

Honour His Name

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[0 : 00] Matthew chapter 6, around page 978 of the Church Bibles. Matthew chapter 6, at verse 9, where Jesus has told us how not to pray.

! And before we come into then how to pray. Do not pray, he said, like the hypocrites, for they love you. To stand and pray in the synagogues, that was verse 5.

And then in verse 7, and when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard with their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask. Pray then like this, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

So we're turning back to the Lord's Prayer. It's a prayer we're familiar with. We say these words mostly each Lord's Day. We repeat the Lord's Prayer.

[1 : 11] We hear young and old alike repeating these words. But what do they mean to us? What do these words actually mean to us?

They're not just words to be repeated, but they're really giving us a pattern to follow in prayer.

Prayer is much more than just using these words that we have in the Lord's Prayer.

We can expand on these words, but there's a pattern in it that reminds us that we are looking and see that God, if you like, ranks first.

He comes first in this prayer. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. And then we see that ourselves, we rank second as you move further down to verse 11.

Give us this day our daily bread. And so it goes on. There's six petitions. Three looking to God and then three looking to ourselves.

[2 : 14] And so we're thinking about honoring his name. Giving glory to his name in this stanza, hallowed be your name.

There's no end to the number of ways that we are told how we can improve ourselves. Be it our looks, our wealth, our lifestyles.

There's offers being thrown at us all the time on all of these things. Offers saying we can be better than we are. And you just look at society today, whether it's in schools or even in the workplace or just in our general day-to-day lives.

There's this kind of idea of being self-confident. Of being able to manage by ourselves. To be strong in ourselves. To be bold.

To be courageous. And all of these things. And in many ways it sounds very positive. And it's no doubt it's something that we need. Even as a Christian we need to be bold.

[3 : 20] We're taught that. To be bold. To be courageous. To be all of these things. But it's how it's taught. And where that courage, where that boldness comes from. And what its focus is on that's important.

You look at the kind of quotes that you find out there about how to be a better person. For example, Michael Jordan. Famous basketball player.

He once said this. Everybody has talent. But ability takes hard work. And there's truth in that.

There's no doubt about that. Everybody has talent. But it takes hard work.

Madonna. Famous singer. No matter who you are. No matter what you did. No matter where you've come from. You can always change. Become a better version of yourself.

Again, you can see there's positives in that. But it's where the focus is. And sadly, you hear it in preaching. When you look at the likes of prosperity ministry.

[4 : 25] Someone like Joel Osteen. It can all sound very positive. It can sound very focused on the scriptures. But at the heart of it is self. For example, he said, be happy where you are.

But what does that mean? And what's behind it all? It's very much a focus on self. So all these ideas, they have good intentions in many ways.

But when we're focusing on self, that then takes our focus away from God. And as we come away from God, that leads us down the wrong paths.

And so in prayer, and in the Lord's prayer as we're looking at it, it is really bringing our focus back on him. Our dependence on him.

If we are going to change, it has to be through him. If we are going to be a better people, it has to be through him. Because that has to be the source of all of these things.

[5 : 27] No matter how positive they may seem, the source has to come from God. One of the best quotes you'll have about bettering yourself, if you like, is found in the scriptures.

In John chapter 3, verse 30. Where John the Baptist says, He must increase, but I must decrease. If you want to be better, if you want to be all of these positive things, he must increase.

God must increase. I must decrease. And that's what Jesus is teaching here in the Lord's Prayer. There's a focus away from self towards God.

Our Father. That's not looking to ourselves. That's lifting our eyes to him. And that's what the first three parts of this prayer are about.

Centered on God. And this evening we're looking at, Hallowed be your name. C.S. Lewis once said, A proud man is always looking down on things and people.

[6 : 37] And of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you. And that's how we are to pray. Humbly.

Coming before him. Not looking down on things and people, but looking up. Looking down on ourselves, perhaps bringing ourselves down. We must decrease.

And he must increase. So, Hallowed be your name. What does Hallowed mean? How do you do this?

What's in his name? These are the things that we're going to think about this evening. Beginning with that word, Hallowed. Hallowed be your name. We say this in prayer often.

How many times have you repeated these words? Hallowed be your name. Have you ever paused and just thought, what does it actually mean? And what does it mean to you personally?

