

SERMON

Matthew 6:9

Hallowed be your Name

Nunawading and Waverley, 29-8-21

The first thing we pray for in the Lord's Prayer is **hallowed be your name**. That means that what we want must come later. This is a hard lesson because we all have our own agendas: a project, a career, needs of family and friends, health concerns and so on. We are happy to pray about these things but what about the Father's name? His is **the name above all names**. Therefore, he comes first.

We are praying, **hallowed be your name**, not, hallowed is your name. May your name be hallowed, be held in reverence, be trusted in and believed, be followed and be sacred in the eyes of the world. As the teeming masses move about looking like bees in a hive all struggling for existence, jostling, travelling, waiting in log jams, commuting, buying and selling, we are praying, "Lord, may you be found by them and your name be on their lips and hearts." We pray this because **Jesus Christ is the only name given to us under heaven by which we can be saved** and with that gift and promise, we are praying that he will come to them, that in all the competing words, religious and secular ideologies, they will hear the Father's name taught 'in all its truth and purity', as the Catechism says. Luther said that when a person is trapped in sin, that is, trapped with only your thoughts about life, it is like living in a room with all the curtains shut and sitting in utter darkness but when Christ comes, it is like rushing out into the sunshine. We are praying that all may hear the name of Father like light entering their hearts.

My name, Wayne, means wagon driver but that is not who I am. God's name is Father and that is exactly who he is just as his Son's name is Jesus, which means Saviour, and that is who he is. The third person of the Trinity is called the Holy Spirit because he declares people holy and then makes them holy. God's name is not a label but stands for God himself, revealing his character as Father, Saviour and Lord. So, we are praying, Father, make yourself the Father of all, be holy to all so that they can become children and be holy like you and rightfully called saints. Then the circle will be completed for the saints you made will revere you as holy and exalt your goodness and love you above everything in the world.

Luther said that 'God's name is holy in itself but we ask in this prayer that we may keep it holy.' The Old Testament tells us how we can do that for to hallow something was to consecrate it, to set it apart for holy use. Therefore, we pray, "Lord, be central to me. Be the weightiest and most glorious thing of my life. May your name be music in my ears, a name that brings joy, that frees me from negative and anxious thoughts, that releases me to speak of your name, delight in it and explore everything about you in your word. And when I know the truth, help me to look at my life, what I say, how I behave and the attitudes I have so that they are completely synchronised with your name." We have seen the dishonour that has come to the Father through abuses in the church. Luther said we are hallowing God's name 'when we live in harmony' with the truth of his name.

As you pray this petition, **hallowed be your name**, sit quietly and think about all that is grabbing you. It will include family members, worries about health, tasks that have to be done, a backlog cleared, finances that need your attention, dissatisfaction and frustrations, guilt over your part in a dispute and many more things, and ask that the Father's name be greater and more precious than all these things. They are not holy in themselves. It is the opposite; they are a burden on you. **Hallowed be your name** is the prayer that lets go of human performance and lifts us up into the Father's total acceptance of us, into a grace that saves and a love that holds on to us, keeping together our body and mind, our thinking, desires and drives and brings them together under the one name.

Is the Father strongly felt by you? As I have said, our technology, our prosperity, the information age, phones keep interrupting us, the speed of life, all these things are like a lightening show. God cannot compete with all these fireworks; their noise drowns out his name. So, we have to pray, **hallowed be your name** so that he can be felt and heard in our souls, our inner beings. Prayer is the way to shut out the world and its noise and for the Father to expand at the centre. Sit down and pray and discover that he will start with your core and go out into your body and into your work and relationships. Then you find that his name is moving with you throughout the day.