

Prayer as Worship

An Examination of Matthew 6:9&10

Part 3

Matt 6:9&10

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

God's Priority

The second thought in this prayer is God's Priority. Verse 9, it says, "**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.**" So here is the first petition- the initial statement was simply the salutation in prayer- but here is the first petition. And the *essence* of this petition is Worship. When we pray like this - we are saying, "*God, the first thing I pray is that Your Name be hallowed!*"

Arthur W. Pink, was a great teacher of God's Word. And one of the things that Pink said is very related to this. He said,

"How clearly then is the fundamental duty in prayer set forth, self and all its needs must be given a secondary place and the Lord freely accorded the preeminence in our thoughts, desires and supplications. This petition must take the precedence for the glory of God's great name is the ultimate end of all things. Every other request must not only be subordinated to this one, but be in harmony with and in pursuance of it. We cannot pray a right unless the honor of God be dominant in our hearts. If we cherish a desire for the honoring of God's name, we must not ask for anything which it would be against the divine holiness to bestow,"

So our prayers are controlled, first of all, by a recognition that God is Father (last week). Secondly, they're controlled by a recognition that God's Name is to be hallowed. Now what does "name" mean? When we say, "*Hallowed be Thy Name,*" what are we saying? God's Name is simply all that God is- His Glory; His Authority; His Reputation, etc.

During Bible times- the name of someone was in a sense the sum of all who they were. And it's still that way to some extent. My name is more than just a name, it really sums up who I am. And so it is with God. God's Name is the sum of all that He is. Christ's Name is the sum of all that He is. And the Name stands for the Nature; the Attributes; the Character; and the Personality of God. And so, what this petition is saying is, "*Father, may Your Person, Your Identity, Your Character, Your Nature, Your Attributes, and Your Reputation be hallowed.*"

Now what does it mean to be hallowed? Well, it simply means to set apart as sacred. When we think of hallowed halls, we usually think of some cloistered halls, long robes, dismal chants, halos, musty dim churches, morbid music, and tired, old traditions. Hallowed means to be set apart as sacred. So what we are saying here is, "*May Your Name (all that You are) be set apart as being sacred*". The Greek word that Jesus used here is *hagiazō* and it means: *to treat as sacred; or to hallow* and it has a synonym, *dixazo* from which we get the word "glory." It means to glorify or honor.

The Foundation of Our Prayers

One of the early Church Fathers- who shepherded in the Church right after John died was a man named Origen. And Origen said that *hagiazō* is also a synonym with another word, *hupsōō* which means: *to exalt or lift on high*.

So what we are actually saying by praying this prayer is , "*Oh God- lift on high Your Name; exalt Your Name; honor Your Name; glorify Your Name; may all that God is be elevated as sacred*". And this should be a very basic part of all prayer- "*Lord, whatever honors You; Whatever glorifies You; Whatever exalts Your Name; Whatever lifts You up!*"

And yet, even though this should be the very basis of all our prayer- praying like this is the antithesis to the kind of praying that's so popular today which says "*Lift me up; give me this; give me that; make me prosper; make me successful; make me important; let me be great in the earth*".

The whole idea of genuine prayer is "*God, may You prosper; may You be glorified!*" So the Name of God- Elohim- Creator. The Name of God- El Elyon- God Most high; Jehovah- meaning: *I am that I am*; Jehovah-jireh- the Lord our provider; Jehovah-nissi- the Lord our banner; Jehovah-ropha- the Lord that heals; Jehovah shalom- the Lord our peace; Jehovah-roi- the Lord our Shepherd; Jehovah-tsdkenu- the Lord our righteousness; Jehovah-tsabaoth- the Lord of hosts; Jehovah- shammah- the Lord is present; Jehovah-megaddeshkem- the Lord who sanctifies; all that He is- is wrapped up in all of His Name. And when we say "*Hallowed be Thy name*" we are saying, "*God- glorify Yourself!*"

A Proper Balance

The purpose of every prayer you ever offer should be that God may be glorified, exalted, honored, lifted up, in whatever way, and by whatever way He can be. And this, by the way, is a protection against abusing the sentimentalism of "Father." To say "Our Father" alone might be a little bit dangerous. You might overuse that idea of "Father". And then when we say "Abba Father," or "papa" and "daddy"- we might understand that intimacy but not understand the balance between that intimacy and hallowing His Name.

So yes, He is our loving Father- but right after we pray, "*Our Father*" we also pray, "*May all that You are be hallowed- hallowed be thy Name!*" That's the balance.

