

**SERMON: MATTHEW 6:9-13 and LUKE 11:2-4**  
**“THE HONOR DUE OUR FATHER’S NAME”**

*Our Father Who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.* (COMMON WORDING OF THE LORD’S PRAYER.)

Does the Bible anywhere say it’s Ok to dishonor father or mother’s name? No—quite the opposite. “*Honor your father and mother, that it may be well with you and that you may live long life on the earth*” (Ephesians 6:3)—also known as the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment (Exodus 20:12). In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus instructs us to honor the name of God, our heavenly Father, who has adopted us back into His family through Jesus. We address him in love as Father, not “Your Honor,” “Sir,” “Mister.”

In this prayer, in this heart-to-heart talk with God,” Jesus teaches us seven “petitions.” Note that the word is not “partition,” but “petition.” A partition is a “section” or “part” (as in, “I partitioned off a section of the basement”). However, a “petition,” is a request (as in, “The voters signed a petition to change the speed limit.”). In the first “petition” or request, we say to our Father, *Hallowed be Thy Name.* For prayer to mean anything, we need to understand what we are asking. I admit it is difficult to understand what one is asking when saying to God, *Hallowed be Thy Name.*

“Hallowed” is similar to “holy.” And both are related to “hale” and “healthy”—top notch. When something is “hallowed” it is regarded with highest honor, it is treated as being separate and above other things. For example a tour guide at the Civil War Battlefield of Gettysburg may say, “We are walking on hallowed ground” meaning these acres are highly honored and respected—many men shed their blood and died here. In the first petition, we are saying, “Dear Father, Honored be Thy Name.”

Next—and for many this may be simple—but likely not for all, especially for younger ones: *Thy name.* What does the word “thy” mean? The word “thy,” is related to “thou” and to “thee” (that is, “thee” with two e’s, not to be confused with the same-sounding word with one e, as in “THE” book). “Thy,” “thou,” and “thee” are old English words for “you” and “your.” “Thy book” means “your” book. “Thy name” means “Your name.” “Hallowed be Thy Name” means “Father, hallowed or honored be Your Name.”

We also need to talk about the word “be.” “Be” is a form of the word “is” or “are.” Using bad grammar, someone may say, “These shoes be too tight. What is meant is “My shoes are too tight.” “My finger be sore,” “My finger is sore.” In the Lord’s Prayer “Hallowed be Your Name” is not bad grammar. The first petition is not saying, “Your name is honored.” The word “be” here is used correctly. Examples: Perhaps a neighbor says when leaving, “Well, your day be good” or parents say, “Son, be good!” “Be” is used to express a wish, a request, a command. So here, “Father, hallowed be Thy Name.” “Father, please see to it that Your Name be honored.”

God can’t make His Name any more holy or honorable than it already is, but we are asking Him to make it more holy and honorable in the way we treat it in our miserable sinful hearts and lives. “Father, see to it that we hallow/honor Your Name even more.” We are not telling God what to do here. But we are saying, Father, You have already told us to honor Your Name: *I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images* “Isaiah 42:8). Now lead us to do what you told us to do in the first place, to honor and respect Your Name.” “Dear Father, honored be your Name among us, in our hearts and lives in this world.”

Finally, what is God’s “Name”? What do we mean by that? Certainly, just as you have a label, an identity tag, a term by which you are addressed so as to differentiate you from everyone else—Jason, Matthew, Paul, Margaret, Laura, Sue—so does God: LORD, Jehovah, Christ, Jesus, Redeemer, Holy Spirit. We are saying, “Father, lead us to honor the names by which we address You.” How does one *dishonor* the names of God? By using them carelessly and blasphemously. “Lord Almighty, did you see that!” “God, did that hurt!” Dishonoring God’s Name.

