

This morning I am in the second week of a sermon series on prayer entitled “Lord, teach us to pray.” This title comes from Luke 11:1:

**Luke 11:1** - One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

Evidently there was something about how Jesus prayed that piqued the disciples' curiosity and led them to ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. And there really are few things more important than knowing how to pray, for it is how we communicate with the God of the universe and access His love, grace, and power. Last week, we looked at the intro and the first line, “Our Father in heaven.” We talked about how prayer is communication with God, not a show for others, how prayer is not a magic formula or technique. And we talked about how Jesus from the very beginning holds up the need for both reverence and intimacy in our relationship with God. God is the King in heaven, but He is also our Father. He is our Father, but He is also the king. He is concerned about the needs of His children, and He is also all-powerful. That is who we come to when we pray.

I want to read the entire passage again this morning, and today we will focus on the phrase “Hallowed be your name.” The goal again is to understand what prayer is all about and become better at praying, that we might know God better.

**Matthew 6:5-13** - “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of **their many words**. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

<sup>9</sup>“This, then, is how you should pray:

“ ‘Our Father in heaven,  
 hallowed be your name,  
<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,  
 your will be done  
 on earth as it is in heaven.  
<sup>11</sup> Give us today **our daily bread**.  
<sup>12</sup> Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

- <sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.’

So again, this morning we will be looking at what Jesus meant by telling us to pray “Hallowed be your name.” There are four questions I want to address with regards to this. What does “Hallowed be your name” mean? Why does God want us to praise and honor Him? Why does Jesus tell us to begin our praying with praise? How do we hallow His name?

### 1) **What does “Hallowed be your name” mean?**

Now clearly this is one of those churchy words, because I would bet that this is not a word that arises in your daily conversation. So what does hallow mean, and what is a name? Someone’s name in the Bible is not just the given name, like Peter or Paul, but your name represents your character, your reputation, who you are. And to hallow means to treat as holy or sacred, to honor. To pray “Hallowed be your name,” therefore, is to ask that God’s name, character, and reputation would be treated as holy and sacred, that God Himself would be honored. God, may you receive the honor that you deserve from my life, from your people, from this world. May you be praised and worshiped and obeyed in the way that you deserve.

**Psalm 115:1** – *Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory.*

### 2) **Why does God want us to praise and honor Him?**

Some of you have probably never concerned yourself with this question. But for many others, including some of you I am sure, this whole business of people lifting their hands and singing songs and telling God how great He is just seems weird, or maybe even pathetic. What is up with this God that He wants all these people to come together to worship Him, to sing songs about how great He is? And is this what we’re going to be doing for all eternity? Telling God how great He is?

Nobody wrestled with this question better than C.S. Lewis, who wrote about this predicament in his book *Reflections on the Psalms*, in the chapter “A word about praise”:

*“We all despise the man who demands continued assurance of his own virtue, intelligence, or delightfulness; we despise even more the crowd of people round every dictator, every millionaire, every celebrity, who gratify that demand... worse*

*still was the statement put into God's own mouth, 'whoso offereth me thanks and praise, he honoureth me' (Psalm 50:23). It is hideously like saying, 'What I most want is to be told that I am good and great.'"*

As you can see, Lewis himself struggled with understanding this call to worship God, to hallow His name. What are we to make of God's call to give Him praise, and the encouragement of the Biblical writers to praise God? Lewis continues:

*"But the most obvious fact about praise – whether of God or anything – strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honour. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless (sometimes even if) shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it. The world rings with praise – lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favourite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game... I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: "Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?" The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about.*

In other words, praise is a natural thing – when we enjoy something, we want to praise it. When you are struck by someone's beauty, you want to tell them. If someone has made you proud, you want to let them know how you feel. If you read a great book or watch a great movie or a funny video, you want to praise it to others and with others. If you love a team or player, or watch a great game, you want to talk about how great they are. When you hear an incredible song or discover a talented artist, you want to praise it to others. When you experience a beautiful sunset, or breathtaking mountain view, or incredible waterfall, you want to praise it and share in the praise with others. When we enjoy something, we naturally want to praise it. Lewis continues:

