when we complain about, oh, they won't let us have a crash on the city lawn anymore. We're being persecuted because we, you know, that they won't let us do these things that we used to kind of do.

And we act like we're all so poor. Woe is us. Maybe it's because the salt has lost its savor. And no wonder people are treading and walking over the church because it's good for nothing.

So that's kind of a negative message tonight on Lent there, Father Dan. You see, Jesus is calling us back to himself.

He's calling us back to his heart that we would once again have a passion. You know, the early church, it talks about they were of one accord. Have you ever been in a church business meeting? Was everybody in total agreement? You know, I've been in some real doozies. But, you know, they may not have agreed on everything, but they were of one passion.

[28 : 23] The things all the early Christians, the thing they all had in common was a passion for the Lord Jesus Christ. They loved God and they gave their lives to God.

They were willing to die for Jesus Christ. That's what we need today in the church. We don't need some new programs. We don't need some new gimmicks. We don't need pony rides for the kids or any of that stuff.

We need to get back. We need to, as the church at Ephesus there in Revelation chapter 2, you have left your first love. Repent and do the first works.

Go back to Jesus and go back. You remember when you first became a Christian, you were in love with Jesus. He had washed your sins away. I can remember when I walked the aisle, when I was 13 years old, in the Christian Missionary Alliance Church for the first time while I was brought up in church.

But for the first time in my life, I realized now I'm going to heaven. My sins have been forgiven. I'm a child of God. Maybe we need to go back to that first love, to that first passion for the one who loved us and gave himself for us.

[29 : 29] Can we bow for prayer? Lord Jesus, thank you tonight that you have loved us with an everlasting love. And I thank you that you have not given up on your church.

You're still working among us, O God. Work in us, Lord. Work in the folks here at Holy Trinity, I pray. Stir us up. Give us a passion for the Lord Jesus Christ that we might be willing to give up our lives, to give up our future, our will, our everything, to bring it to the foot of the cross.

And to say, Jesus, would you restore us to be the church that Jesus envisioned when he said, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

We need a healing, O God, in the church today, in this land. Lord, it needs to start in the pulpits and in the pews. O God, in the name of Jesus, heal our church, your church, Lord Jesus, that we once again can be a burning and a shining light in this dark world, that people that need Jesus, people

that are lost, that are hopeless, that don't think there's an answer for them out there, that they would come to Christ.

Through our witness, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. God bless you. Do I have to stay here?