

9 *“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*

1. Hallowed be Thy Name

What does it mean to hallow? It is an old-English word. The KJV, NASB, and NIV translate it using this word. It is a powerful word. It means to treat as sacred and ultimate. To hallow is to seek to make something your ultimate concern.

The basis of prayer is to remember we are praying to God who loves us like a father. The focus of our prayer is to be God. When we have a proper view of God, it then shapes the rest of our praying. If we don't have a proper view of God then most of our praying will be off base and ineffective.

Matthew 6:5-6 *“When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.*

Don't pray like the hypocrites. A hypocritical pray-er is an inconsistent pray-er. They prayed in the open, but not in secret. They prayed only to get acclaim. The focus of their prayers was self. In true prayer the most important thing is God. You want to praise Him. You want to enjoy Him. He is the Supreme thing in your life.

When the focus of our prayer is self, we pray to get God to change His mind and use His power for our glory and convenience. When the focus of our prayer is God, then we ask God to change our mind and we seek to glorify Him through our obedience and service.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
... deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me
In everything give thanks
Pray without ceasing.

The hypocrite only prays when he is in trouble or wants something for himself.

When you only pray when you are in trouble, what are you adoring?
What you do in secret tells you who your God is.

Archbishop William Temple said, ***“Your religion is what you do with your solitude.”***
What do you most like to think about? What do you most enjoy daydreaming about?
What gives you the most comfort to fantasize about?” Temple says, “That's your God.

Maybe you think about a person. Maybe you think about your career. Maybe you think about a house; the dream house you've always wanted to build. Perhaps it is a dream vacation. It could be having a lot of money. It could be having popularity. According to William Temple, those things are **God substitutes**.

These things become like sweets. They're the chocolate chip cookies. When we get "down" we think about these things to comfort ourselves. This is a form of adoration – a form of worship. **These things are appetite suppressants or they cause us to want more of the substitute.** They cause you to seek comfort from something other than God. They waste your time and they take away your hunger for God. You hunger for the sweets instead of God. Instead of sitting down for a fellowship meal with God, you stuff yourself with your daydreams. **If you want to experience God you've got to identify the sweets you are popping between meals and eliminate them** so you retain your hunger for God.

Watch out for anything that destroys your appetite for God. What do you do in secret? It is one thing to be seen as holy by men. It is another to be known as holy by God in secret. God knows your heart. God knows where you look for comfort and satisfaction.

This is why praise is so important. Praise keeps us focused on God. If you are spending time focused on something else, that is your god. Our culture pulls us away from praising the one true God. This is why we must be intentional about our praise.

2. Praise should come first, not last.

Don't we usually praise God after something good happens? If we only praise God after something good happens to us, then we are focused on us and not God. God is always worthy of our praise. When we begin with praise, it properly aligns our perspective on life.

9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Hallowed be Thy name – before asking for daily bread and forgiveness of debts.
Praise before petition. Praise before confession. Praise is first for a reason.
Praise is the proper context for the others. Praise is to dominate our lives.
Praise helps us see God as He is: loving, powerful, holy, most important in our lives. Hallow.

If you don't hallow God first, then the problems show up in petition and confession. You won't ask for the right things and you won't know how to find forgiveness.

A. Confession conundrum

A man had been unfaithful to his wife. He admitted. He repented. His wife forgave him. His friends forgave him. He kept saying, "I can't forgive myself." He came from a very prudish family who saw any kind of sexual sin as the worst kind of sin. That is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible says sexual sin is sin. So is paying unfair wages, so is lying, so is pride. The Bible does not make distinctions among sins.

Even though his parents were dead, he had disappointed his parents. He could not forgive himself. He needs to demote his parents. He needs to get them off the throne. He derived his self image from living up to his parents expectations. When he failed his parental expectations. He could not forgive himself.

This was a failure of adoration. When he adored God more than his parents, then he could accept the forgiveness of God.

B. Petition Problem. Give us this day our daily bread. What is bread? It is what we have to have. Bread is not dessert. We get confused about what is bread and what is dessert.

What if you say:

I've got to have that promotion or my life is over? That has become bread to you.

I've got to have that girl or my life is over?

I've got to have that house or my life is over?

I've got to have approval or my life is over?

What happens when you do not get what you want? Do you say:

"I pray and I pray and I pray, and I get no peace. I don't think God hears me."

When you are praying for the wrong thing and God does not want to give you the wrong thing, it may appear that He does not hear you. "Give me more stuff. Give me a girlfriend. Give me success. Give me more time for my hobby."

No wonder you are not getting peace. If you have hallowed your career, it will run your life. If you think about losing it, you will fall to pieces. If you hallow a girl, and you don't get her, you will have no peace. If you hallow a hobby and don't have time for it, you will be miserable. You are hallowing the wrong thing.

It is a failure of adoration. You have to demote your job, your girl, your dream house. When you adore God first, everything else falls into place. Adoration heals your view of the world and yourself. Adoration comes before petition.

Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

When we adore God first, it puts things in perspective and allows us to leave our requests with a great, loving, powerful God, instead of worrying about them. *Be anxious for nothing*

3. The Love of God and the Holiness of God

9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Kenneth Bailey details a different perspective on "hallowed be Your name." Bailey translates Matthew 6:9 this way: *Our Father, who is in heaven, May it be made holy, Your name.*

He says that God's name is already holy. How can it be made more holy? How can sinful man make God's name holy? He says that God makes His name holy by revealing Himself to be holy. Think about Isaiah 6.

In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. 2 Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called out to another and said,

*“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts,
The whole earth is full of His glory.”*

*4 And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out,
while the temple was filling with smoke. 5 Then I said,*

“Woe is me, for I am ruined!

Because I am a man of unclean lips,

And I live among a people of unclean lips;

For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

*6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from
the altar with tongs. 7 He touched my mouth with it and said, “Behold, this has touched your
lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”*

Think about the pattern revealed in this passage:

1. God reveals Himself to be holy.
2. Isaiah is overwhelmed with his own sinfulness
3. Isaiah confesses his sin
4. God forgives and cleanses Him.

What happens next? *8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who
will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

Consider how the Lord’s Prayer begins: *“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.*

Abba, our loving Father, You are Holy. There is love and there is holiness. God says, “Come to Me like a loving Father. Remember that you are not Me. I am holy. Don’t pull me down to your level. Don’t think you can pull yourself up to My level. I am holy. You are not. We are loved, but how do we become righteous?”

Think about the cross. The love of God and the Holiness of God intersect at the cross. God loves us and does not want to punish us, but God is holy and must punish sin. Jesus died on the cross and satisfied the holiness of God and revealed the love of God.

Think about the pattern revealed in the cross and those who respond in faith to God:

1. God pursues us in love.
2. God’s holiness is revealed.
3. We are convicted of our sin and we confess our sin.
4. God forgives us of our sins. I John 1:9

What happens next for the believer?

*Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the
name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I
commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

Who will go? Do your idols keep you from answering the call of God? I can’t commit to that because I could do that, but I feel the call of God, but I’d rather do That is your God.

Resources for this sermon/series:

Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels by Kenneth E. Bailey

Tell It Slant: A conversation on the language of Jesus in His stories and prayers by Eugene Peterson

Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God by Timothy Keller

I also listened to a podcast by Timothy Keller