

**The Sermon on the Mount
Hallowed Be Your Name!
Matthew 6:9
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When I was a young Christian, I made the same New Year's resolution, it seemed like, year after year in those early years, and yet failed to keep it. Maybe you've done the same thing. My resolution was: I'm going to read through the Bible this year. Now that is a resolution I highly recommend and something I have since done, but in the early days of my Christian life, I began January 1st with great enthusiasm and excitement and energy, excited about all that I was going to learn. What could be more exhilarating than sort of watching over God's shoulder as He speaks the universe into existence? And I loved reading the story of the patriarchs and seeing God's incredible providence as He worked in their lives, and His grace to them because they were flawed and imperfect men, and I realized God could show grace to me in spite of who I am, just as He did to them. And of course, then you come to what is the greatest Old Testament miracle, the miracle of the Exodus, when God with a mighty arm and an outstretched hand, brings His people out of the slavery of Egypt, illustrating His ability to bring all of us out of the slavery of sin.

And then came Leviticus. All Scripture is profitable. I understood that then. I understand it now. But as a new Christian, I wasn't exactly clear on how Leviticus was profitable. In fact, I think that's where most Christians stumble in their well-intentioned resolution to read through the Scripture – somewhere in the early chapters of Leviticus. Understand this. Leviticus 1 through 17 has one basic message that you and I need to get, and it is foundational to human existence. The lesson is this: the only way that sinful man can approach holy God is through the sacrifice of an innocent substitute. That's it. The only way you and I as sinful human beings, can ever hope to enter the presence of God is if an innocent substitute dies in our place, and our guilt is transferred to that person or to that thing.

In Leviticus 1-7, Moses lays out the five sacrifices that were to be a part of the system of sacrifices for Israel. It is a detailed, almost laborious description of those sacrifices, because it's outlining that the only way you and I can ever approach holy God is through sacrifice. In chapter 8 of Leviticus, Moses then consecrates the priests. Specifically, he consecrates Aaron, his older brother, and Aaron's sons, Moses' nephews, to become the priests – those who will offer this complex system of animal sacrifices, which pictured the reality of the Messiah who would come. But if you think that actually carrying out those instructions for Aaron and his sons was as tedious as it is for you to read it, then you've never really read Leviticus.

I want us to start there this morning. Look at Leviticus 9:1.

Now it came about on the eighth day (*this is after all the system of sacrifices has been put into place, after Moses has consecrated his older brother Aaron and his sons to the priesthood*) that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel; (*those men who were the leaders in their tribes and clans*) and he said to Aaron, I want you now to offer. . . (*notice in verse 2*) a sin offering and a burnt offering and (*down in verse 4*)... a peace offering. . . (*Verse 5*) So they took what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of meeting...

This is the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a tent made up of two compartments – the Holy of Holies where God had His throne room, as it were, and the holy place into which the priests could enter. Then there was a courtyard. And in that courtyard, there was an altar of sacrifice, a bronze altar, where the animals were to be slain and parts of them burned. Surrounding that courtyard was something that amounted to a curtain that kept the people out, and this facility was in the very middle of the camp of Israel. And so verse 5 says:

Aaron and his sons took what Moses had commanded them to the front of the tent of meeting, (*the tabernacle*) and then the whole congregation came near and stood before the Lord. (*Some two million plus Jews gather around this tent that symbolizes God's presence among His people*) Moses said, 'This is the thing which the Lord has commanded you to do, that the glory of the Lord may appear to you.'

So Aaron and his sons then do exactly what God had commanded through Moses and they offer the sacrifices that they had prepared to offer. Now notice what happens, verse 22.

After Aaron had slain the animals, "he lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down (*that is, from that elevated altar where the animals had been slain,*) after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And then Moses and Aaron (*left that altar that was there in the courtyard, and they*) went into the tent of meeting. (*into the holy place*) When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people (*probably the shekinah, that blazing glory cloud that manifested God's presence. Watch what happens next in verse 24. As they're standing there, near that altar with those dead animal parts on it*) fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

Now for those looking for one, that was a worship experience. Fire actually comes out from the presence of God across that courtyard and consumes, in a moment, incinerates those animal parts that are on that altar.

