

The Lord's Prayer Part 1 (Matthew 6: 9)  
"Hallowed Be Thy Name"

Read Mathew 6: 5-14

**Set the stage for the sermon on the mount:**

- At this point in Jesus' ministry He is unable to escape the crowds which continue to grow larger wherever he goes.

-This particular day, Jesus seems to recognize the size of the crowds gathering and knows in some sense there is no escaping them, but He also feels the need to teach His disciples.

-He assumes the posture of a rabbi and his disciples assume the posture of His students; Jesus then begins to teach them knowing full well that the crowds are also listening.

-The sermon Jesus preached on the mountain has become forever immortalized as "The Sermon on The Mount" and it spans across chapters 5,6, &7 of the book of Matthew.

- Which brings us to the subject of today's exhortation. Halfway through the sermon on the mount Jesus begins to teach His disciples both how not to pray and how to pray, this is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer.

- Our own Westminster Confession gives has a great deal to say on the subject of the Lord's Prayer, so to begin, let's look at how it introduces us to the topic and its importance.

WCF introduction to The Lord's Prayer:

**WCF #186 - "What rule has God given for our direction in the duty of prayer?"**

Answer: "The whole word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our savior Christ taught His disciples, commonly called the "Lord's Prayer".

**WCF #187 - "How is the Lord's Prayer to be used?"**

Answer: "The Lord's Prayer is not only for direction, as a pattern according to which we are to make other prayers; but also may be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer."

- This is alluding to the fact that although it can be said verbatim as a prayer, which we often do in our liturgies, the model of the Lord's prayer reveals it is more a model for the attitude we are to have when approaching God in prayer. More on this later...

**WCF #188 – "Of how many parts doth the Lord's Prayer consist?"**

Answer: "The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts, a preface, petitions, and a conclusion."

**WLC #189 - "What does the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?"**

Answer: "The preface of the Lord's Prayer (contained in these words, "Our Father who art in heaven",) teaches us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of His fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other childlike dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of His sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also to pray with and for others."

- When we pray, we're drawing near to God.
- We are to do so with an attitude that reflects God's fatherly goodness.

- A child like affection for God is assumed if prayed in good faith and righteously.
- It acknowledges God's sovereignty and the condescension on His part opening Himself up to communication so freely.

- The fact that Jesus Himself teaches this is proof that we have God's blessing to approach Him when no such privilege is owed. It should encourage us to make use of this privilege often.

1. Now we move into our first petition.

WLC #190 "What do we pray for in the first petition?" ("Hallowed be thy name")

Answer: "In the first petition, (which is, hallowed be thy name,) acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by His grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly esteem him, His titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify Him in thought word, and deed: that He would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to Him; and, by His overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to His own glory."

- The word for hallowed is "Hagios" and it means to make holy, purify, consecrate; to venerate.
- A. The scripture used a very similar word in the account of Nadab and Abihu to express His own promise to be sanctified in the presence of those that draw near to Him.
- Remember one of the most powerful examples found in scripture is found in Leviticus 10:3 where we were reminded by Moses that God had promised to be, "ek-ka-desh" or regarded as holy.

- What can we infer from this? We can infer that in the 1500 years since that historical incident where God protecting His own glory and honor, he has not changed His mind on whether He desires to be regarded as holy.
- What God was saying both then and now is this, “I will have my name appear holy, I will make known to my people and to all the world, that I will be sanctified, and I will be known by all to be a holy God.
- The judgment he implemented at the consecration of the priesthood made it clear for all time that He doesn’t just desire to be regarded as holy but that He truly is holy.
- The pattern of the Lord’s prayer holds continuity with what God has already made clear, that we are to hallow his name.

B. On the subject of the Lord’s Prayer Calvin once said that “No man can pray correctly without God’s instruction.”

- Is this not what we do with our own children?
- The intention here is not to give the Christian a mantra but rather to instruct us in the right state of mind for praying in a manner that’s both lawful and pleasing to God.
- Scripture from Genesis to Revelation makes it clear that we do not have the liberty to approach God however we choose to. (Use example of how our children do not get to approach us any way they choose, both verbal and attitude)
- The Lord’s Prayer guides and restrains our wishes so we don’t go beyond the limits of what God demands.
- You can use the Lord’s Prayer everyday but if you fail to understand it’s a map of the where a human heart needs to be before drawing near to God then you’ve missed the whole point.

- It is possible to have prayed the Lord's prayer every day for your entire life and to have never prayed it with a heart that made it acceptable to God.

C. This should be helpful to all of us because it establishes how God desires to be approached. With reverence and a respect for His holiness. (Big eva.. daddy God etc..)

