

Hallowed be Your Name

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Date: 23 December 2007

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[0 : 00] Let us turn again to the chapter we read in Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 6. Matthew chapter 6, and we'll read at verse 9.

Pray then like this, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Particularly these words, hallowed be your name. A question is asked in the Bible, and it still is being asked right to this very day.

And it's a question that will be asked of every single person on the day of judgment. What do you think of Christ? What think you of Christ?

That's a question that the Lord is asking us this morning. It's a question that he's asking all peoples of this world. And it's a question that all created humanity will one day have to answer.

Because everything is ultimately centered around Christ. What do you think of Christ? Now, in the day that we're living, it's quite interesting how there is an increasing intolerance of this time of year and anything to do with Christ.

[1 : 27] Now, as we're very well aware, the Bible doesn't tell us exactly when, at what time the Lord Jesus Christ was born. But it is interesting that this, as people tell us, aggressive atheism, which is certainly on the rise and becoming more and more rampant in our nation, it is turning in very much at this time of year to try and remove anything to do with Christ.

So we can't help but ask the question, what do we think about Christ? And I want us to take this a little further back today, just to think about who the Lord is and what our attitude to the Lord should be.

Because, ultimately, the thing is, we are all, every single one, we're going to have to appear before the Lord Jesus Christ. And everybody, every single person is going to have to confess that Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

We're told that in Philippians. Every knee will bow. Everyone. There won't be any person ever who has ever been, who has ever lived, but will not confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

And that's quite an awesome thought, when you think of the anger and the hatred and the violence towards the name Jesus, even in this world today.

[3 : 01] Now, of course, what a person's attitude and what a person's thought is towards God does not ultimately change who God is. Because nobody can take away from the essential glory of God, of who he is himself.

His glory remains unchanged and affected by us. But at the same time, we are required, as we live out our days here in this world, to glorify God.

That's why we were made. That is the chief purpose of our existence here. That's why you're here and why I'm here. It is to glorify God.

Not to glorify ourselves. It is not to project ourselves onto the stage of life. The ultimate aim of our life is not to make a name for ourselves.

It is to exalt and glorify the name of God. And that is what we find here at the very start of this prayer, the Lord's Prayer.

[4 : 09] You remember how Jesus taught his disciples how to pray. This isn't the Lord's own prayer. We often find the Lord in prayer.

And for instance, there is a prayer recorded for us in John 17, where we find Jesus himself in prayer. He sets out for us here in this particular prayer a model for us to pray.

And this isn't Jesus' own prayer, because he says, forgive us our debts. Jesus had no debts to forgive, in need of forgiveness. Because he, of course, was God of very God.

So, at the forefront of our thinking, despite all it will be, at the forefront of our thinking, as we reflect and as we anticipate, and amongst all the well-wishing, amongst all the gifts, all the presents, all the

things that take up our life at this particular time of year, all the family get-togethers, and all these things, let us always, always remember that God's name has to be revered, God's name has to be hallowed, and God's name has to be honoured.

And so we find that the very first petition in the Lord's Prayer is, Hallowed be your name. Now, some people think that the first petition is, Your kingdom come.

[5 : 38] Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. That's a first petition. No, it's not. If it was saying, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed is your name, if it was simply making a statement.

But it's, Hallowed be your name. Which is very clearly, this is making a petition. It is making a request. And this shows us that when we begin our prayer, we begin with the Lord, not with ourselves.

And that's one of the great problems often in life. And I'm sure that you and I have been guilty of that often. That when we go to the Lord in prayer, we are very often so taken up with what we're praying about, that we forget that ultimately our prayer is in order that we may come to know the Lord all the more.

It is an opportunity of meeting with God. Of talking to God. It is an opportunity for us of giving thanks to God and of praising His name.

Of course the Lord is concerned with our needs, with our worries. Of course He is. And He wants us to come. He wants us to come to Him with everything. Not just what we may term the spiritual things, but also the temporal things.

[7 : 03] In everything. By prayer, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. In everything. But the fact is that as we come to God, we must begin with Him.

And I believe that's one of the reasons that sometimes when we pray, we don't really gain any great peace or any great satisfaction from our prayer.

Because we come away from prayer and we say, you know, I don't really feel that I've made any headway. I don't know if the Lord really heard me. But part of the problem is that we have been so taken up with ourselves that we've forgotten who it is we're really praying to.