Tragically, sin quickly follows. Leviticus 10:1. “Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, *(from the ashes and the fire that’s still burning, that God had made on that altar)* they placed incense on those pans and they offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.” Now there are many different ideas about what Nadab and Abihu did and did not do. The options range from taking a role that God had not assigned them to take, to being drunk while they served as priests. I think drunkenness is actually the best explanation because the commands down in verses 8 and 9 are that never again is a priest to drink in the process of serving the Lord. But whatever they did (we can’t be absolutely certain) whatever they did, this much is clear. Look at the end of verse 1: “it was not as He had commanded them.” Now I want you to see God’s response. Look at verse 2: “And fire came out from the presence of the Lord *(just as it had a few minutes before)* and *(consumed that sacrifice, but this time it)* consumed them *(Nadab and Abihu, those who had been consecrated priests, Moses’ nephews, Aaron’s sons)*, and they died before the Lord.” In a moment of time, God flashes out from His presence and consumes them, incinerates them. Verse 3 tells us Moses’ interpretation. Moses says to his now grieving oldest brother, Aaron, “It is what the Lord spoke.” This is exactly what God said, Moses says to Aaron. And then he quotes God: “‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.’ So Aaron, therefore, kept silent.”

Now obviously, the primary application that Moses is making here is for the priests, who as a part of the sacrificial system, approached God to offer sacrifices. But the principle that’s taught in verse 3 is not bound by person or time or location or role or nationality or even by testament. It’s just as true in the New Testament as it is in the Old Testament. It is an unchanging and unchangeable law of God’s moral universe. Look at verse 3 again: “By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and before all the people I will be honored.”

Now today, we come to the first petition in the Lord’s Prayer. And in it as Jesus teaches His disciples and us how to pray, it is very clear that He wants us to grasp exactly this same principle that’s taught in Leviticus chapter 10 – that as we come near God (in our case, as we come near Him in prayer), we must treat God as holy. The greatest concern on our minds, the very first request out of our mouths should be for this very thing. What our Lord teaches us in what has traditionally been called the Lord’s Prayer, is that the concern to treat God as holy must always be our greatest priority in prayer. Let’s read it together. Turn with me to the beautiful, profound prayer in Matthew 6:9.

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.’”

Now in this remarkable prayer, we have not only a particular prayer that you and I can pray both in private as well as in corporate prayers together. But more importantly, and more to the point our Lord is making here, He has provided us with a model, a pattern for all of our prayers. There are three basic elements of this prayer. As we've noted, there's a preface – "Our Father who is in heaven." Then there are six petitions or categories of prayer. And that's followed by a conclusion. Now over the last two weeks, we have studied very carefully the preface or the invocation: "Our Father who is in heaven." In that preface, Jesus teaches us the attitudes we should have as we approach God in prayer, and we looked at all of that very carefully. If you weren't here, you can go back and catch up if you have the opportunity to do that.

But today, we come to the six petitions--six petitions which give us the six categories of prayer. These six petitions outline all the kinds of requests that come from our lips and our hearts. Every request you will ever make of God that's legitimate, is found in this outline. Now let me summarize these six categories for us. We're going to walk our way week by week through them because each of them merits a careful look. But let me, as we begin, summarize them for you. Jesus teaches us here that we are to pray, first of all, about the glory of God: "Hallowed be Your name." Secondly, we are to pray about the kingdom of God: "Your kingdom come." Thirdly, we are to pray about the will of God: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Number four - we are to pray about the needs of this life: "Give us this day our daily bread." Number five - we are to pray regarding the confession of sin and seeking God's forgiveness: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." And then finally, we are to pray regarding the pursuit of personal holiness: "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil." So those are the categories in which our prayers are to come. Our requests to God are to be about His glory, His kingdom, His will, our own needs for life here, the confession of our sin and about the pursuit of personal holiness.

Now before we study the first of these petitions in detail, let me make several general observations. As you look at that list of six categories of prayer, there are some general observations we need to make. First of all, notice the proportion of this prayer. Half of the requests that Jesus is teaching us to pray are about God, and half of them are about us and our needs. Sadly, that doesn't reflect the reality, does it? Most of our prayers are all about us. Jesus says half of our prayers should be about God and His glory and His work and His will. There's a second general observation here and it's about the balance of biblical prayer. You see, when you look at those six categories, if we really evaluate our normal praying, most of our requests of God fall into only two of those categories. Most of our prayers are either about the needs of this life or the confession of sin. There are four other categories our Lord taught us to pray in. In other words, our prayers are significantly out of balance. A third observation about these requests is the order that Jesus puts them in. Obviously, it's by design and it tells us volumes about what should be the priority of our prayers. The first three requests are all about God. We don't get to us and our needs until we get to the second half of this model prayer. Our prayers should begin with, and be preoccupied with, God and His glory and His work and His will. And only when we

have first prayed regarding God are we then in the right frame of mind, are we ready to bring up the things that we need from Him. So those are some general observations that we can make.

