

Reading: Isaiah 6:1-13

Theme: “Hallowed Be Your Name”

What a privilege and honour to be able to learn from the Lord Jesus in prayer – the Lord’s Prayer allows us to do so. In the opening words of this prayer “*Our Father in heaven*” (the Preface) we saw of our approach to God and we need to remember Who we come to and what we are doing – asking for the eye and ear of heaven to be upon us and what we say. We come to God with reverence, fear and yet also a holy confidence and boldness because of the intimate relationship we have with Almighty God as our Father in and through the Lord Jesus. We also noted we come as part of a family that we are to pray for and with - for God is addressed as “*Our Father*”.

The Lord Jesus moves from our daring, bold and confident approach to our Father in heaven onto what we have the privilege to pray for – our requests and petitions. 6 or 7 petitions (*commentators differ*) are laid before us in an order, the order of our priorities to pray for and live out. These 6 petitions divide into 2 sets of 3 petitions: the 1st 3 are concerned with God – His name, kingdom and will; the 2nd 3 relate to ourselves and our needs – our provision (*daily bread*), pardon (*forgiveness of sins*) and protection (*deliver us from evil*). The 1st 3 look to, are concerned only with God and His glory.

We learn immediately that we are not to usually begin with our circumstances, needs and condition. We are to concern ourselves foremost in prayer with God’s honour and glory. There is no principle connected to the Christian life that is more important than this for our lives and especially our praying. It does not mean our lives, situation, problems etc. are unimportant, but compared to God’s glory they are to recede into the background.

In these 1st 3 petitions we ask things that are so big they will almost appear to tax God, His attributes and power. We ask things that will leave no room for doubt when He answers! We ask things that are too big for us to ever begin to imagine we dare ask for, things too big for us to be bold in our asking unless Jesus directed us, guided us and gave us permission to do so.

In a sense we have in these 3 petitions only one petition – asking for things to be done on earth as they are in heaven. We ask for heaven to come down to earth! To do so, to truly mean these petitions and all they involve, means we are God centred, truly earth orientated and leave no room for our sinful desires and natures. I want us to go on to look at this 1st petition in more detail and apply it to our praying and lives. Here we are to pray “*Hallowed be your name*”. Yet what does it involve and include?

1. What the Word “Hallowed” Means.

It means *to make or to honour as holy, to sanctify, revere, to make or keep holy*. Here we ask God to make His name honoured as holy. Realise it is the only petition in the Lord’s Prayer we will continue to pray in eternity as it will never be out of date or place! In eternity we will never have to pray for His kingdom to come, or His will to be done, or to be given daily bread, for the forgiveness of sins or to be protected from evil and temptation. Yet in heaven we will still desire to hallow, honour as holy His name forever.

Here on earth we are to pray and mean this - for God’s name to be honoured as holy, to be revered, to be sanctified. As we do so we pray that mocking, blasphemy, the casual use of His name be stopped and all people be in awe and reverent fear of His name. As we pray this we do not add to His essential honour and glory, for we cannot do that. Angels cannot praise Him aright, let alone

mortal creatures like us. He cannot be greater than He is, but we pray and desire for Him to appear greater in the sight and estimation of other people. As we pray this, we are to own our need for His help to recognise and show how holy and majestic He is first of all in and through our own lives.

2. The Meaning of “Name”.

We often use names as labels. Yet in biblical days this was not so, for names expressed the very nature of a person, their character, position, power, influence etc. This is especially true of God. God’s Name includes Himself as revealed in His word and all His works. It includes His essence and anything by which He may be known. It involves God in all His attributes; in all He is in and of Himself; God in all He has done, is doing and will do.

God has been revealed in many names in the Bible. ’El indicates strength and power and is found in many names for God. El Shaddai = God Almighty; Elohim = a plural form and refers to God in the fullness of His power; ‘Elyown = the Most High; Adonai = points to God as Master, as Lord. Jehovah or Yaweh = the eternally self-existent One and translated LORD and often used in connection with other names: Jehovah Jireh = the Lord will provide; Jehovah rapha’ = the Lord that healeth thee; Jehovah Shalom = Lord our peace; Jehovah Ra-ah = the Lord my Shepherd; Jehovah Tsidkenu = the Lord our righteousness; Jehovah Shammah = the Lord is present. These and many other names declare of the person and character of God, His attributes, power and glory to mankind. The Bible shows us of His great and mighty works. We pray here that this God and all He is and like is to be hallowed.

3. What It Means to Pray This.

When we pray this, it means that we desire that God in all His being, in all His many glorious attributes, power, holiness, majesty, glory and love be thought of, honoured, held in esteem by **us first of all and by all** other moral creatures on earth i.e. mankind. We pray that He has the right honour, reverence, fear, glory and majesty that is due to Him from all of creation, especially moral creatures such as mankind and angels.

The hallowing of God's name is always to be attached to His reign (kingdom); the chief feature of His reign is that His will be done. When we pray this 1st petition it leads on to the next petitions in a natural progression. As we pray this, it is to express our deep, burning desire for the honour and the glory of our God. The Lord Jesus lived for God's glory. We are told man's chief end is to glorify God. This is why we are to concern ourselves in prayer for His honour and glory. We pray this not merely to have an intellectual grasp of His names, attributes etc. but as we humbly and thankfully consider, meditate and think about His glorious Being, His character, attributes, works of salvation and creation, that we turn these things into rapturous astonishment, praise and worship of who He is.

We have been brought into an unbelievable relationship with this God, so we should desire others to know and wonder at how great He is and accept the offer of His so great a salvation. We do not do this in order to add to His glory, but we are concerned that the greatness of our God be made known and appreciated much more by men and women, boys and girls. We are to act as magnifying glasses in our lives and attitudes so that God is seen as bigger and more glorious than people previously thought or imagined.