*I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with... The worthier the object, the more intense this delight would be. If it were possible for a*

*created soul fully to “appreciate”, that is to love and delight in, the worthiest object of all, and simultaneously at every moment to give this delight perfect expression, then that soul would be in supreme beatitude.*

Does this make sense? When we enjoy something, our delight is incomplete until it is expressed. And our enjoyment is magnified when others share in our enjoyment and praise whatever it is along with us. Ever watch a movie by yourself? See a moving video? Listen to an amazing song? Read an inspiring article? What do you want to do? Tell others about it! Post it on Facebook or share it on Instagram! Express to others how amazing it is and hope that others join you in praising it! Shout it from the rooftops so that others will join in praising and share in the enjoyment! Share it with others so that they can join you in praising it. When you think a band or a movie or a player or a picture or your child is great, you want everyone to join you in praising it. You want everyone to hallow their name, praise the person or thing.

*It is along these lines that I find it easiest to understand the Christian doctrine that “Heaven” is a state in which angels now, and men hereafter, are perpetually employed in praising God... To see what the doctrine really means, we must suppose ourselves to be in perfect love with God – drunk with, drowned in, dissolved by, that delight which, far from remaining pent up within ourselves as incommunicable, hence hardly tolerable, bliss, flows out from us incessantly again in effortless **and perfect expression**, our joy no more separable from the praise in which it liberates and utters itself than the brightness a mirror receives is separable from the brightness it sheds. The Scotch catechism says that man’s chief end is “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” But we shall then know that these are the same thing. **Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him.**”*

Lewis writes that to discover the source and pinnacle of all beauty and glory, to be able to perfectly enjoy it and express our enjoyment and share that joy with others – that would be heaven indeed. In other words, heaven is not just a never-ending church service. It is entering the presence of the source of everything that is good in this life, the one who gave every good gift, perfectly enjoying Him and expressing that enjoyment and sharing in that joy with others forever. As Jonathan Edwards put it:

*“God is the highest good of the reasonable creature, and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here.*

*Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows. But the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.*

What does this mean? God's invitation to praise Him and Jesus' instruction to pray that God's name would be hallowed is an invitation to enjoy God, because praising Him and enjoying Him are meant to be the same thing. If this makes no sense to you, then please ask Him to reveal Himself to you. You were created to know God, to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever, to hallow His name and join with others in hallowing His name.

### 3) **Why does Jesus tell us to begin our praying with praise?**

Why not start with confession, or supplication, or intercession for others, or praying against temptation? Why start with praise, with asking that God's name, God's reputation, God's character, be hallowed, be honored. I think this is because when we begin with a focus on God's character and name and His honor, it puts everything else in its proper context and perspective.

Think about it: **often we are coming to God because we are in need.** We are in pain and want healing. A loved one is struggling and in need of help. We are worried about something and are hoping God will intervene. **But what do you believe about this God to whom you are praying?** What has He done in the past, and what has He promised or not promised to do in the future for you? Are you treating God as a heavenly ATM, or as a means to an end that you really want? Or do you come to Him as your heavenly Father, the King of heaven? And what has He already given you that might help you to put your requests in proper perspective? Answer those questions, and you will be properly oriented to asking Him for things.

**And what about confession?** If we are coming to God because we have messed up and feel terrible, what do we believe about the God to whom we are coming? How are we to relate to Him? How does He feel about us when we screw up? What has He already revealed about who He is and what He has promised for those who confess their sins to Him?

**And what about temptation?** If we are struggling with a particular sin or addiction, who is God and how can he help us? And why does it matter that we overcome temptation? **When we begin with asking His name to be honored, then certainly that can change our perspective on our sin and our temptation, because it's not just**

about us and our relationships with others, but about the honor or dishonor that we bring upon God's name by the way we are living.