- The command to Hallow the name of God teaches us, very valuably, to approach God with the respect He is due. WHY?
- Answer: Because even though private prayer doesn't fall under the category of public worship, you are still drawing close to God nonetheless.

3. Exodus 20:7 says "though shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain."

A. The negative sense principle comes into effect here.

- WLC #99 point 4 "That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden, and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed (incorporated), the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included."

B. Calvin quote – "God's name is profaned whenever any detraction is made from His supreme wisdom, infinite power, justice, truth, clemency, and rectitude."

- Isaiah 6:1-4 – "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to the other and said: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts: The whole earth is full of His glory!". And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke."

- This is one of the most awe-inspiring descriptions of God given to us in scripture. The words can't do the reality justice so we were also given a description of Isaiah's response. Isaiah was completely undone.
  - To refer to God directly or indirectly with anything short of reverence and respect that glorifies His majesty is a grievous sin.
- C. "God's name should only be used in connection with that which can be known of Him".
- D. "God's name, (is not hallowed), but rather taken in vain abuses it by perjury, but when it is lightly and disrespectfully adduced in proof of frivolous and trifling matters: \*I speak with respect to oaths."
- E. Here is why we do not casually use God's name as the foundation of our honesty.
- Answer: Because we are liars and frequent violators of our own promises, why do we need to bring God's name into that?
  - What makes matters worse is that oaths are primarily made in relationship to another person or persons and if God's name is used as the foundation of committing perjury against them, we have subsequently exposed the name of God to reproach or contempt, which we know He will avenge.
- F. Matthew 5:36-37 cautions us to not even swear by our own head let alone the holy name and character of God Himself.
- Exodus 22:10 (serious business involving justice between two men)
  - Leviticus 5:4 (rash oaths not honored required sacrifice)
- G. The 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment is an important reminder that men need restraints in place so that they don't abuse the name of the Lord almighty.

Calvin had this to say “We now see, what wickedness is displayed by most men in judging of the works of God, and how freely they allow themselves to indulge in censure. If any of us are chastised, they grumble, and murmur, and complain, and some break out into open blasphemies: if he does not grant our wishes, we think that he is not sufficiently kind to us. [434] Many turn into matter of idle talk and jesting his incomprehensible providence and secret judgments. Even his holy and sacred name is often treated with the grossest mockery. In short, a part of the world profanes his holiness to the utmost of their power. We need not then wonder, if we are commanded to ask, in the first place, that the reverence which is due to it may be given by the world. Besides, this is no small honor done to us, when God recommends to us the advancement of his glory.

4. A proper biblical understanding of the respect God’s name deserves is rightfully humbling to our human ego.

A. Man can’t truly understand who God is until man understands how sinful he himself is. The chasm between us is an infinite one.

- Having the proper attitude in glorifying the name of God, in the manner that He deserves, naturally puts us in our place identifies with clarity the one to whom we are praying.
- So many people pray to versions of God they create in their own minds that their prayers become idolatrous.
- It’s a great sin to pray to an idea of God that’s not biblically truthful. Images can be a problem in the same way. To believe you’re not praying to a holy God would be insane. This is why we specify His holiness by hallowing His name in some capacity as commanded.

5. Prayer is a holy duty, and we are given and we are given many examples throughout scripture that God’s name is to be sanctified first before the performances of holy duties.

A. To do this we must have “high thoughts” of God. This means that we look upon Him as He is on His throne in all His majesty and glory. It is impossible for a Christian not to hallow His name when drawing near to Him.

B. Only a true Christian can hallow the name of the Lord in an acceptable way because it's first and foremost a matter of the heart. The unbeliever doesn't have a sanctified heart and subsequently can't have high thoughts of God. You can't hallow God's name if you do see Him as the God of glory and deserving of reverence.

C. Glorifying the name of the Lord at the beginning of a prayer is not only humbling but helps establish a proper motive for praying.

- Hosea 7:14 - "They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds."
- God acknowledges here that even though they were deeply affected in their prayers, it wasn't God they were crying to. They howled purely for themselves.
- Jeremiah Burrows made the comment that "God is regarding their prayers no more than we do the howling of beasts".
- A prayer coming from a heart not right with God might as well be the bellowing of a bull.
- Every true act of worship must be done for the glory of God and nothing selfish.

Conclusion: Hallowing the name of the Lord is the first step in offering authentic worship that He demands.

- Do we love to hallow the name of the Lord?
- Do we diligently teach our children to hallow the name of the Lord?
- Do we have a proper fear of the Lord when we approach Him?
- Psalm 89:7 – "God is greatly to be praised in the assembly of His saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him".



- Our worship of God will equal the degree to which we fear of Him.
- If you have no proper fear, then you have no proper reverence of His holy name. If you have no proper reverence, then you can't properly hallow His name with a heart that he'll accept.