

The Lord's Prayer Part 4 Hallowed Be Thy Name

As we return again to these blessed words of the "Lord's Prayer", may we first take a brief step backwards and consider further what the Lord Jesus intends when He tells us in verse 2 of today's passage, "When you pray say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name".

Read along with me, in Luke chapter 11, beginning in verse 1!

¹And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

²And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. ³Give us day by day our daily bread. ⁴And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. (Luke 11:1-4)

These words, "Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven". What does it mean, to "hallow" the Name of God?

In my Greek dictionary, this word for "hallow" characterizes a form and measure of holiness, and righteousness, and purity, and sanctification that is far beyond any measure our human minds can conceive of, an expression that is usually reserved for God alone.

And as Jesus gives us these words, "hallowed be Thy Name", He intends the words to have a two-fold meaning to us, first to express who God really is, and then to also define the very special response that you and I are to have towards Him.

And Jesus has placed these words "hallowed be Thy Name" at the very beginning of the prayer because He wants to immediately remind us that, yes, God truly is our loving Father, but as obedient sons, we also must never forget for a moment who He really is. I must, with all there is within me always acknowledge and accept that I am addressing Almighty God.

But how and why would that ever be a problem for you or for me . . . to not remember who God really is? For several reasons, the first and perhaps the most

common reason is, just as we have found with our earthly fathers, too often, as we go about our daily lives, our sinful flesh can take liberties that we should not take, and we oftentimes become careless and casual and even disrespectful.

And the same can also take place with God, our heavenly Father. It is good and it is right that we do become comfortable and confident in our relationship with Him. But within our comfortable relationship, we must always remain careful and guarded, else we will make the same mistakes we make with our earthly fathers and we'll let ourselves drift into misguided concepts about Him, and we'll begin to think and to behave in careless, casual or disrespectful ways.

How will we recognize when that is taking place, that our familiarity with God has bred some elements of disrespect?

Sometimes, it is when we find that most of our prayers have become reduced to little more than a quick request, tossed over our shoulder in haste, much like a college student who comes home between semesters and wants to spend only enough time with his father to justify asking if he can borrow the pickup truck.

Sometimes a lack of reverent respect can arise during times of strong emotional responses, perhaps in those moments when a painful circumstance has taken place in our life. We become angry with God and we blame Him for our loss. Yes, God does allow His hurting children some liberties in the way we respond during those times, but probably not to the extent that we often go.

But far too often, the problem of our having a "less than fitting" concept of who God really is, is inherent in our relationship with Him from the very beginning.

Yes, in those earliest moments of salvation, we do very much want and do invite God's presence. And we want all of the goodness that He offers. But, too often, similar to that which takes place with a premature baby, some of the very basic essential concepts about God fail to develop within us, and we are left with an immaturity that is not good for us.

And it especially manifests itself in our lack of a real understanding and appreciation for the really holy and righteous character and nature of God. And we fail to develop a clear understanding of what our response to God's holiness must always be.

That is especially evident in some of the expressions that spill forth from our mouths in those unguarded moments, expressions like “Oh My God”, or we speak about God as being the “man upstairs”, or “the big guy upstairs”. And though we might not intend any disrespect towards God, those expressions do not hold His Name in high esteem.

Another of the difficulties that is very noticeable in our modern Christian culture is a lack of a biblical understanding of what these scriptures call “fear of the Lord”.

In our modern Christian teachings, great emphasis is placed upon the love and mercy and grace of God, which is good and right and excellent. But that emphasis is often so strong that it almost completely excludes and even denies the need to also keep a strong sense of a “fear of the Lord”.

There are many preachers today who tell their listeners that “fear of the Lord” is an antiquated requirement of the Old Testament law and that “fear of the Lord” should not be a part of our Christian teaching. Using scripture verses like 1 John 4:18 they tell us that,

¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)

Yes, these words are absolutely true for us. God's perfect love does cast out the fear that we once had because of the sin that once filled our souls.

But it was the blessing afforded by that fear that first drove us to Christ for His redemption and for His washing away of our sin. And the necessity for some elements of that “fear of the Lord” must always remain because that same sin that once controlled us is still ever and always preying upon our souls and enticing us back into its ways. Without the remembrance of that “holy fear”, you and I can easily enter back into sin's traps and lures and control.

So yes, God's perfect love does drive out that old fear and dread of eternal suffering and damnation. But as these words, “hallowed be Thy Name” remind us, there is a necessity for us to remember who our holy God really is and the sinful circumstances from whence we came. And to remember that unless we keep some of that “holy fear” we can easily slide right back into sin's clutches.

So then, praise be to God, His Holy Spirit will keep a healthy measure of that “holy fear” flowing within us, to warn us away from sin. And in those moments when we do wander away from God, that same “holy fear” will drive us back into His love.

The truth of God's word never changes. “Fear of the Lord” will always be “the beginning of wisdom” and the “beginning of understanding” within our souls. And it is God's holy wisdom and understanding that guides us to know that we must ever and always “hallow” the “Name” and the “Nature” of God, to in every matter of life hold all that God is and all that God does, His purity, His holiness and His righteousness in the highest and greatest esteem and reverence.

. . . Which then leads us into the next part of this prayer and the next part of God's plan for each of us . . . “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”.

In our human condition, it is very difficult for us to fully comprehend the nature and the reign of God's Kingdom. And that is especially so as it relates to the daily matters of life here on the earth. From most all appearances, we human beings seem to be the ones who are guiding and directing all that takes place around us each day, from the governance of nations to the ordinary matters of daily life.