[7 : 39] What difference should this make in your life? If this is how we are to pray, what difference does this make? Hallowed be your name. God is a priority in our prayers at all times.

Because if our focus is not on him and through him, then our prayers are not lifted up to what is above, to our Father in heaven. And here he is saying, Hallowed be your name.

What does that word, Hallowed, mean? It's maybe not a word we're overly familiar with, but we do hear it in some different contexts.

For example, in a traditional way, you can sometimes hear that word, Hallowed. We must protect the Hallowed traditions of our community.

There's that sense of something that's important, something that's precious. Hallowed traditions. It's used metaphorically. You often hear it about football teams or teams that play in stadiums.

[8 : 43] The teams stepped onto the Hallowed turf of the stadium. The Hallowed turf, that pitch, it's almost like it's sacred. It's special.

There's something about it. But as we're looking at it here, when it's saying, Hallowed be your name, it means so much more. That traditional sense, or in that metaphorical sense, there's that sacred or that revered kind of nature to it.

And there's that with God, that sacred, that revered. But there's so much more. Because here it's really meaning to sanctify your name.

That your name be holy. That we give that holy nature to God. But we cannot give it to him, because he is already holy.

So it's not something that is missing in God, that we are to seek to pray for him, that he will have. He is already holy. So what does it mean as we are praying, Hallowed be your name?

[9 : 50] Well, it's about honoring his name. Honoring his name. Giving glory to his name. This is what hallowed means in this sense.

Giving honor and glory to God. If left to our own devices and our own self-help methods, then the name of God would not be given honor and glory.

And there's always a danger of that in our prayers. Where instead of starting, like I say, this is a pattern for prayer. Instead of starting with our Father in heaven.

Instead of starting with God, giving glory and honor to him. We start with self. And we start with the second half of this prayer. Give us.

We were looking to God in that way. Straight away. Our focus is on ourselves. God, answer my demands. Answer my needs. Answer my prayers the way I want you to.

[10:55] We begin with self. We end with self. And that's not the way that we are taught to pray. Because you see in scriptures, when people turn to their own ways, turn to their own wisdom, the blessing of God is so often lost or departs from them.

The phrase, everyone did as they saw fit, or everyone did as they thought right, is a repeated phrase in scripture. It appears at times when God's name was not being glorified.

Where his name was not being hallowed. But instead, self-importance was greater. You see it in Romans. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

They turned to their own ways, thinking, we know better than God. We're not going to give God glory. We're going to glorify ourselves. And we take God out of everything.

You can look at an example in our own society, with, for example, the girl guides. They were set up in 1910. And as part of becoming a girl guide, you had to take an oath.

[12:16] And part of the oath was, to love my God. But in their wisdom in 2013, they changed that.

And it became, to be true to myself, and develop my beliefs. To be true to myself. Instead of to love my God, it's to be true to myself.

God is just taken out. In just a few words, totally removed. So instead of God being set apart, in this way of being holy, his name being sacred, his name being precious, his name is removed.

There's no glory given, there's no honour given, to the name of God. It's to be true to myself. And it's not just with the girl guides. That becomes prevalent, in so many areas of life.

Where God is removed, and it's all about self. And so here we are learning, when Jesus is teaching us to pray, as we are praying to our Father in heaven, we are doing it, that his name may be glorified.

[13:28] His name may be honoured. Hallowed be your name. God is set apart as holy. As we read in Isaiah 45, we were just seeing there, how God was speaking, about the glory that was due to him.

I, I am the Lord, there is no other. That's what you see repeated, through Isaiah 45. There is no other. And so here we are being reminded as well, it is his name, that is going to make all the difference.

Giving glory to his name, because there is no other. God is set apart. That is what the first commandments teach us.

You will have no other gods before me. He is the most important one. You see it in the third commandment, which is so close to this, hallowed be your name.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain. We are to glorify his name. His name is treated differently.

[14:38] His name is precious. Look, when you look at Psalm 145, as we sang it in the Sing Psalms version, you have that, these words, oh my God.

Now, how often do you hear that phrase repeated today? You hear it probably every day of life. But how is it used? Is it used in the sense of his name being hallowed, his name being glorified, his name being honoured?

It's not. It's often a curse. It's often just a phrase that comes off the lips of people. Oh my God.

