

Hallowed be Thy Name
The Lord's Prayer # 2
Calling On The Name Of The Lord
Archibald Wallace

We know a lot of people and things by their name. For example, if I said the name "Hitler," it would immediately bring to mind memories of one of the worst people of history, one who killed and stole and lied. And, if I said you were a Hitler, you would know what it meant I was saying about you. We know many things and people by their names—think of the image that comes to mind when you hear Golden Arches? Or Niagara, or Reagan, or Washington.

Names are important in that they can tell us a lot about a person, they identify us, so, suppose you were a Hatfield or a McCoy? Or a Yankee or a Southerner? What would that say about you as a beginning?

One of my favorite plays, *Romeo and Juliet*, by William Shakespeare, has Romeo debating about the value of a name. You see, Romeo was a Montague in Verona, Italy and he loved Juliet, but she was a Capulet, and the Montagues and Capulets hated each other for some perceived abuse of yesteryear, and by thre time Romeo and Juliet fell in love, the families were feuding and could not stand the name of the other. Romeo's love for Juliet was forbidden because of her last name—Juliet was a Capulet and anything named Capulet was bad. Romeo lamented their last names and the power they held over the situation of star crossed lovers, and one day he mused these lines:

"Tis but thy name that is my enemy—
Thou art thyself, though, not a Montague.
O be some other name,
What's in a name?"

What's in a name? A lot! In many cultures, parents wait to give a name until the personality of the child is known—not our culture.. In other cultures, names are changed to reflect what a person has become: In the Old Testament,

Abram, meaning exalted father, became Abraham, father of many nations;
Jacob, the deceiver, became Israel, after he wrestled with God's angel, meaning one who has struggled with God.

Saul became Paul—the world's greatest missionary;
Simon became Peter, to show the rock he had become.

In the Hebrew culture names were important; your name described who or whose you were: if a name had "el" or "ah" on the end it meant the person belonged to God. Elijah meant God is my God; Elisha meant my God saves. Some names had specific, very important names—Joshua meant, he who saves, and it was the same name given Jesus, 1500 years later. Names counted and meant something. Moses asked at the burning bush, when being commissioned by God to go and rescue God's people from Egypt, who shall I say it is who sent me? In other words: what's your name? And God said, tell them, "I Am" sent you.

Today, we are continuing with a part of the prayer Jesus taught his disciples, a prayer we wrongly call "The Lord's Prayer," —Jesus did not pray it himself; it was a model to be used by believers. We turn today to the words, "Hallowed be thy name!" And, we start with the premise that Jesus did not give them a new prayer, but used Scriptures he knew well from the Old Testament, which he synthesized and drew together to form a prayer that was complete and inclusive of all of the great concerns of the Old testament. Last week, we looked at "Our Father," and how it signaled a close personal relationship between us and God. This week, we will look at "Hallowed be thy name." So. Let's begin with some of the information about God's name that is included in the Old Testament.

Our first reading is Genesis 4:25-26

25 Adam made love to his wife Eve again, and they gave birth to a son named Seth, meaning God has granted us another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.

26 At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord.

The name of the Lord---what is it?

Another reading is from Leviticus 22:31-32

31 Keep my commandments and follow them, for I am the Lord.

32 Do not profane my holy name for I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites.

My holy Name!

And, a third reading-- Malachi 1:11: predicting the future through prophecy ---

11 My name will be great among the nations from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me because my name will be great among the nations," says the Lord Almighty.

THE WORD OF THE LORD!

Israel called on the name of the Lord from the beginning and Israel learned early that it was not to profane God's holy name. Israel was also told God's name would in time be on the lips of every nation and every people. But what was or is God's name? A little boy one Sunday heard his preacher ask if any one knew God's name? The boy held up his hand and when the preacher called on him, the boy said: ANDy, Andy is God's name. When asked where he got Andy, the boy said from the song: "And He walks with me and He talks with me." Andy is not God's name.