But in reality, that is not so. Behind all the activities of this visible and natural world, there is a whole host of activities taking place. From the governance of God and His angels to the abhorrent and evil activities of satan's hordes of demons, there is perhaps more taking place within the unseen realms than is taking place up on the surface of the visible realms where you and I live and move and have our being each day.

And yes, God is God over all things that exist. He is the sovereign ruler over all the heavens and the earth. But within His sovereign reign, for reasons known only to Him, He has permitted His created beings to have a certain amount of freedom and power and governance over both those unseen realms as well as over these visible realms that we live within on this earth.

We know from these scriptures that in some distant unknown ages past, when the angelic hosts rebelled against God and his rule over them, God cast those

angelic beings, satan and his fellow demons, to this earth. And they have set up a kingdom of their own here on earth. Those words in Revelation chapter 12, ⁹And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:9)

No, the kingdom of satan and his demons are not absolute or sovereign over the earth, but God has allowed satan's rule to be powerful, very powerful. We get a glimpse of the kingship that God has permitted satan to have as we read about the temptation of the Lord Jesus there in the wilderness. There in the Book of Matthew chapter 4, we read,

⁸. . . the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹"All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." (Matthew 4:8-9)

In those temptations, Jesus knew the eventual end of satan and He refused satan's offer. But it does seem clear from these words that Jesus did not deny that satan had some authority within his offer, that God had permitted satan to have power over this earth and over some of the kingdoms of the earth. But that kingship of satan truly is limited and its time is coming to an end.

From the first moment that Jesus arrived on this earth, the battle for the true kingship over this earth was set into motion. As He came, Jesus brought His kingdom with Him and He began, even in those earliest days, to build His kingdom through the saving of the souls of mankind, bringing each of us into His kingdom.

And thanks be to God, He has also enlisted you and me to serve in His Kingdom armies. We, through the power of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, and through the presence of the Holy Spirit, with the Word of the Gospel, are marching against the armies of satan to regain God's kingdom here on the earth.

And yes, God could simply speak the hosts of satan right out of existence with only the word of His mouth. But He has chosen to not do it that way, but instead to allow us, mankind, that privilege and that responsibility, the privilege and the responsibility of joining with His Son, the Lord Jesus, to reclaim this earth for His Kingdom.

As we receive the Lord Jesus as our Savior and Lord, He comes to live within us, and His kingdom begins to grow and multiply.

Once, when Jesus was asked when His kingdom would come to the earth, He said in Luke chapter 17,

“The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation,²¹ nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:20-21)

And praise be to God, as more and more people have received the blessed salvation that Jesus brought with Him, His kingdom has continued to grow. He described how His kingdom grows with several different parables, like those given in Matthew chapter 13. There Jesus said,

³¹ . . . “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.³² Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.” (And then also,) ³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.” (Matthew 13:31-33)

Folks, the Kingdom of God spoken about in the Lord’s prayer truly has come to the earth. His kingdom resides within the hearts and souls of every believer. And His kingdom grows daily as more and more people give their hearts to Christ in salvation.

And that is the impetus of these words here in the Lord’s Prayer, that we, that you and I, would keep carrying God’s truth on forward, being a vibrant part of the growth of His kingdom, being an active part of that mustard seed tree and of the leavening of that yeast, bringing many, many more of God’s sons to glory.

And though as the battle continues and the successes often seem few, we know that we must not become discouraged, but instead, we must do as the Apostle Paul exhorts us in 1 Corinthians 9,

²² To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. ²³ I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:22)

And then folks, as souls are being saved and the kingdom of God grows, we need to also take up the next banner that's given here in this prayer, that of being a part of bringing the "Will of God" into the daily behaviors and habits of His blessed children, starting with our own.

It is from the foundation of the pure and holy and righteous Nature of the Name of God that our "first calling" as His beloved children begins . . . that of wanting God's Will and God's ways to prevail in everything that takes place in our lives, both within us and in all of the things with which we have to do.

And yes, you and I really can know what the Will of God is, both for ourselves and for the matters that take place all around us each day. We often think that we don't, especially as all the evil activities of the cultural wars swirl around us and our families these days.

But if and when we are in doubt about God's will, He gives us a clear and plain word from His scripture to guide us. He tells us in Romans chapter 12.

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ²Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
(Romans 12:1-2)

There are several instructions within these words that will help us to know what we are to do within the matters that assail us each day. As born again believers, you and I have the presence of the Holy Spirit living within us every moment. And He will warn us away from conversations and circumstances that are not according to His will. But we really do need to be listening carefully for His "still small voice".

Also, we are told in these words to be transformed by a renewing of our minds. How can we do that? We do that by spending as much time as possible studying the words of these scriptures, gaining a knowledge of God, who He is, and what He wants of us. We are His dear sons and daughters and He wants us to be just like His Only Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus. And we can only do that if we give ourselves over to a diligent study of these precious words of scripture.

Folks, God wants you and me to “know” Him, to truly “know” Him, to “know His very Heart”. It is then that we will be able to “know” and to “do” His Will.

And it is then that we will be able to train up our children in the way they should go in their daily lives. It is as we write the precious words of these scriptures upon our own hearts, that we are able then to teach them diligently to our children. It is then that we will speak about them as we lie down and as we rise up and as we walk along our way.

And folks, please know that as we openly and freely do the will of God in our own lives, that our relatives and our friends and our neighbors will witness our doing of God's will, and they too can be changed by our behavior.

That may seem to some to be too small a contribution for us to make. How can my behavior help to change the world, to bring about God's will? Folks, that's the way God designed His plan of redemption to take place on this earth, “one soul at a time.”

These words of the Lord Jesus again as we close . . .

Our Father ,which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Luke 11:2)

Let's pray!