



Worship – Part 16
Acts of Worship – Part 4
Prayer: Hallowed Be Thy Name
GCSP – 08/25/2007

What's in a name? When you here a phrase such as, "He has never done anything to ruin his good name", what does that mean? Does it mean that there is something inherently good about his actual name and his actions could make his name bad?

When we use the word "name" in this context we are talking about character, reputation, integrity, and a whole list of other qualities about the person – not just his actual name.

Actual names carry some importance as well. Our culture doesn't view the naming of a child as a monumental occasion, but in other cultures and in olden days, the meaning of a name had the most bearing when naming a child. Today, most people just want it to sound good – and for some unknown reason many will come up with the strangest spellings to make the name unique.

In Bible times, the name represented the whole person; it could be said that the name was the person. The meaning of your name was something to be cherished and lived up to. This is why many times in Scripture when a character or a destiny was changed, so too was the name changed.

Abram to Abraham in **Genesis 17:4** went from "the father is exalted" to "the father of multitudes." Jacob to Israel in **Genesis 32:28** went from "God has protected" to "God perseveres or persists." Simon to Peter in **Matthew 16:17** went from "hearing one" to "rock." Each of these name changes corresponded to the new direction and destiny of their lives.

Does anybody here know what your name means?

It doesn't hold true all the time, but it is pretty amazing how often people exhibit the characteristics associated with the meaning of their name even when they didn't know what that meaning was.

The name Alfred means, "Wise counselor." Pretty cool, huh? But wait, it gets better. The shortened version of my name, Al, means "Handsome." So I am the handsome, wise counselor – and I might add, the humble, handsome, wise counselor. Oh, and I need to add one more; the humble, handsome, wise counselor who loves cats. And if you weren't here last week, you will need to get the tape to better understand that.

Turn with me in your Bibles to **Matthew 6**.

We are working our way through a passage that is commonly known as the Lord's Prayer. I have mentioned several times that this is meant to be a model prayer, not necessarily a prayer to be repeated word-for-word. So I am looking at each phrase to help us gain a better understanding of how Jesus instructs us to pray.

Matthew 6:9-13

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen'" (NASB).

Let's pray.

Before Jesus gave this model prayer to His disciples, He set the stage by giving two illustrations that taught the principle of humility. He showed us that when we give to the poor we should do so in secret, and He showed us that when we have opportunity to pray in public we should do so with an attitude of humility and not to impress those who may hear us.

It is only after making this important point that Jesus gives us a model prayer. In this model we have the general components of a God-honoring prayer. If we grasp the intent and meaning contained in Jesus' teaching, we will have skeleton or a framework in which we can hang our prayers that will honor God and obtain glorious results.

Jesus Himself tells us this is a model for prayer right up front.

v. 9a

"Pray, then, in this way."

I spoke of several biblical examples of men and women of God praying then in this way – and we saw the miraculous results and power that was contained in their prayers. So we must not take lightly this simple phrase, **"Pray, then, in this way."**

We also saw last week that God's purpose in prayer is to glorify Himself and His Son. All prayer should have the primary intent to honor and glorify God. We looked at **John 14:13**, which says, **"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son"** (NASB).

So when we add the postscript to our prayers, "In Jesus' name, amen" we are not simply talking about the actual name, "Jesus", we are speaking of the character, the reputation, the integrity, and everything else that is Jesus. We are saying, Lord fulfill this prayer only as it brings honor and glory to You.

We also saw in **1 John 5:14-15** that all prayers that are prayed according to God's will are guaranteed to be answered just as we asked. John says, **"This is the confidence we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him"** (NASB).

So praying in Jesus' name is simply praying according to God's will. When we pray according to God's will we see our prayers answered in great detail and in miraculous ways. True prayer, just like true worship, centers on God's glory, not on man's needs.

If you make a habit of praying according to God's will, you will begin to see the impossible and the miraculous happening in your life and in the life of His church.