We're just, as it were, talking about how things are. I'm not beginning with the Lord. And we were, if you study scripture, you will find that many of the great prayers that are given to us, even although the people who were praying were going through really difficult times, we find that there's this tremendous sense of awe and reverence in their heart before they approach God.

this sense of the greatness and the majesty of God as they come to him in prayer. I suppose an example of the type of thing we're talking about is Job.

[8 : 27] Now Job is, you read the book of Job, you find that Job is somebody who keeps, he's complaining and pouring out his heart before God. Now, we're not being critical of Job.

Job. Because what Job went through would unhinge the reason of most people. The devastation, the heartache, the pain, the loss, it really was quite extraordinary.

And we're not being critical of Job. Because I know that if I was in Job's shoes, I don't even, I can't even begin to imagine how I would be praying.

So I'm not, we're not being critical of Job. But as you read through the book of Job, the less, one of them, there's many lessons, one of the lessons that we're being brought to see is, God is dealing with Job.

And Job is complaining and Job is pouring out his heart and Job is filled with bewilderment and agony and pain. And it's like us, after he spent himself and he's got nothing left, it's like then that the Lord comes in and he says to Job, hold on Job, I want you to look up and above and beyond just what you're able to see.

[9 : 44] I know it's been painful and I know the world that you've known has caved in round about you, but I want you to look beyond that. And that's what the Lord enabled Job to do.

And Job began to focus upon the greatness, the transcendent glory of God. And he began to see the otherness of God and we find that Job says, behold, he says, I am vile, what shall I answer you?

I will lay my hand over my mouth. It's like Job says, it's like he's saying, sorry Lord, I didn't realize, I hadn't come to understand who you really were.

That's what Job was saying. Now of course we know that the Lord blessed the latter end of Job greater more so than even the former, than its former.

But the fact is, Job came to learn this lesson. And it's a lesson that sometimes the Lord is showing us as well. And that is one of the reasons why sometimes we can engage in prayer and go through prayer and we don't feel we've achieved anything or gone anywhere.

[10:57] We feel that our prayer is just hitting brass. And we're saying that heavens, they're just brass and iron. We're not getting anywhere. Sometimes after a while the Lord is saying, what about me?

What about me? You're not seeking to exalt me, to glorify me. I'm your God. So there are times we need to stop and to think, and that's what this prayer is all about.

The start of the prayer is helping us to focus upon who God is. Before we begin to dwell on the other things, our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Now of course, the name of God is, it's not the name of God as such, and that you say, well it's God, that's his name. The name stands for all that he is. His character, his passion, his work, all these things are caught up in it.

And so the petition is, hallowed be thy name. That we are to hallow, we are to treat us holy, the name of God.

[12:12] And the holiness of God is something which separates God. In fact, that is the meaning of holiness. Of course, sometimes we use the word holy in respect of righteousness or purity.

And sometimes we'll speak of a particular Christian, somebody who's very Christ-centered or very Christ-like. And we'll say, that person, he's really holy or she's really holy.

Where it's somebody whose character is one that there is this, as it were, it's so marked by a righteous walk. But holy means separate.

It means different. And that's what characterizes God, his holiness. His separateness. As has been said, his otherness, his distinctiveness.

And you know, this word holy, I suppose, I think it's probably I'm not altogether sure, but I think. It's like how many words find their way into our everyday language.

[13:22] For instance, holidays. A holiday or a holy day. And you can see right away, holidays are different. They are days that are different to all the other days.

Because your holiday is separate from all the other days of your week or your month or your year. They are days that are set aside, days that are different. Days that you do different things.

So you can see how sometimes words work their way into our everyday language. And it gives you this idea of something that is separate, something that is different.

But you know, that's what God does when he touches a person's life and heart. he makes them holy.

He separates them. When a person is converted, that's what happens. Now, when we use the word holy with regard to purity and to righteousness, maybe today you feel very impure and you feel very unrighteous within yourself.

[14:30] But when you look at the word holy regarding separate and different and other, that is exactly what God has done. He has touched your heart and he has separated you to himself.

So that you no longer belong to yourself, but you belong to the Lord. The Lord makes that very clear in the Bible. You are not your own because you have been bought with a price.

So we now become servants of God. Every person who is born again is born to serve the Lord. And so we catch a little of this, the distinctiveness of this idea of holy.