And yet, as we sang there, I will exalt you. Oh my God. And King. It's not about a curse that we need to use. It's a plea. And that's what this is reminding us here.

Hallowed be your name. We are making that plea to God. Because we depend on him. But it's also more than just words.

[15:45] This is not just a word prayer. This is a prayer that is to be lived. Hallowed be your name. It's about these words being said, but about our attitude changing and our behaviour as well.

If we are crying out to our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. How are we doing that? How are we living that out? There are many ways in which we make gods in our lives.

The Bible speaks about it so often. Isaiah 45 spoke about it. How the nation has their gods, but none can help. All other gods are idols dumb.

But we have a God, a Father in heaven, whose name we are to hallow. And that is not to be just spoken.

It is to be lived. So that even in our thoughts, even in how we live our attitudes and everything, it is to be with that sense of, Lord, help me to glorify you.

[16:57] Help me to honour you. Because we are helpless ourselves. The danger that we have is we make ourselves God before God himself.

And it's easily done. All these self-help kind of attitudes, the assertiveness, the boldness, the courage that comes from self, that's putting ourselves in place of God.

That's a change in our attitude, in our minds. But it's taking us away from God. So even in the way that we think, we are to glorify God, to hallow his name.

So it's our attitudes we are to honour him with, but it's also our behaviour. Hallowed be your name. In the way we live.

So our actions, everything that we do, we are asking that his name be hallowed, his name be glorified in everything that we do.

[18:07] So is it? Is your life lived like that, where you hallow his name in the way that you live? Is his name hallowed in the way that you speak?

In the words that you use? It so easily could be us that's saying, oh my God, in that flippant way, and that's our witness to those around us.

Instead of that plea, Lord, you're my king, you're my God, you're my father. So in the way that we speak, what about in the way that we work?

Are we hallowing his name in that sense? Are we honouring his name? Are we glorifying his name in the way that we work? Honouring our employers, honouring our time, honouring our attitudes, and that as well.

In the way that we treat others. It's so important. So if we're praying, hallowed be your name, and we're mistreating or misspeaking towards others, that is not hallowing his name.

[19:22] That is not giving glory to his name and honour to his name. It is dishonour. And so that's why this is so important to pray. Hallowed be your name.

So as you pray this prayer, as we repeat these words, think about your attitude, your conduct, your speech, everything, your mind, your prayers.

Is it hallowing the name of God? Because as we do, we realise that we are depending on him for everything. We are depending on his son, on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Are we glorifying his name by glorifying our saviour? By honouring him? By giving glory to him in all that we do? There are so many ways that we don't.

But we are to say, hallowed be your name in every way. But then that leads us secondly to your name.

[20:35] What is in this name? His name is precious. His name is important. We all have a name.

We are all identified by a name. Our birth certificates give us a name. But our name doesn't tell us much about the kind of person that we are.

There are many people in the world, there are many people in our island with the same name. But not every Donald, not every Callum, not every Mary, they're not all the same.

We're all different. We've all got our different traits. We've all got our different attitudes. We've all got our different behaviors. Characters are very different. But here we are looking at the name of God.

Hallowed be your name. And his name has much more substance. It has much more meaning than our names. And what does it mean?

[21:40] What does his name mean? Well, as we read in Isaiah 45, we see the significance of his name. As we read in Isaiah 45, verse 5, I am the Lord and there is no other.

There is his name, Lord. Apart from me, there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me. There is this grace. In verse 23 of the same chapter, And you look at that in the New Testament where it's talking about every knee shall bow and every tongue confess what? That Jesus Christ is Lord. And that's his name. He is Lord. So to recognize the name of God is to recognize all that God is.

That we are given such a clear picture of who he is throughout his word. So many things are revealed to us by his name. By who he is and all that he has done.

Just think of Jesus himself, how he prayed to the Father. We read this the last time in John 17, that prayer of Jesus. How does he pray there in verse 17?

[23:11] Holy Father, keep them in your name. Holy Father. It's the same word as hallowed.

Hallowed Father. Holy Father. And he's praying to the Father, keep them in your name. He is praying for his people.

And then you look at how the name of God is used. Maybe especially as you go through the Old Testament. You see all the different meanings behind his name.

And we are reminded there as we are praying hallowed be your name. How it's not just our words but everything about us. our attitudes, our actions, all of these things.

