

**Lord, teach us to pray:  
#3 – “Glory and Praise”**

**Matthew 6: 9  
Psalms 29, 100 and 150**

We have been looking at the model prayer which Jesus taught his disciples when they asked, Lord, teach us to pray.

Last week, we were considering the privilege Jesus gives us in this prayer, allowing us to call his Father our Father. Through his grace, we have been adopted as the children of God – precious, beloved and cherished. Through his grace, we get to come, just as we are, into the very presence of the holy and almighty God of heaven and earth, who is our Father, in perfect confidence of his desire to welcome us, forgive us and transform us to become ever more fully our own true and holy selves, as we were created to be, even into the likeness of Christ. Through Jesus’ grace, we get to call out to God in all our frailty, brokenness and need, knowing our Father who loves us and hears us, will respond with mercy and blessing.

In the Alpha Course, Nicki Gumble was sharing how the Holy Spirit enables us to be sure of our adoption as God’s children through Christ. Gumble then made reference to Prince Charles, and the fact of his many titles. He is the Heir Apparent to the Crown, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cornwall, Knight of the Garter, Colonel in Chief of the Royal Regiment of Wales, Duke of Rothesay, Knight of the Thistle, Rear Admiral of the Royal Navy, Great Master of the Order of Bath, Earl of Chester, Earl of Carrick, Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles, and the Great Steward of Scotland. Yet to his sons, William and Harry, he is first of all, Dad. When we become children of God, we are given such intimacy of relationship with our heavenly King. When we come to faith in Jesus, when we receive

his Holy Spirit, we are ushered into this new reality and new joy, and we get to pray, Abba, Our Father.

Having said that, let me affirm this. While William and Harry may call Charles “Dad”, Charles never ceases to be Heir Apparent to the Crown, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Cornwall and all those other grand titles. He never ceases to carry the honour and authority that is his by virtue of who he is. How much more so is this true with God. Though we are given the welcome into the arms and heart of God and are afforded this incredible privilege of calling God our Father, never does our Father cease to be the Lord, the Almighty, the Holy and Righteous One, God of God and Lord of Lords, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Blessed One. And while we are given the gift of such intimate relationship with God through Christ that we may call him our Father, never does the Lord cease to deserve all the glory and praise that is due to him because of who he is, in and of himself. Never does our Father cease to be worthy not just of all our love but of all honour, respect, majesty, glory and praise.

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. No where else in scripture do we find the precise term which we translate as hallowed other than here in the Lord’s Prayer. Our English word, “hallowed” essentially means to be held holy, or to be seen as different and separate. The reference to God’s Name means God’s very nature and character – who God is in himself. As an example, the Psalmist said that some trust in horses and some trust in chariots, but God’s people would trust in the name of the Lord our God – that is, in who God is. For God’s name to be hallowed means to recognize not just God’s name but that He himself is holy, unique and exalted, worthy of worship, trust, love, obedience and praise.

Alternate translations have rendered the phrase “may your name be kept holy” or else “may your name be held holy.” William Barclay tried to sum up the meaning of the phrase this

way: "May all reverence be given your name." Eugene Peterson in *The Message* simply put "Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are" with the clear implication that when God makes himself known to us and we come to know his faithfulness, his holy unconditional love and goodness, then all the love and praise God deserves will naturally and inevitably be summoned forth from thankful hearts. Hallowed be your name, our Father. Praise and glory and worship and honour, majesty, and love be given to you. You are worthy of nothing less. And even our highest, noblest and most wonderful praise falls short of what you deserve by right because of who you are, our Father.

But the phrase, hallowed by your name, conveys something more personally commanding. To pray those words is to say, Father, may I hallow and honour your Name. May your name receive the glory and praise you deserve – from me! May my heart reverence you as you deserve. May my life be marked with holy infatuation with you – may I love you as I ought; may I give you first place in my heart as you deserve. Lord, ever before I start asking for daily bread for the body and peace for the soul, for forgiveness for my sins and a spirit of mercy towards others, for protection on my way and guiding help to remain in your way, Lord, may I first of all simply love you for who you are. Before I ask, may I praise!

May I revel in you who has lavished on me love beyond comprehension. May I paint the town red with thankfulness for this world you have made, for giving me life, for what you have done for me through your Son, for the gift of hope restored, the wonder of joy unconquerable, for the promise of life everlasting. May I learn to marvel and never cease being absolutely astonished at the tenderness of your love for me, at the strength of your love with me, and at the power of your love to heal, change, free and make me new. May I celebrate, glory and whoop and holler and let all the bells ring with gladness because you, our Father, have shown in and of yourself what

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real love, true love, perfect love, holy love looks like and in Jesus you have abundantly and unstintingly poured out that love to me. Father, hallowed by your name, by me, by us.

When able to do so, I've been watching the CBC documentary, *Village on a Diet*. For those who may not know the reference, it is a reality show in which the town of Taylor, BC is filmed as it corporately tries to lose a ton of weight over a ten week period through a combination of diet, exercise and change of life style. It is a fascinating reveal of how out of shape and lacking in basic health consciousness most Canadians are—because it is, after all, not simply about the good folk of Taylor, BC, it is about us all. It reveals what an undisciplined lot we really are when it comes to taking care of ourselves. It also paints a picture of how much junk food Canadians really do eat.