So the Lord takes what is common and unclean and he separates it to himself. I suppose in a sense when you can catch a little idea, it's at the Lord's Supper.

Where we take what is common and ordinary and things from everyday use, some bread and some wine, and they are separated for a time for holy use. That's maybe giving a little idea of this.

[15:42] But you know when God really touches us, when something of the holiness of God touches our life, it has a profound effect upon us.

If you're here today as a believer, you can think back to a time or times that were different. You can remember an experience or experiences where it's as if God was the only person who was there with you.

It may have been in church, it may have been in your own bed, it may have been out on the moor, it may have been in a fellowship. I don't know where, but you can remember times or a time when something of the majesty and the holiness and the awe of God affected and touched your soul.

You'll always remember it. We find instances in the Bible often of where God, as it were, touches a soul where the holiness of God affects people.

say for instance Jacob, after he had his dream. And you'll often find people immediately afterwards or in the aftermath they build an altar or they worship God like Jacob did and he lifted the stone that he had used for a pillar and he poured out oil and he made vows to God because he had been affected and touched by.

[17 : 13] And then of course Jacob just went on back into the ordinary. But there were these moments where something of the awe and the majesty and the holiness of God as it were interrupts our life and affects us.

And that is something that we want and we pray for. And the holiness of God really is a strange thing because it has contrasts within it.

Because on the one hand it draws us. In the one hand it is drawing us to himself and yet on the other hand there is a sense of awe and a sense of fear.

And if you know something of that you will know exactly what I am saying. And Jesus himself was somebody who was holy.

He was holy in the sense of the separateness and he was holy in the sense of the righteousness. And we find that amazing picture of both the drawing and the attracting on the one hand and the other hand of being pushed away.

[18 : 27] That many people found Jesus the most attractive the most wonderful person in this world. And there were other people who couldn't wait to get rid of him.

The sense of the holy. God's name be your name.

And just in passing may I say something here. Hallowed be your name. The name of God. God's name is important to himself.

It is so important to himself that when he made laws for his nation. Remember God set up a nation for himself. And he made ten particular laws for the government of that nation.

And of course there were many other laws that flowed out from these. But there were ten principal laws for the government of the nation that he had made for himself. And the third law that God made was this very thing where he was hallowing the name of God.

[19 : 42] Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Where does that stand in our nation's law today?

Do we really have any sense of how important God sees his own name? That before he said anything about killing or stealing he said honour hallow my name.

Do not take my name in vain. And today God's name trips off people's mouth and tongue without any thought.

What does the church think of God's name? because before the kingdom will come the next petition thy kingdom come where the Lord is saying my people must hallow my name before my kingdom will come.

That's the way it works. So we need to get to the place and to the point where we are seeking to exalt, to magnify God's name.

[20 : 52] And so we do so as we come and worship today. That's one of the things we're doing.

We're seeking to hallow God's name, to magnify his name, to raise up his name, to exalt his name.

That's what you do when you magnify. When you've got magnifying glasses, you bring something nearer, you can see it more clearly. That's what we're seeking to do. And that's what we must seek to do with our lives.

To seek to hallow God's name. To make it the name above every other name. And you know, part of the solemn thing is that we can be guilty of the very reverse.

Paul, writing it in Romans, he tells the church there, to the Jews, that they were guilty for causing God's name to be blasphemed amongst the Gentiles because of you.

Oh, my friends, let us ask the Lord to keep us from that. But that we will seek to honour and magnify the name of God in our lives and everything that we do.

[22 : 07] Is that your prayer? Is it my prayer today? That God's name will be exalted. Ask the Lord for the fear of God to be in your heart.

I believe that's one of the things that we really have lost sight of, the fear of God. We need to have that, to understand it.

Not the slavish fear, but the sense of reverence, the sense of awe, the sense of the holy, the sense of the divine.

And ask that this Lord would be a Lord that we would come to know for our own life, for our own soul. And the marvelous and wonderful thing is that this altogether holy God of exceeding great righteousness and purity has met with sinners like you and me, with all our defilement, with all our sin, with all our iniquity.

and that's what God has done in Christ. Have you come today to discover and to know in your own heart and your own soul the forgiveness of sin as is found in and through the Lord Jesus Christ?

[23 : 29] Let us pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.