And it's showing our dependence on his name. So you look through the names of God in the Old Testament. I've got a few of them here to share with you. Genesis 22, verse 14.

[24 : 14] Jehovah Jireh. The Lord will see to it or the Lord will provide. That's the meaning. So as we're saying hallowed be your name, we are honoring God by remembering the Lord will provide.

We are depending on the Lord. Exodus 17, verse 15. Jehovah Nisi. The Lord is our banner or our victory.

David prayed and said his banner over us is love. But there's that idea of the Lord is our banner. So as we're praying hallowed be your name, we are remembering that we are honoring God by remembering he is over us.

He is the one who gives victory. Jehovah Shalom. The Lord is our peace. That is where peace is found.

Not in self-help. Not in self-change. But in dependence on him. Honoring him. Honoring his name. Glorifying his name.

[25 : 26] We find our peace in him. Jehovah St. Kenyut. Jeremiah 23, verse 6. The Lord who is our righteousness. So again, hallowed, glorify his name.

Honor his name. Because he is your righteousness. He is the one who gives us that righteousness through his son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalms 23, verse 1. The Lord my shepherd. Jehovah-rohi. The Lord is my shepherd. Glorify his name. Honor his name. Because he is shepherding you.

He is leading you. Through the still and the calm waters. Through the valley of the shadow of death. Every step of your life. We are depending on him in prayer. Honoring his name by walking with him, the Lord my shepherd.

Exodus 15, verse 26. Jehovah-rohi. The Lord our healer. Again, we look for all these healing ways in this world.

[26 : 35] But God is the great physician. And we pray to him. Hallowed be your name. Glorify your name. Honor your name in all that we are doing where the Lord is able to heal.

Where the Lord is able to help. Jehovah-shammah. The Lord is there. That's his name.

He never leaves. He never forsakes his people. There's that confidence as we pray Hallowed be your name. The Lord is there. He's listening. Our Father in heaven hears our prayers.

And the Lord is there with us every step that we take. Final one. Isaiah 37, verse 16. Jehovah-sebath.

The Lord of hosts or the Lord of battles. He fights our battles. He's victorious as we saw earlier on. Jehovah-nessi.

[27 : 36] But he also is the one who fights for us. Jehovah-sebath. So you have his name. Throughout all of Scripture you've got all of these names.

Hallowed be your name. Glorify his name. Honor his name in all of these ways. He is mighty. He is powerful.

He is able to keep all of his promises. So do you find comfort in that? Do you find comfort in these few words?

Hallowed be your name. There's a challenge because it reminds us it's not just words. It's our attitude. It's our behavior.

And sometimes that needs to change. But it changes through God working in us by his Spirit.

[28 : 35] Not self-help. Not self-confidence. But confidence in him. And it changes us in a way that we repent of our sin and that we seek to hallow to honor to glorify his name.

And there we find comfort. That's what Isaiah was saying in Isaiah 45. I I am the Lord. There is no other.

The people were going away seeking their own gods being their own gods. But he is always saying return. Return to me. Turn to me and be saved all you ends of the earth for I am God and there is no other.

And so will we bow before him? Will we decrease and he increase as we pray these words Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name.

Let us glorify his name. Let us honor his name. Let us remember his name and all of these precious ways that he reminds us that he is victorious.

[29 : 53] He will provide. He is our peace. He is our righteousness. He is our shepherd. He is our healer. He is there. That is who we are praying to.

That is the one who is with us. And may we know him with us constantly as we do seek him in prayer. And let us pray.

Lord our gracious God we do thank you for all of these promises we find in your name. We thank you for the reminders that we are helpless but that you are the one who helps.

That you are the one who fights. That you are the one who is victorious. That you are the one who gives peace. That you are the one who provides. The one who is with us. We thank you for all of these things.

May we grasp them and see them as precious every day of our lives. May we understand these words even more as we pray them. Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be your name.

[30 : 56] We pray that you would help us not just to say these words but to show out these words as we live in our minds, in our attitudes and in all the ways that we seek to give glory to your name.

So Lord we offer up that praise to you. We offer ourselves to you Lord. Take us and help us, shape us and mould us as you would have us to be.

For we ask it all with the forgiveness of our sin. In Jesus' name. Amen.