

"Hallowing the Name of God"

Matt 6:9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Oh, how mindful we ought to be of how great a privilege it is for us, who are so unworthy, to be able to call the God of all creation, "our Father". Especially when we realize what unworthy sinners we are, and what a most holy and righteous God our Father in heaven is. But, having been born of God, we have been given that magnificent right to be children of the Most High God. (John 1:12) Thus, because of His great mercy and grace toward us we enjoy the excellent privilege of calling this most glorious and mighty God, "our Father".

Now after our Lord teaches us to call upon God as "*Our Father who is in heaven*", He then instructs us as to what should be our first petition in prayer. And that first and foremost petition in prayer is "*hallowed be Thy name*". That is "sanctified be Your name, set apart be Your name." We may understand from this then that the hallowing of God's name is to be preferred before all things. It is to come first before we pray concerning our daily needs, "give us this day our daily bread". It is to precede our prayers regarding the increase of God's kingdom, "Your kingdom come". Dear ones, our Lord hereby makes us aware that although we rightly place great value upon the salvation of eternal souls, God's glory is of greater value than even the salvation of men's souls; of greater value than the very increase of His kingdom.

- A. This can best be understood when we remember that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. (Matthew 22:38)
1. We are instructed that whatever we do we are to do all to the glory of God. - *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* (1 Corinthians 10:30)
 - a. Therefore God's name should be glorified, honored and sanctified by us
 - b. Not only in our prayers but by all we say or do.
 2. We may conclude then that this first and great petition speaks of the most significant aspect of true faith, the glory of God.

Ursinus in his commentary writes; "The petition, *Hallowed be your name*, is placed first in order, because it comprehends the *end and design* of all the rest, inasmuch as the glory of God should be the end of all our affairs, actions and prayers."

B. What then is meant by "hallowing God's name"?

1. To hallow or to sanctify is to set something apart from the common use to some sacred use or purpose.
 - a. As the vessels of the sanctuary in the Old Testament were set apart to be used only in the service and worship of God
 - b. In the same manner God's name is glorious and holy and thus it is set apart in honor and glory by His very essence and being.
2. We do sanctify God's name when we give to Him and to His name the honor, reverence and adoration which is due to His very being.
 - a. But we must understand that in so doing we add nothing to His essential glory for His name is most holy and glorious with or without our acknowledgment or proclamation.
 - b. Indeed we cannot make God greater than He is,
 - c. But when we acknowledge His name to be most holy we do cause Him to appear greater in glory and honor in the eyes of the world around us.
 - d. For instance when we pray that prayer in our worship service each Lord's day and say "*Hallowed be Thy name*" we cause all who hear those words to be made mindful of the holiness, greatness and glory of our God.

C. Now let us ask, how can we hallow God's name?

1. First we must have an understanding of the significance of His name.
 - a. We must have a sound Biblical knowledge of His name.
 - b. The Psalmist expresses it in these words, "*O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth, who have set Your glory above the heavens!*" (Psalm 8:1)
2. In the commandments given at Sinai we are commanded not take His most holy name in vain.
 - a. We are not to consider it lightly in our daily thoughts and words,
 - b. Certainly we are not to consider it lightly in the manner in which we pray.
3. For His name is a name that is above all names

- a. This was expressed by the Levites when after they had confessed the sins of Israel and having been restored to the land they cried out *"Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever!" Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise!"* (Neh. 9:5)
 - b. Those *"who know Your name will put their trust in You."* Ps 9:10
4. And not only must we have an understanding of the greatness of His name but also an understanding of the greatness of God Himself.
- a. He is the great creator of all things.

Nehemiah verse 6, *"You alone are the Lord; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You."* And as the Creator of all things, our God is high above the heavens, and therefore He is to be exalted . . . above the heavens, and His glory above all the earth. (cf. Ps 108:5)

- b. Now when we know this to be true of our God, we must therefore rightly consider His name to be glorious above the heavens.
5. We hallow His name when we have a deep appreciation toward Him; when we love and delight in Him.
6. We hallow His name when we delight in His attributes, acknowledging that He is most holy, most wise, and eternal in His love, holiness, justice, mercy, goodness and truth.
7. We hallow His name when we marvel in His all His works; in creation, in redemption and His gracious providence. We hallow His name when we love Him because He first loved us.
8. We hallow and sanctify His name when we place our faith and confidence in that precious name.

With the Psalmist of Israel we must make known that *" . . . we have trusted in His holy name."* (Psalm 33:21) As Abraham *"did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God;"* (Romans 4:20) God's name is glorified when we do not waver at the promises of God in unbelief. For unbelief brings a stain upon God's honor and cast a shadow upon His holy name. For the Apostle John warns us that *" . . . he who does not believe God has made Him a liar."* (1 John 5:10)

9. We hallow God's lovely name when we love His name and count it to be our very source of joy.

Again as the psalmist wrote, *"Let those also who love Your name be joyful in You."* (Psalm 5:11) Truly what a witness it is to the world when even in times of sadness or conflict and trial we can express a certain joy because we love that precious name. Even as Paul and Silas at the midnight hour after being beaten were singing and giving praise to God. Truly O God may we be a faithful witness before the world expressing our love for Your name by showing gladness and joy in singing *" . . . praise to Your name, O Most High."* (cf. Psalm 9:2)

10. And finally, we hallow God's name when we worship Him in Spirit and in truth.
- a. God Himself has instructed us that He *" . . . must be regarded as holy by those who come near to Him."* (Lev. 10:3)
 - b. It is the purity of worship that most glorifies God holy name.
 - (1) So much of worship today resembles entertainment more than worship.
 - (2) The worship common today seems to be more concerned about felt needs than a humble reverencing of God's holy name.
 - (3) But let us that desire to "hallow God's name" be mindful that *"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him."* Psalm 89:7

CONCLUSION: Next time you pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name" think on this that God who is most holy, whose very being is so far above us, whose glory is so great, yet because of His mercy and grace toward us redeemed sinners hears us when we pray to Him through our Great High Priest Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

O God, *"since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve You acceptably with reverence and godly fear."* (Heb. 12:28) May we indeed hallow your name in our worship, our prayers and our daily walk, for we ask this in Jesus most holy name. Amen.