But God has another name besides any term of address, or identity label—just as you do. If your name is Jeremy or Debra, you have another name besides that. I don’t mean your last name, or your middle name. I don’t mean your nickname. You also have a “name” in the sense of a reputation. Do you have a good name among family, friends, and neighbors—honest, willing to help, pleasant, kind? Or a bad name—thief, lazy, grump, smart-

mouth? God's reputation is good—holy, almighty, all-wise, loving, kind, merciful, forgiving in Jesus, fair, just, dispensing to the rebellious and wicked their “due,” punishing them for despising Him who made them, blessed them, and sent His Son for them. God has given His own very good summary of His reputation. After Israel had worshiped the golden calf while Moses was getting the 10 Commandments the first time, God rightfully disciplined the people and mercifully gave Moses the 10 Commandments a second time. We read that the LORD *descended in the cloud and stood with him [Moses] there—and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”* (Exodus 34:5-7).

God's name, God's reputation, centers in His giving His Son whom He sent to be the sacrifice and Savior of all the sinners of the world. What love! *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins* (1 John 4:10). *All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.* (John 5:23). Dishonoring Christ dishonors the Father.

Using all the definitions from above, then, *Hallowed be Thy Name* equals, “Father, see to it that Your Name--labels and reputation--are kept honored and holy by us.” What does it mean for everyday life? What are we asking God to help us do? or to keep us from doing? 1) Using His names carelessly, to curse, swear, etc. dishonors His Name. You are dishonoring your Father's reputation when you call on Him to “damn to hell--it, someone, something.” God does not just willy-nilly damn things to hell because they displease you. Hell is for the rebellious and wicked, who turn away from Him, who have no use for Him, for His rescuing Son, or His counseling Spirit in their hearts. So we ask, Father, help us not to do that.

What else dishonors God's reputation? 2) Where is His reputation given to us? In the Bible! Every truth in the Bible is God's reputation. To mis-use the Bible is to dishonor His name and reputation. “*Thy Word is Truth,*” Jesus said (John 17:17). Also, regarding the devil, Jesus said, “*When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it*” (John 8:44). Every departure from the Truth of Holy Scripture is a lie from Satan. The New Man of faith in the Christian does not hold hands with Satan and his lies. Therefore *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves* (Matthew 7:15). *For I [Paul] know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you [from the outside], not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves [from the inside] men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch! and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified* (Acts 20:28-32). Thus, “Father, help us to be devoted to the Truth of Your Word. By abiding in the Truth we honor Your great and glorious name. Let us not dishonor Your name by believing, teaching, promoting, condoning, accepting any lies of Satan.” *Hallowed be Thy Name.*

What else besides cursing and swearing, and supporting the lies of Satan and false teaching dishonor God's name? 3) Can a child ruin his parents' reputation without saying a word against them? Yes, by the way the child lives! A troublesome child who ends up in “juvie” court, in spite of his parents' training, nurture and love, not only ruins his own reputation but that of his parents. Likewise, the way you live reflects either highly or poorly on your Father who sent His Son in whom you are justified and set free. As a child of God in Christ, any command of God that you break in this world, makes Him look bad. Your bad behavior dishonors God's name. Contrary-wise, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.* (Matthew 5:16). Living as God wants, hallows and honors His Name.

In this first request or petition, Jesus teaches us go to our Father in heaven, earnestly pleading that the Father lead us to honor Him, His gift of forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life in Jesus by which we escape the wrath and punishment for sin in hell, and to honor His Spirit who points our hearts to Jesus. The solution to our greatest need and every need is our Father's incomparable compassion in Jesus. This is to His glory. Honor Him.

Luther explained the 1<sup>st</sup> Petition in this way in his Small Catechism: *Hallowed be Thy Name. What does this mean?* God's name is certainly holy by itself, but we pray in this petition that we too may keep it holy. *How is this done?* When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as children of God lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this dear Father in heaven! But whoever teaches and lives contrary to God's Word dishonors God's name among us. Keep us from doing this dear Father in heaven!

Amen! So be it!

Pastor Kanzenbach---