You will know God and know His will by knowing His Word, and even when we do not specifically know God's will, **Romans 8:26-27** tells us the Holy Spirit will take our humble prayers and translate them into God's will so that they will be answered. It is a pretty amazing concept when you take some time and contemplate the beauty and glory and privilege that is prayer.

We then briefly looked at the first component of a God-honoring prayer.

v. 9b

"Our Father who is in heaven..."

If you are here tonight and you have accepted His gift of salvation, God is your Father. As **Romans 8:15** says, we are to cry out Him, "Abba Father!" Probably the best English translation of the word "Abba" would be "Papa" or "Daddy." You can look to God as your loving papa who wants nothing more than to love you unconditionally, care for you compassionately, provide for you lavishly, and be there for you whenever you have need or just want to talk.

But we need to balance the familiarity of calling God "papa" with the reverence, awe, and respect of calling Him God.

v. 9c

"Hallowed be Your name."

Outside of the times you have recited this model prayer, when was the last time you used the word "hallowed" in your conversation?

It comes from the Greek word, "*hagiazō*" and it means, "Sanctify; consecrate; dedicate; purify; and to set apart." In most cases, the English New Testament translates *hagiazō* as sanctify or sanctified. It is only translated as hallowed here and in **Luke 11:2** where Jesus is once again teaching His disciples how to pray.

Sanctifying God's name is the very first request we are taught to make. After we address our Father God and come before Him as a little child would come to his loving earthly father, we are to immediately focus on who God is. We ask God to set apart His name, His character, His glory, His honor, and His majesty. Our very first and foremost request is that God be magnified through all the earth.

Your prayers must not be a casual routine that gives passing homage to God and then immediately focuses on you.

Analyze how you usually pray. Most will begin with "Dear Lord," "Dear God," "Heavenly Father," "Dear Jesus," or some combination of these. And that is typically the extent of giving honor to God in most prayers. After this brief acknowledgment of His name, the rest of the focus is on me, myself, and I.

If this is typical of your prayers, then you need to take heed to the words Jesus is saying. You need to allow this teaching of "**Hallowed be Your name**" to open up a dimension in your prayers of reverence, awe, appreciation, honor, adoration, and godly fear. You need to contemplate the character of God. You need to focus on His awesome power, His infinite wisdom and knowledge, His ultimate might, His unconditional love, His unlimited provision and protection, and His unsurpassed holiness. You need to be so utterly focused on God that your supposed needs and problems melt away in His presence. You should come before God with the purpose and priority of glorifying and honoring and magnifying Him.

This is God's priority and it should also be ours.

Hallowed is a good word, and hopefully it has a fresh meaning to you as you apply this truth to your prayers.

But as awesome as God is, many struggle with this aspect of prayer. They struggle because they just do not know God's character as they should. Unfortunately the blame for this can at least partially be placed on the translators of the English Bible. In the Hebrew and Greek, there are many names attributed to God, and each one shines the spotlight on one of God's infinite characteristics. There is tremendously rich meaning and depth behind the various names of God

in the Hebrew and Greek, but when we read our English Bibles, we simply have God or Lord most of the time.

But if such tremendous importance was placed on the names of people based upon what each name meant, how much more should the meaning behind the names of God be? So let's spend the rest of our time tonight briefly exploring several of God's names, so we can know and appreciate more exactly who we are hallowing in our prayers.

The most general name for God is "El." El literally means "power" or "preeminence." It is interchangeable with Yahweh in ancient Hebrew writings. It is most often compounded with other names, as we will see in just a moment. El was used as part of the names given to many people in the Bible and still today – although I doubt very many today know what they are doing or implying by its use.

For example, the name Eliezer means "God is help." The name Elijah means "Yahweh is my God." Joel = "Yahweh is God." Samuel = "Dedicated to God."

El is used in the Hebrew for God of glory in **Psalm 29:3**, God of knowledge in **1 Samuel 2:3**, and God of salvation in **Isaiah 12:2**.