But this morning, I want us to examine the first of the six petitions. It is foundational not only to our prayers, but to our entire spiritual life as well. The first category of prayer has to do with the glory of God. Look at Matthew 6:9. Jesus says, “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, (*and here’s the first request*) hallowed be Your name.’” Hallowed be Your name. Now as we study this simple and yet profound petition, I want us to ask and to try to answer three basic questions that will help us unlock our Lord’s meaning here. The first question and the most obvious one is this: what does it mean? What does it mean--hallowed? You know, *hallowed* obviously isn’t a word we use very often. I doubt you have used that word outside of the Lord’s Prayer. In fact, it’s an old Anglo-Saxon word. And it’s used even in modern translations, many of them, including the NAS, only here and in Luke 11, the other place where the Lord’s Prayer occurs. Now why would the translators of modern versions of the Bible use a word that we don’t use – *hallowed*? Well, the reason is because this word *hallowed* has an ancient tradition. If you go back to the first English translation of the Bible made from the original Greek and Hebrew, it was done by a man named William Tyndale in 1526. And if you look at Tyndale’s translation, at that time when he was translating this passage into English, he used the old Anglo-Saxon word *hallowed*. But it actually predates Tyndale – if you go back to the 1300’s, a man named John Wycliffe was the first to translate the Scriptures into English. But he didn’t translate from the original Greek and Hebrew; he translated from the Latin Vulgate, the Bible that the Catholic Church had used through the centuries. It had to be handwritten because this was before the printing press. And when John Wycliffe in the 1300’s translated Matthew 6:9 into English, he said: ‘Pray, then, in this way... hallowed be Thy name.’ Well, now it’s absolutely entrenched in Christian thought, right? I mean, it doesn’t really fit to say anything else if you’re praying the Lord’s Prayer. What are you going to say? So it’s been passed down even into our modern translations as *hallowed*. The problem with that is, most people don’t know what it means. What does it mean? Well, while the English word *hallowed* is not a very common word to us, the Greek word that it’s translated from is a very common New Testament word. It’s the familiar word that’s often translated *to sanctify*. God, may Your name be sanctified. The Greek word *sanctify* means to set something apart, to make something holy, or the best way to understand it here – to treat something or someone as holy.

Now this word *sanctify* is used both in the Septuagint – that’s the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. That’s the Bible that our Lord and the apostles primarily used in the first century. It was translated a hundred to two hundred years before Christ, the Septuagint. That was the Bible they used. In that Greek translation from the Hebrew, and in the New Testament, we see this word *sanctify* used of things that are set apart for ceremonial use. For example, in Exodus 39, it’s used of the garments the priests wore. They were not to be worn every day. They were set apart from the ordinary common use for a special purpose. The same thing is true in Matthew 23 when Jesus says the gold on the temple, as well as the sacrifices that are made, are

sanctified. They're set apart from ordinary use to special use. This word *sanctify* is also used of people. The priests are said to be sanctified, set apart to God. It's used of us as Christians. We are sanctified. We were sanctified positionally at the moment of our salvation. We were set apart from sin unto God positionally. And then it's used practically - throughout our lives, we are gradually set apart from our sin into holiness. That's sanctification. We are set apart.

On rare occasions, this word is used of God just as it is here in the Lord's Prayer. Here's one example. Isaiah 8:13 – “It is Yahweh of hosts whom you should regard as holy (*there's our word*). And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread.” Now in the passage we started with this morning, Leviticus 10:3, where God says, “By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, and I will be honored before the people”, the Septuagint uses this word *to sanctify, to hallow*, and there it's translated as *to treat as holy*. But it's interesting because the synonym that Moses used in that text and that was brought into the Septuagint also gives us a glimpse into the meaning of this word because the synonym ‘I will be honored’ – when the Septuagint translators translated that Hebrew word, they chose the normal Greek word for *glorify*. Listen carefully. That means to treat God as holy is really exactly the same thing as glorifying Him. They are synonyms. What Jesus is saying in this first petition is that we are to ask God to work in our lives in such a way that His name will be set apart, or treated as holy, or glorified.

Now what is meant by *His name*. His name will be hallowed or set apart? Well, you know that in the biblical world, a name was far more than a label like Tom or Bill. It actually meant something. Often it was intended to capture something of the character of the person or the character of his or her parents or the circumstances in which they were born. I think Thomas Watson, the English Puritan, captured this idea best in his classic on the Lord's Prayer. He said that when we talk about the name of God, we're really talking about two things. We're talking about God's essence or God's person. And secondly, we're talking about everything by which He is known or all of His attributes and all of His actions. So in other words, Jesus is saying we should pray something like this: ‘Father, may all that You are in Your person and may everything connected with You be treated as holy or glorified.’