Now, no Jew would ever say "*Father*," without adding something to that title. So in the prayers of the Jews- here are some examples of how they prayed, "*O Lord, Father and Ruler of my life. O Lord, Father and God of my life. O Father, King of great power Most High, Almighty God!*" And the famous daily prayers of Ezra: "*O Father, O King, O Lord*". So the fatherhood of God is always balanced with those terms and concepts which represent His Awesomeness.

Now, on the Day of Atonement, there are ten *penitential* days that surround that one day. And the Jews pray the great "Abinu Malkainu," which is the "Our Father, our King" prayers. And they repeat that prayer 44 times each day during those ten days of penitence. The purpose of that is to create the Divine balance between "Our Father" and "Our King".

You see, if you only know God as "Father"- you might lose a little bit of reverential fear for God- which always leads to an increase in ungodliness. We must know that as much as God is our loving Heavenly Father- he is also our King. And He has a holy place and He deserves that holy place and His Name is to be lifted up and exalted in every way.

How Do Sinful Men Exalt God?

But how do we pray in such a way as to exalt God's Name? By simply praying for His Glory to be done; for His Glory to be accomplished; for His Glory to be known and admired by all men; that His honor will be upheld and broadcast throughout the earth. Therefore, our prayer should be that God may do this or that if it brings Him Glory. And you might be praying about a child, or you might be praying about a situation in your family, or you might be praying about a job, or you might be praying about a physical problem. But, we should pray, "*Lord, whatever will bring You glory- do that and only that. Whatever will lift high Your Name; Your Glory; Your Reputation; Whatever will cause You to be glorious and to be exalted; Whatever will draw people to see You as the one true living God- please, O God- do that!*"

Several hundred years ago- John Wesley said to a very vocal critic of Christianity,

"Your god is my devil."

And so, we must be careful that the "god" that we pray to is the God of the Bible because the kind of "god" who is nothing more than a genie- and who has to obey everybody's commands- is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible expects that through our prayers that His Name be exalted, and that His Name be lifted Him up, and His Name be Hallowed.

So to pray as it is popular to pray today is actually an error because any prayer that has Man at the center strikes a blow to the very Nature of God. And that is to take God's Name in vain- it is to be irreverent. So this isn't just bad theology- it is gross irreverence and near blasphemy.

Right Belief Leads to Right Living

As Luther's catechism says,

Question:

How is God's name hallowed among us?

Answer:

When both our doctrine and our life are truly Christian.

In other words, God is glorified when both my daily life and my Doctrine reflects the Truth of God's Word. In other words, if I believe rightly about God- I will live rightly in submission to God.

So, when I pray "*Hallowed be Thy Name,*" I'm saying, "God glorify Yourself". And what do I mean by that? Put Yourself on display. And how's He going to do that? Through my humbled and submitted life. So I should pray, "*O God- put Yourself on display through my life- whatever that means to me in life or in death, in poverty or in wealth, in sickness or in health- whatever it is. Put Yourself on display through my life!*" That's how Jesus said to pray.

The 19th Century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche said,

"Show me your redeemed life and I'll be more inclined to believe in your Redeemer."

How is the lost world going to see God? Through us- if we are correctly displaying His Glory by the way we live our lives.

One of the early Church Fathers, Gregory of Nyssa, preached a sermon on the kind of person who hallows God's Name; who lives to the Glory of God; who lives to honor God and to lift God up. And he said this of that person,

"He touches the earth but lightly with the tip of his toes, for he is not engulfed by the pleasurable enjoyments of this life, but is above all deceit that comes by the senses. And so even although in the flesh he strives after the immaterial life, he counts the possession of virtues the only riches, familiarity with God the only nobility. His only privilege and power is the mastery of self so as not to be a slave to human passions. He is saddened if his life in this material world be prolonged, like those who are seasick, he hastens to reach the port of rest."

Now, that's the way to live! We're not living here in this life simply to be safe; happy, and prosperous. And so we should not pray that way. We are to live our lives for the Glory of God and to make God known in the earth. And the one who lives to the Glory of God; the one who actually hallows the Name of God earnestly desires for God to be glorified and for God to be exalted. And therefore because he lives for that purpose- that person is more concerned to pray about the Glory of God than he is about his *own* situation or his *own* glory or his *own* prosperity or even his *own* safety. That kind of person wants only to strive after the

immaterial, not the material, and he seeks not to be not be engulfed by the pleasurable enjoyments of this life.

So, the one who glorifies God is more consumed with the things that dishonor God, more consumed with what's going wrong in terms of the world and how it treats God than how he is being treated. That's why **Psalm 34:3** says,

O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together.

That's what prayer's all about.

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