Do we have the desire that our families, friends, neighbours, colleagues, Doncaster and the whole world should come in

adoration, reverence, praise, worship to honour and to thank our God? This should be uppermost in our hearts and minds whenever we pray in all our circumstances, but do we pray like that? Having such a desire would alter our praying. If we are honest, we can be so often concerned for ourselves, our comfort, well-being and ease, that we rush in, we treat God as a vending machine for all our ills and problems, Yet, we fail to ask Him to be glorified even in them, for us to be given grace to bring Him glory and praise, to exalt His name in and through them. Shame on us. We have little thought for God, His honour, glory, name and yet have so much concern for ourselves, our desires, comfort and ease.

4. The Need to Pray Such.

God does not need us to pray this, for His glory and holiness are eternally secure, He does not change. Whether we pray it or not has no effect on Him one little bit, for His glory will never fade or tarnish, it does not alter, it does not need to be polished up by our prayers or praise. Yet we are so affected by sin, by shame and weakness that we, by our sin, malice and hatred of God, have obscured His glory and blinded ourselves to His magnificent awesomeness and majesty. Incredibly we all pollute His lovely name even if we try to use it correctly, let alone when people have unclean and blasphemous mouths that use His name as a curse, a swear word or lightly.

God's name is mocked and maligned when people mock and curse His providential dealings with them, when they fail to acknowledge His goodness to them, when they coldly and ritualistically approach Him in prayer, using His name in a mindless repetition. His name is mocked when people fail to live God centred and obedient lives, when people deny His work in Creation and say evolution or chance or the big bang is the god or force behind such.

We need to pray this, so that **we rightly value Him and all His name stands for,** so we come to Him with honour and praise from adoring hearts for His person and provision. As we gaze at His creation we are to honour Him and declare how great He is as we see the wonder of the stars, universe, the human body, the incredible complexity of a single cell, or the DNA of the simplest creature, as we see His glory in every colour, in every living organism around us. We need to pray this to have our eyes constantly refocused, our life's direction re-orientated and our reason for living redefined. This has:

5. Practical Implications.

Praying this will involve living a life that says “*Amen*” to such a prayer - to show we really want to hallow His name, character and being **in our lives 1st of all.** We are to live godly lives, owning Him in all we do, giving Him the glory that we could so easily take to ourselves. It begins when we trust the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour. Unbelief stains God's honour and eclipses, minimises His name as basically we say “*He is not worth believing in or living for!*” Trusting Christ as our Saviour glorifies and honours God, His name and His greatest work. As Christians it means we watch over our lives to bring honour to Him - by obeying His word and doing His will. We find sin cannot be treated as a little thing by us, but is a huge affront to His name. We become more careful to honour Him in private as well as in public.

As we live our lives in this way, we are to have the highest appreciation of Him in our thoughts - to honour Him (*the Hebrew for honour indicates “to esteem as precious”*). We are to constantly esteem Him as precious, as the glorious and incomprehensible God; so, we will honour and value His word,

His name, His day, His commands and His people. We are to live to obey Him and do His will and so hallow His name. We will find that when we sin, we feel it because His glory suffers. When He is mocked and blasphemed we will take it to heart as His name and person is dishonoured.

To hallow His name means it grieves us, hurts us to see His people, His Church in a low state of spirituality and morality, because His name and glory are laughed at and trampled underfoot and He is dishonoured. We are to seek the salvation of others for here God's glory is most clearly seen, here His name is praised as men, women, boys and girls see Him as their only hope and go to Him and they come to know, love, adore, worship and glorify our great Saviour and give Him glory and honour. We hallow His name when we seek His glory above and before our own glory, before our own ease and comfort, life and reputation. As we do so we want to cause others to speak and think well of Him by our lives and words.

To pray this 1st God centred petition is to put His reputation 1st, above our own, above ourselves. Yet we are to pray that His name be hallowed "*on earth as in heaven*" and so our worship of Him is to be affected also. We cannot conceive of angels doing so many things that the modern church scene calls worship of God. Our worship is to have a holy, reverent awe and fear of God coupled with joy and wonder e.g. Isaiah 6 where it is not a frenzied excitement, but wondrous adoration of God. The redeemed in heaven seemed to be at one and the same time almost speechless and full of praise; almost overwhelmed by God, yet aching for more of Him. As we want God to be hallowed, do we dare pray to worship like that? Pray God will be held as holy, honoured as such amongst us in that way, for this is what we are given leave to do so here. As we pray this petition we ask a fearful and awful thing.

The original Greek words of these 1st 3 petitions (*imperative passives*) mean “*Let your name be hallowed...*” Their tense (*aorist*) indicates their urgency. William Hendriksen comments “*With respect to the 1st petition this means that the worshipper is so completely filled with unrestrained eagerness that the Father’s name be adored, honoured and glorified, that he cannot wait to communicate his consuming desire that it receive this honour from the lips, hearts and lives of everyone.*” Is that true of you and me?

God’s honour and glory is to be our desire in evangelism. Yes, we want people saved for their eternal good and well-being, but that is secondary, almost non-existent to the fact that we desire God to have the glory - for His name to be hallowed. We are to pray for God’s name, glory and honour. As William Gadsby wrote in his hymn ‘O what matchless condescension’ v4 says “*In His highest work, redemption, see His glory in a blaze; beyond mortal comprehension higher than an angel’s praise; grace and justice here unite to endless days.*”

Dare we pray in such a way? Sadly, we know so little of God’s name hallowed in our lives and generation, but we have the privilege to pray for Him to hallow His name in our days - in our lives, in our church, for Him to receive the glory, honour and majesty due to Him. The psalmist in Psalm 115:1 sums it up perfectly when he wrote “*Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.*”