Now this was a frequent Old Testament and New Testament wish and prayer. There are dozens, probably hundreds of examples. Let me just give you one Old Testament example. Psalm 115:1. “Not to us, O Yahweh, not to us, but to Your name give glory because of Your steadfast love, because of Your faithfulness.” In the New Testament, we see this theme as well. Let's start with the writings of Paul. Look at Romans chapter 11. And I'm going to multiply examples because I want you to feel the weight of this. Romans 11:33-35, Paul's talking about God's amazing wisdom in the plan of salvation and redemption. You can't fathom His wisdom and how He's accomplished this. Verse 36 – he's talking about, notice, *all things* is really the subject of the sentence: All things are from Him (that is, He is the source of all things) and through Him are all things (that is, He sustains everything) and to Him are all things (that is, He is the end of all

things, He's the reason for their existence "To Him be the glory forever. Amen." Turn over to chapter 16 of Romans. Paul ends his letter to the Romans on this same theme. Verse 27: "to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen." In Ephesians 3, 20, 21, he says: "May God get the glory in Christ and in the church forever." Look at Philippians 4. Again, Paul ends his letter to the church in Philippi in verse 20: "Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen." Look at 1 Timothy 1:17. "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." Peter ends his second letter in 2 Peter 3:18 with this same theme: ". . .grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." In Jude 25--Jude, the half-brother of our Lord, says: "To the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." Go down just a few verses to Revelation 1: 6. John says: "He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father - to Him (*to God*) be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

I've multiplied those references because I want you to get a sense of how this permeates the Scripture. This is not a minor theme. And I could multiply hundreds of references that make this same point. So when we pray "hallowed be Your name", we are praying this: Lord, let everything in me and everything in the life of my family and everything in my work and in my school and in my church and in the whole world, let it bring You glory. Let me ask you: are you truly this concerned about God and His glory? Is this really the first thing you think about when you come to pray? Jesus says begin with this: "Hallowed be Your name." May Your person and everything connected with you, O God, be treated as holy.

Now that brings us to a second crucial question that I think if we can understand it, it will revolutionize our prayers. The second question is: why does it matter? We've seen what it means, but why does it matter? Well, there are a couple of ways we can learn how much it matters. We can learn a lot about how important it is to hallow God's name, by reflecting on the disastrous consequences of those who don't. We started with Nadab and Abihu. They didn't treat God as holy and what did God do? These were priests. These were Moses' nephews, Aaron's sons. And how did God respond to their failure to treat Him as holy? He sent out a blazing, consuming fire from His presence and He incinerated them on the spot. My mind goes to Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson. In Daniel chapter 5, Daniel shows up before Belshazzar and he says to him, Listen. You knew what God did to Nebuchadnezzar, your grandfather. You knew how God humbled him, how he came to acknowledge the true God. And yet knowing all of this, Belshazzar, you didn't humble your heart before God. Instead, you have not glorified the God, he says, in whose hand is your life-breath. That's a terrifying statement. And so Daniel says that handwriting on the wall - it's to say your life is over, your kingdom's done. And that night, that very night, Babylon fell to the Medo-Persian Empire and Belshazzar was killed. God does not take it lightly when He is trifled with.

Let me show you a New Testament example. Turn to Acts 12. We meet Herod Agrippa I, one of the men who received the kingdom after Herod the Great's death. Acts 12:21.

On an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum and began delivering an address to the people. And the people kept crying out, 'The voice of a god and not of a man!'

Now there are probably a couple of things going on here. No doubt, he was something to behold in the kingly robes and garments sparkling in the sunlight with the jewels on them and everything else. And he probably was a brilliant man in terms of his ability to speak. There was probably also a little brown-nosing going on here as well. But the problem was, Herod began to read his own press. He began to believe his own press releases, and notice what happens in verse 23: "Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died." Now this is a pagan, but when he didn't give God glory, God interacted to take his life.

Same thing happens to all mankind in Romans 1. Paul passes this indictment on all humanity. He says in verse 21: "Even though they knew God..." That is, from creation they knew that there was a God, and that He was great, and He had divine power, and He was eternal in His being. You can see that from the creation. We saw just a glimpse of God's power last night as that thunderstorm rolled through our area. Job calls thunderstorms the fringes of His power. I mean, you can see about God in creation, but what does verse 21 of Romans 1 say? Even though they understood this, "they did not honor Him (*the word 'honor' is the Greek word 'glorify', they did not glorify Him*) as God or give thanks..." And how did God respond to mankind's refusal to see Him, and to glorify Him, and to give Him thanks for all that He's done? Verse 24: "God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts..." Verse 26: God gave them over "to degrading passions (*to homosexuality*)..." And verse 28: "He gave them over to a depraved mind..." God interacts in His judgment - not of overt judgment, but of pulling back His influences, so that man runs his sin out to the maximum. We see this on the front page of our newspaper every day. This is how God responds when He's not glorified.