Begin your prayer with praise, with hallowing His name, with resolving to honor God's reputation, and it will impact everything else you ask for. When we begin with praise, with reminding ourselves who He is and what He has done and what He has promised, we are more likely to pray in His name, according to His character, from a place of truth and not from a place of error.

#### 4) **How do we praise Him?**

Now of course, we bring honor to God's name not just by the words we speak or the songs we sing, but by the lives we live. We hallow His name by obeying Him and living for His glory and His kingdom. Next week, I am going to focus more on that aspect when we look at "your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." But for the sake of this week, I want to drill down more on prayer and praise.

J.I. Packer, in his book *Praying the Lord's Prayer*, writes this: "The vitality of prayer lies largely in the vision of God that prompts it. Drab thoughts of God make prayer dull... A book was once published with the title *Great Prayers of the Bible*: the mark of great prayers, in the Bible or elsewhere, is that they express a great awareness of a great God."

A great awareness of a great God. If prayer is lifeless, perhaps it is because your vision of God is too small. You are not aware of who He is and what He has done and what He has promised to do. So how do we hallow His name? How do we praise Him? Recall and thank Him for who He is, what He has done, what He has promised. Rejoice in who God is, what He has done, and what He has promised to do. Present, past and future. Let's hallow His name together, shall we?

#### **Hallowed be His name for who He is**

**Thank you that you are holy and perfect – *Isaiah 6:3* - "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory."**

**Thank you that you are loving – *Romans 5:6-8* - You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare**

*to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Thank you that you are all-powerful** – *Mark 10:27* - *Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."*

**Thank you that you are full of grace and mercy** – *Psalm 103:8* - *The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.*

**Thank you that you are good and always faithful** – *Psalm 100:5* - *For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

**Thank you that you are just and righteous** – *Deuteronomy 32:4* - *He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*

**Thank you that you never change** – *Numbers 23:19* - *God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?*

You are sovereign over everything. You are trustworthy. You know the end from the beginning. Or, if you prefer, the names of God:

Abba – Father

Alpha & Omega – Beginning and the end

El Shaddai – God Almighty

Elohim – Creator God

Immanuel – God with us

Yahweh – The self-existent one

Yahweh-Jireh – The Lord our provider

Yahweh-Rapha – The Lord our healer

Yahweh-Rohi – The Lord our shepherd

Yahweh-Shalom – The Lord is peace

Yahweh-Tsidkenu – The Lord our righteousness

Jesus – The Lord saves

Hallowed be your name!

**What He has done**

**Thank you that you died for my sins – Isaiah 53:4-5** - Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

**You ransomed me from the devil – Mark 10:45** - For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**You forgave me and reconciled me to God – 2 Corinthians 5:18-19** - All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup> that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

**You adopted me as your beloved child – John 1:12-13** - Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

**You have promised me an inheritance in Christ – 1 Peter 1:3-4** - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-- kept in heaven for you,

**You gave me your Holy Spirit – Romans 5:5** - And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

**You conquered sin and death - John 11:25-26** - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

### His promises

**Thank you that you are always working all things for good - Romans 8:28** - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

You will use this for my good, to make me more like Jesus or equip me to minister to or empathize with others in a way that I could not otherwise.

**You will come take me to be with you** - **John 14:2-3** - *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

**You will never leave nor forsake me** - **Hebrews 13:5** - *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

**You welcome me when I am in need** - **Hebrews 4:16** - *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

**You will supply all my needs** - **Philippians 4:19** - *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

**You will give me wisdom when I need it** - **James 1:5** - *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

Hallowed be your name! We praise you for who you are, for what you have done, and for what you have promised.

Why does God want us to praise Him? Because we were created to enjoy Him forever, to be loved by Him, and we naturally praise that which we love. Why does Jesus tell us to begin with praise? Because properly orienting ourselves to who God is and what He has done and what He has promised puts everything else that we might ask for or tell Him about in perspective.

Let's respond in worship.