

# HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

**Week Commencing 11 October 2022**

*Notes for next week's sermon on "Hallowed be your name"*

We are working our way through the Lord's Prayer, line by line. Next Sunday we will explore what it means to pray "hallowed be your name". Our readings this week will help us reflect on the greatness of God.

## **DAY 1: Read Psalm 96:1-9**

Here we are exploring the first line of the Lord's Prayer. As Jesus teaches us to pray, you'd expect the very first petition to be special! It is in fact revolutionary and runs like a salmon against the stream of the whole world. The whole world is basically saying 'look at me; look after me; look out for me'. Even as Christians our most natural prayers are 'help me'. In the Lord's Prayer, having addressed God as our Father in heaven, we come to him and say, 'may your name be honoured'. Jesus teaches us in the prayer that the world doesn't revolve around us, but around God.

That great Christian author JI Packer says: *were we left to ourselves, any praying we did would start and end with ourselves, for our natural self-centredness knows no bounds. And we learn in Matt 6:12 that the first desire of the children of God is the glory of God - isn't that a remarkable thing?*

Or what about another Christian great John Stott: *"We are constantly under pressure to conform to the self-centredness of our secular culture - and when that happens we become concerned about our own little name - liking to see it on our note paper - or hitting the headlines in the paper and defending it when it is attacked; about our own little empire, bossing, influencing and manipulating people to boost our ego, and about our own silly little will, always wanting our own way and getting upset when it is frustrated. But in the Christian counter-culture, our top priority concern is not our name, our kingdom, our will but God's, and whether we can pray these petitions with integrity is a searching test of the reality and depth of our Christian profession.*

The beautiful Psalm which you have read today urges us to see the greatness of God; to understand how worthy he is of our praise and worship. When we pray in the Lord's Prayer "Hallowed be your name" we are asking God himself to ensure that the whole world comes to understand his greatness, might and power and start to honour him for who he really is.

## **DAY 2: Read Psalm 96:10-13**

Today I want to share with you a longer quote from JI Packer on praying for the hallowing of God's name. If you reflect on this in the light of the Psalm, I'm sure there will be great blessing.

God's name = the person he had revealed himself to be.

"Hallowed" means known, acknowledged and honoured as holy. "Holy" is the Bible word for all that makes God different from us, in particular his awesome power and purity. This petition then asks that the praise and honour of the God of the Bible and of him only, should be the issue of everything.

Every school of Christian thought insists that the praise of God, as distinct from the promoting of ourselves, is the proper purpose of man's life. "Not to us, O Lord, but to thy name give glory" (Psalm 115:1)

Who can pray this request and mean it? Only [the person] who looks at the whole of life from this point view. [They] will see everything as stemming ultimately from the Creator's hand and therefore as fundamentally good and fascinating, whatever man may have made of it (beauty, sex, nature, children, arts, crafts, food, games, no less than theology and church things). Then in thankfulness and joy, he will so live as to help others see life's values and praise God for them, as he does.

But hallowing God's name requires praise for the goodness and greatness of his redemptive work too, with its dazzling blend of wisdom, love, justice, power and faithfulness. By wisdom God found a way to justify the unjust justly; in love he had his Son to bear death's agony for us; in justice he made his Son, as our substitute, suffer the sentence that our disobedience deserved; with power he unites us to Christ risen, renews our hearts, frees us from sins' bondage and moves us to repent and believe; and in faithfulness he keeps us from falling, as he promised to do, till he brings us triumphantly to our final glory. We do not save ourselves! Neither the Father's saving grace, nor the Sons' saving work, nor our own saving faith originate with us; all is God's gift. Salvation, first to last, is of the Lord and the hallowing of God's name requires us to acknowledge this and to praise and adore him for the whole of it.

Isn't that brilliant? Revel in all God has done for you today and ask him to please hallow his name!

**DAY 3: Read Job 38:1-18** (*however, read on to the end of the chapter and on to 39 if you can!*)

Not sure how much you know about this great (though difficult book). One day Job lost everything he ever had – both family and possessions. Job never knows the reason, and some unhelpful friends offer all manner of unlikely suggestions. Job questions God and his reasonability in what has occurred.

In these chapters, God sets out (as it were) to show his credentials. Job has had loads of questions for God. Now God has a few for Job. He is virtually saying to Job: are we equals Job that I should be answerable to you? Did we create the world together did we – was it just you and me? Did we lay the earth's foundations together? Have you given orders to the morning? Have you walked all over the earth? Tell me Job if you know all this!!

Why am I pointing out this passage today? Because our view of God is often way too small! Like Job, we need to realise that we are in no way equals. Yes, we are privileged to approach and address him as our Father in heaven, but his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not ours (see Isaiah 55:8-9).

To ask that God hallow his name means we need to start with being amazed and overawed and humbled before God to start with. If we don't consider him to be that great, then we won't have much of a desire that others see him as great! So read these verses again today and realise how great and wonderful and awesome is our God. See just how great his name really is!! And ask him that all over central and western NSW, he would cause his name – himself – to be mightily honoured.

**DAY 4: Read Job 40:1-14 and 42:1-8**

The Lord's monologue with Job has continued! An amazing piece! You will have noticed that Job has briefly responded before God continues. He admits in v4 to being unworthy. All he can do is put his hand over his mouth and speak no more. Job has realised the greatness of God and in response has humbled himself. He has been put in his place.

In chapter 42 he has another opportunity to respond. In v2 he acknowledges that God can do all things and that no plan of his can be thwarted. He admits to speaking of things he did not understand – things too wonderful for him to grasp. In v5 he said – *now my eyes have seen you*. And his response to seeing God for as he truly is? *Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes*.

Brothers and sisters in Christ – have you begun to see God for who he is? The one for whom nothing is impossible. The holy and mighty and majestic one!

Of course we know now what Job didn't know. That this great and mighty one stooped so low as to walk our planet and subject himself to torture and death at the hands of his creatures. He did this so as to reconcile us to himself.

Do you see his greatness? His love? His mercy? His justice? The greater appreciation of this, the more you will have the desire that other people join you in honouring God's name and you will pray that God himself will cause his name to be honoured!

Let me finish the week by quoting Packer once again: "Man's chief end is to glorify him and to enjoy him forever. Note - these two activities are one. God's chief end is his glory and he has so made us that we find our deepest fulfilment and highest joy in hallowing his name by praise, submission and service. God is no sadist - our duty, interest and delight completely coincide. Christians get so hung up with the pagan idea that God's will is always unpleasant, so that one is rather a martyr to be doing it. To give oneself to hallowing God's name as one's life-task means that living, though never a joy-ride, will become increasingly a joy road."