Elohim = Creator or The All-Powerful One. It is usually coupled with Yahweh in the Hebrew Scripture meaning "Yahweh your God" or "Yahweh your Creator." Elohim described the intensely personal and possessive relationship between God and Israel.

Compounds of the name El include:

El-Shaddai = God Almighty or The All-Sufficient One or The God of the Mountains. In **Genesis 17:1**, the Lord appears to Abram and says, "**I am God Almighty**" (El-Shaddai). It also means "complete, perfect, and all-powerful."

El-Elyon = God Most High or God Exalted. In **Genesis 14:18**, Melchizedek is called "**a priest of God Most High**" (El-Elyon). It rightfully implies that God is the Maker and Possessor of all creation.

El-Olam = The Everlasting God or The Eternal God. Abraham uses this name for God at Beersheba in **Genesis 21:33**. **Psalm 90:2** says, "**Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.**"

El-Roi = The God Who Sees Me. Sarah's handmaiden, Hagar, is the only one to use this name in Scripture after she was sent away with her son, Ishmael, to die in the wilderness (**Genesis 16:13**). God saw her affliction and protected Hagar and Ishmael.

If you had to pick one of the many names of God that could be most identified as simply His name, as opposed to descriptors of His character, that name would be Yahweh or Jehovah. Shorter forms of Yahweh have been used, such as, "Yah" which is sometimes used with a "J" instead of a "Y." The word "hallelujah" simply means, "praise Yah" or praise God.

Yahweh is the name God gives Himself when He speaks to Moses and tells him to tell the people His name is "I Am." It can literally mean the Self-Existent One.

The name Jehovah, like the name El, has several compounds used to bring a specific characteristic of God to light.

Jehovah-Jireh = The Lord Will Provide. Abraham first used this name in Scripture when God provided a ram to sacrifice on the altar in which Isaac lay (**Genesis 22:14**).

Jehovah-Mekaddishkem = The Lord Who Sanctifies. **Exodus 31:13** is the first reference to the God who Sanctifies. The Lord called himself by this name in stressing the importance of observing the Sabbath Day rest.

Jehovah-Nissi = The Lord is My Banner. When ancient armies would march into battle and especially when they marched home victorious, they would raise a banner identifying their king. After God defeated the Amalekites, "**Moses built an altar and named it the Lord is my Banner**" (**Exodus 17:15** - NASB).

Jehovah-Rapha = The Lord Who Heals. In **Exodus 15:26** God says of Himself, "**I, the Lord, am your healer.**"

Jehovah-Rohi = The Lord is My Shepherd. David uses this name of God in the **23rd Psalm**.

Jehovah-Sabaoth = The Lord of Hosts. This name of God is found in many Scriptures and depending upon which translation you use, it may be rendered as "The Lord Almighty."

Jehovah-Shalom = The Lord is Peace. In **Judges 6:24**, Gideon builds an altar in recognition of this name of God. When Isaiah calls the Messiah "The Prince of Peace" he uses this name.

Jehovah-Shammah = The Lord is There or The Lord is My Companion. God revealed this name to the prophet Ezekiel as He was giving him a vision of the New Jerusalem (**Ezekiel 48:35**).

Jehovah-Tsidkenu = The Lord Our Righteousness. **Jeremiah 23:6** and **33:16** use this name of God, both times in reference to the Kingdom.

Another prominent name used in Scripture is Adonai, which simply means Lord or Master.

All of these names and infinitely more give us a glimpse of who God is. The immense awesomeness of God cannot ever be fully explained or described, but as we dwell on the names we do have, and as we study the passages that lead to the use of one of these names, we will begin to grasp who God truly is. And we will know what it means to hallow His name – and this will lead us to a fuller and more meaningful and more powerful prayer life.

Now I hope this just whet your appetite a little to get to know God better and better each day, and I trust that the next time you pause to pray, you will dwell on Him longer before you start telling Him about all of the things you think you need.

Let's pray.