

Hallowed be Your Name

Luke 11:1-4
Psalm 29

As The Lord's Prayer is the only prayer in the bible that Jesus taught us it's hugely significant. We said its a template. A concise prayer that includes everything God wants us to pray about. Because of this it's worth exploring phrase by phrase.

Terry spoke last week on "Our Father in heaven". Helping us recognise the significance of even the first word "our". God is not just my father. Everyone is included. We can say "yes" to God and be adopted into His great family.

Today the next phrase " hallowed be your name". It's so easy to think "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name," is somehow just the introductory throw away line of the Lord's Prayer. But it is so much more.

In 1977 my Father was awarded the CBE. It was such an honour. My mother, sister and I went to Buckingham palace to witness my Dad being given his medal by the Queen. It was so exciting, we all had new outfits. We were in the gallery. There were wide, sweeping stairs, crimson carpets. The Queen stood in front of her throne. As each person was presented they bowed, honouring her Majesty. As she presented the medal she spoke to my father. He said she was very friendly. It was a great day, we loved it and talked about it for weeks. These memorable occasions seem to happen very rarely. But this needn't be the case. If we can recognise that the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer is a similar occasion.

And yet it seems that the Lord's Prayer has lost its impact. Probably from all the years we rattled it off in school assemblies. This sermon series is about rediscovering the Lord's Prayer afresh. By saying "Hallowed be your name" it's like we are going to the palace, entering the presence of the King, the King of the universe. We can meet God, experience His presence. Be welcomed by Him, talk to Him. What a privilege!

This is something to be enjoyed, lingered over. Which is why in Pete Greig's prayer template that Terry told us about last week P.R.A.Y. Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield. "Hallowed be your name" comes under the rejoice section. We are moving on from " pressing the pause button." We could say "hallowed be your name" is an invitation for adoration, to worship, lifting up our hearts and minds to enjoy God's presence. To take time thinking about all God's blessings to us, living in this country, at this time.

Perhaps we are also starting to see that the primary aim of prayer is relational not just transactional. Meeting God not just asking Him to do things for us. Years ago I heard Jackie Pullinger speak at a New Wine ladies day. I remember her telling us about her prayer life. She was embarrassed as she described starting to pray and stopping as she sensed God telling her how much he loved her and when she wanted to get on to her prayer list she would sense Him saying "not yet, stay a little longer, lets just

enjoy this time together". It was the first time I had ever heard prayer spoken of with such intimacy. It's what I yearn for. Everything flows from relationship.

We have just heard read the version of the Lord's Prayer in Luke. The phrase "hallowed be your name" in other translations is written as " may your name be honoured "

We have said that prayer is best when we "keep it simple, keep it real, keep it up". In this first phrase we are getting real. Reminding ourselves of who God is and that the first place is always His. We believe that God is the creator of the universe. By putting him first we are reminding ourselves of reality. Getting our priorities right. God is God. He is all powerful; we are not! When we stand and look up at a clear night sky? As we ponder the universe what do we find ourselves thinking? Is it "Aren't I amazing! " Probably not! More likely, "Oh How beautiful! What a blessing! Thank you Lord for the wonder that you made all this and yet still have given me the gift of life."

But if we are really honest so often, when we start to pray we are full of concerns and our attitude to prayer is often the wrong way round. It's as if we put ourselves at the centre. As if God should be there just to answer our requests! We get very disappointed when our prayers don't produce the results we are hoping for. It's easy to see how over time we can get fed up and think prayer just doesn't work! It's a waste of time! No wonder we give up! Noticing the beauty of creation helps us keep a correct perspective as does pondering on the words "hallowed be your name".

What does "hallowed" mean. We've said to honour God to give Him first place. But also to hallow something is to set it apart as holy.

Holy, pure, sacred. Exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness. No wonder God deserves our praise and to be honoured. The Psalms, the equivalent of the Old Testament hymn book is full of examples that we can use to honour God in our prayers every day.

The second verse of Psalm 29 "Give to the Lord the glory due to his name. Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness."

" And I will hope in your name, for your name is good." (Ps 52:9)

"How majestic is your name" (Ps8:1)

The root of the Hebrew meaning of the word holy is "separate". God is holy, set apart from any defilement. God is holy, and we know we are not. We have a dilemma. We've said prayer is relational, coming close to God. But how is this possible when God is separate and Holy?

This is where the good news of the Christian Faith comes in. Jesus. It is through the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus that God has solved this dilemma for us. What a relief!

Through Jesus we have the opportunity to connect with God. To experience relationship with the creator of the universe. This is His amazing gift to us. Our choice is how do we respond to this gift? With gratitude? With open hearts? By Saying "hallowed be your name" with the reverence God deserves. When we honour God He honours us and through Jesus invites us to enter into his throne room whenever we like. What an awesome privilege!