One of the professionals who has come to Taylor to help them in their quest to lose a ton of weight is a psychologist. As part of her equipping of Taylorites, she offered tips on how to eat. For instance, she encouraged them to put their fork down in between bites. She suggested they take a sip of water after each mouthful of food was swallowed. Such simple practices do a couple of things. It slows us down in our eating which is good for digestion. It increases our fluid intake which also aids digestion but gives us a sense of being filled, thus reducing our food intake. It helps us relax, to learn to savour each bite, and spend more time in conversation with others around the table. It helps change our mealtime from being a competition to a communion – from seeing how fast we can wolf down our food so as to run off to the next errand or activity, and become instead a time of relaxation, refreshment and blessing.

As the folk of Taylor were being taught about healthy ways of eating, I began to ponder the parallels with prayer. I suspect all too many of us pray in much the way we eat, which is in a hurry and on the run and with only the agenda of our demanding "make-me-feel-good" want list uppermost on our

minds. And we wonder why our souls seem so unwell, our spiritual lives feel so flabby, our living for Jesus is so anaemic and our hearts so lacking of the joy that should belong to those who get to call God our Father.

Maybe a lot has to do with our failure to hallow and reverence the name, and our forgetting that at the heart of all prayer and all relationship with God lies simple adoration for who he is. Someone once said that no more eloquent prayer exists than "Wow!" Andrew Murray noted that while ordinarily we bring our own needs to God in prayer before we ever begin to think of what belongs rightly to God and his interests, Jesus, in the Lord's Prayer, reverses the order. First thy name, thy kingdom, thy will; and only then give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us. Why? It's not because we have to appease God, pacify or bribe God with cheap praises before we can down to begging or cajoling a reluctant deity to parcel out a blessing or two. Rather, when we remember the vastness of his love, the generosity of his love, the faithfulness of his love, the undeserved richness of his love, the constancy and dependency of his loving goodness, then we become able to release our frantic anxieties, our desperate brokenness, our shame and fear and needs into his hands and into his care, assured that God really does already know what we need. He already knows how we need his grace to mend us and has in fact already done everything for us for our forgiveness and salvation. When Jesus told his disciples not to worry about what they should eat or what they should wear, he said that God already knew what they needed. Instead they should seek first his kingdom – that is, seek God – and everything else would be added to them.

Remember the old song: *Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.*

When we learn just to praise God because He is so good; when we begin to revel in Him and in the glory of his love

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for us like a kid turned loose in a candy shop might be ready to turn inside out with joy; when we begin to lose ourselves and our anxieties in the beauty and might and power and wisdom and wonder and worthy of his deep, holy love and nature and character, we begin at last to find ourselves; we begin truly to rest in and grow in hope; we find our peace as we simply marvel and trust in who God is. Our Father, hallowed be your name. You are worthy.

Jody Eareckson Tada once was describing her vision of what heaven would be like. She first of all recalled how in her childhood every Sunday morning worship service began with the singing of the first verse of the hymn, Holy, Holy, Holy. Except, she said, it always felt like a bit of a funeral dirge, with everyone drawling out the words in a spirit of utter boredom. How many people caricature heaven as an eternal boring church service.

Contrasted to that, she said, is the uncontained excitement of seeing something so glorious, so beautiful, that the vision of it summons from the deepest core of our being an expression of wonder and praise – holy, holy, holy! Heaven will be like that, Tada suggested. When we see God in all his glory and in all his perfect love for us, all we will be able to do is stutter in answering love, Holy! Holy! Wow! And eternity will not be long enough to be startled, amazed, captivated, enthralled by how good, how beautiful, how holy our God really is.

Heaven, of course, doesn't just happen after these old mortal bodies of ours give up the ghost. Heaven is wherever the presence of God is, and when we learn to take time and savour the beauty and promise and goodness and glory of God, when we rest in and marvel at his depth and height and length and breadth of his love for us, when we simply wait on God and turn our hearts to who he is, heaven begins, and his Name gets hallowed, in us, by us. St. Augustine said that God thirsts to be thirsted after, and when we simply glory in him, rejoice in him,

yield thanks and praise to him, as another writer put it, that surely puts tears in the eyes of God.

The first question in the old Westminster catechism asked what is the chief end, that is, the chief purpose of man? The answer: To glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Our Father, hallowed be thy name.

Let us pray:

*When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright  
shining as the sun; We've no less days to sing God's praise,  
Than when we've first begun.*

Holy God, we love you; only help us love you more. To You, to whom all creation cries "Glory", may we give glory. To you, who made us and whose we are, may we enter your presence with thanksgiving and with praise for your name, for you are good and your love endures forever. To you, O God, may praise be given from everything that has breath, but to you, O God our Father, may praise especially be given from us. Lord, help us so to think on you always that we would praise you always. Help us so to rest in you ever that ever we would know peace and joy. Help us ever to look to you, that ever we might glory in you. You deserve no less. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.