

As God's children, it grieves us to see him dishonoured and disrespected in the world, and we rejoice to see him honoured, worshipped and glorified.

Like all the petitions of the prayer, our sincere desire for God to answer our prayer, includes with it a real commitment to do our part in seeing that happen.

As much as we pray that God will hallow his name, we make it our great concern to hallow him ourselves, and do all we can to bring him glory.

In the Lord Jesus Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit in us, God will indeed answer that prayer. God will be hallowed, and we will enjoy his glory for ever.

Next week we look at the second petition which builds on our desire to see God's named hallowed, namely that his kingdom come.



Reflections on The Lord's Prayer

"Hallowed be thy name"

Last week we began our look at the Lord's prayer, with an understanding of who God is; that he is our father, in a covenant sense, by virtue of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We considered the fact that while God is our father, he is also the sovereign Lord of all creation.

These are wonderful truths, that, if we take hold of them, must change the way we think, about God, about ourselves, and about the meaning of our lives.

Truth in the New testament is not just there to inform us, to correct our thinking, and direct our behaviour, it is intended to change who we are.

The realisation that God the creator and Lord of all the universe, is our father, must cause some movement in us. It must stir us to respond in some way. If it doesn't then perhaps we haven't really taken hold of it.

To know that God is our father, at least implies that we know that we are God's children, that we are in an intimate relationship of trust and dependence.

To be considered a child of God is an immense privilege and a great blessing. It sets us and our lives part for a truly higher purpose.

So how do we respond? What is a fitting return for such an amazing blessing?

Today we start to look at the first three petitions of the Lord's prayer; three petitions that summarise our response to knowing God as our father, and which concern God's person and his glory.

“Hallowed be thy name”

The first petition expresses the desire to hallow God’s name. That is, to keep it holy, to set it apart.

God’s name is unlike any other name, and he cannot be mentioned as one among many. God is unique, his name is to be held in high regard and treated with respect.

[Exodus 20:7]

But there is more to God’s name than a kind of identifier. A name, in the Bible, is not just a collection of letters or sounds. A name in the Bible stands for the person being named.

When a prophet spoke “in the name of the Lord”, he was not just using God’s name as symbol, as a banner to rally under, but claiming the authority of God’s person.

The petition that God’s name be hallowed, is a request that God himself be hallowed. That God himself be recognised, and respected as holy and worthy of all worship. To hallow God, is to glorify him and hold him as being of supreme and ultimate value.

This is a fitting response to knowing God as father; the desire that he be known, loved, acknowledged and worshipped by others. That the whole world, all men and women everywhere come to know him; and know him, in Jesus Christ, as their Lord and saviour.

This is the first and greatest of the petitions that are included in the prayer. It sets the context, if you like, the overall aim of all the other petitions.

That God's name be hallowed should be the first and greatest desire of our hearts. All that we subsequently seek from God, in this prayer or elsewhere, finds its direction in that desire. We seek God’s glory above all things, and it is to our very great joy that God is glorified in forgiving our sins and granting us new life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As those who know and love God as father, our chief aim in life should be to see him honoured and glorified, and all our prayers, even those which appear to be for our own benefit, are to that end. This part of the prayer reminds us that, as God's children, it is his glory we seek, not ours, and that all our work in this life should be to honour him.

[Mat 5:16]

This putting God’s glory first also gives us confidence, because God has promised that he will be glorified through his work on our behalf.

[Ps 50:15]

While we may instinctively feel that putting God first, is to our detriment. This is not the case. We may feel we loose out if we prefer other people above ourselves, but that is not the case with God.

If we seek God for the sake of his blessings, and not for the sake of his glory, however spiritual those blessings may be, if we seek God for his provision, as an end in itself, then those things become idols. To seek our own joy and satisfaction is not wrong, but our true joy and satisfaction must be rooted in the glory of God.

God’s blessing cannot be separated from his glory, and what we ultimately seek in being blessed by God his is his glory, and his blessings as far as they contribute to that glory.

God's glory is our glory. Thats is to say, it is God that we enjoy for all eternity, and to enhance God's glory, or more accurately the appreciation of God's glory, is to enhance our joy in him.

Part of our growth in Christian discipleship is to learn to seek God for himself, because he is valuable and wonderful and worthy, and not to seek him for what we think we can get from him.