Truth is, if we read every passage that talks about God and his name, we would learn that the names they used were descriptive of what God did or could do, but they were not God's name. In time Israel took God seriously about the holiness of God's name and would not say it—it was so special. They said Lord instead and in time came to a spelling that was unpronounceable. They didn't want anyone saying it out loud—it was so special. That spelling is what I shared with you last week —YHWH,—try and say it! It sounds like the wind passing over your lips.

Jesus knew this background and he knew the Scriptures about God and he knew his father, our Father. So, in formulating a model prayer, Jesus wanted us to know our God was special, different, all everything, so nstead of revealing his name, he revealed the specialness of the one and only God it stood

for. Jesus wanted to be sure that when we prayed to our father, we acknowledged right at the beginning the greatness and the specialness of the one we were praying with, Hallowed be thy name. That phrase acknowledges we are coming into God's presence, and we must come humbly, and we must not come demanding. We come to someone so special, so unique, that there is none other like him. And we are told right at the beginning of our prayer with God, you must acknowledge who God is, and you must show that God lives in your heart, and you must proclaim that you are mindful of the gulf between you and God. All of these you do when you pray, Hallowed be thy name. In saying this, we acknowledge that God is our maker, our sustainer, our redeemer and our friend. We are his subjects and we live in his Kingdom, in his universe. Hallowed be the name of the one who loves us so much, he could not help but create, and could not help but provide for our every need.

The word Hallowed comes from the Greek word "hagios," meaning holy-- Separate, special, set apart. When we use the word in our prayer we are saying our God is the one and only God, that God is real, and that God is here, living in our hearts, going wherever we go.

By saying God's name is hallowed,

we acknowledge that we know God and we know what God has done and can do and is doing.

By saying God's name is hallowed, we acknowledge the covenant that exists between us, that God loves us, that we belong to him, and that we are constantly aware of him in our lives; T

By saying hallowed be thy name, we are committing our lives to God, acknowledging our submission to God and promising we will live life in trust and obedience to him.

Going back to the question of God's name, God said who He was often in Scripture;

He told Moses his name was: I AM.

He told John in Revelation. "I am Alpha and Omega," the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet, meaning he was/is the first and the last of all things. He was here before we were and he will be here after we are no more.

He told Ezekiel at the valley of the dry bones, when he said someday all of the bones would dance again, that he could do this because, "I am God Almighty."

In Genesis they wrote his name as "Elohim"—God, the mighty creator.

Later in Genesis they wrote his name as "Adonai,"—meaning Master or Lord, the one who has control over us in everything.

Another Genesis notation is where he gave his name as "El-Shaddai"—God Almighty.

In Exodus 3 God's name is recorded as "Jehovah," or the one true God.

In almost every instance when a name is given for God, it is a descriptor of something God did or could do. It wasn't until Jesus came, that we finally are given a full revelation of who God is, what God does, and what God expects of us. In the name of Jesus—he who saves—we see once more the essence of God in the name.

I want to end with a song by modern pop singer Hailee Steinfeld. The song is called "Your Name Hurts." She sings of a relationship breakup and of how much it hurts, and she uses these words in one refrain.

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Your name hurts (Your name hurts)
I don't say it no more
It's like the worst of words (Worst of words)
You don't even know
Feels like burning on my lips
The ones you used to kiss
No way you ain't feeling it too
I hope my name hurts, my name hurts
My name hurts you (You, you, you)

Hailee Steinfeld was in pain when the letters of his name came across her lips; she even called it the worst of words. But, we have a name that is different, the name of one who loves us dearly, who has done everything possible to save us from ourselves. The one who has saved us is named in Scripture as Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. His name is Jesus, he who saves. Hallowed be thy name.

It doesn't hurt to say his name. In fact it's just the opposite. But Hailee's song –Your Name Hurts, should open us to hear God's call for us to come home, because if we don't, if we won't repent and turn to God, then we may be singing her song in the wrong place. It is our choice, and we may never have it again. I hope and pray each of you has or will choose the song of life. The one that says thy name is holy, before it hurts for having passed.

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