You can look into the future and see the same thing in the book of Revelation. As God unleashes His judgment on this planet through a series of cataclysmic judgments. Revelation 16:8 - "The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, (*this is in the future now*) and it was given to it to scorch men with fire." Somehow God changes the normal function of the sun either in weakening our own atmosphere or in somehow moving them slightly closer or miraculously doing something else so that now "men (*verse 9*) are scorched with fierce heat. (*and how do they respond?*) They blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory." And what does God do in response? He continues to unleash the fullness of His wrath.

Now most of those are unbelievers, but what about for us who are in Christ? Does God still take our failure to treat Him as holy seriously? You know, the one example that just screams at me from the Scripture is the example of Moses, because Moses was unique. God Himself says in Numbers, that Moses was special. He talked to Moses face to face as we talk to our friends. Someday we'll enjoy that, but not now. Moses was unique. And yet in spite of that, listen to what the Lord said to Moses as a result of the incident in Meribah. You remember, when Moses struck the rock? Numbers 20:12. "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.'" You're not going into Canaan. You're not going into the Promised Land because, Moses and Aaron, you failed to treat Me as holy. By the way, for those of you who are in the later years of your life, there's a warning here in the life of Moses. You know when this failure came? It came in year one hundred and nineteen, one year before they were to enter the Promised Land. You need to pray as I do: God, help me to finish well.

In Deuteronomy 32:50, God says to Moses:

You will die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor... because you broke faith with Me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah... because you did not treat Me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel."

Even someone who had a unique relationship with God, when he failed to treat God as holy it was a very serious matter. When you look at the consequences of not treating God as holy or glorifying Him, you can see how crucial this is to God.

But we also know how important it is because Scripture teaches us that the glory of God is God's own chief end. Now I know this doesn't fly well in a man-centered Christian culture in which we live, but this is what the Scriptures teach. God does everything for His own glory. What are the two greatest acts of God? Creation and redemption. Both of those were for God's own glory. Creation – you know the passage in Psalm 19:1. "The heavens (*and the expanse of the heavens*) are to tell us (*what?*) the glory of God..." As I lay on my bed last night, awake, like you were as that storm system rolled through the metroplex, my mind was drawn to the reality that we are in one tiny little spot on a pale blue dot, flying on the outer rim of one of the smallest galaxies in the universe, called the Milky Way Galaxy, among an ocean of other galaxies. And all of that is not to teach us how small we are. It does that, but all of that is to teach us about the greatness of God. It's His glory, the expanse showing the glory of God. And He created for that reason. The reason all that stuff's out there, the reason the stuff you saw on the way to church this morning is there, is to display God's glory. It's why He made you.

It's also the reason God acted in redemption. If you were to look at Ephesians 1, three times in Ephesians chapter 1 Paul says in reference to the Father, in reference to the Son and in reference

to the Spirit, God brought salvation to the praise of His glory. The only reason you are a Christian today is because God was getting glory to Himself. Yes, He loves you individually and personally. Yes, you are a love gift to His Son. But the ultimate reason behind it all is to put His glory on display.

When we pray, “Hallowed be Your name,” we are saying, God, sanctify, or set apart, or glorify Your person and everything which is associated with You. Jesus tells us to begin our prayers here to show us that the glory of God is more important than anything else. It’s more important than your getting the needs of this life. It’s more important than your getting your spiritual needs met. It’s more important than life itself. Think about this for a moment. In heaven, we won’t need to ask for daily food because there’ll be no hunger. In heaven, we won’t need to ask for forgiveness; there’ll be no more sin. We won’t need to ask for protection from evil because the evil one will be forever bound. But we will continue to hallow God’s name forever. We read it this morning. Turn back to Revelation. Let’s start in Revelation 4:9:

And when the living creatures (these are the cherubim, those creatures who continually celebrate the holiness of God, they) give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders (that’s representative of the saints) will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, (that is our acknowledgment that any rewards we get are all grace) and we will say, ‘Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created.’”

There we celebrate God’s glory in creation. Go over to chapter 5. Here we celebrate God’s glory in redemption. Verse 12 – that huge crowd made up of angels and the redeemed around the throne will say,

‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.’ And every created thing in heaven and on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, ‘To Him who sits on the throne (the Father), and to the Lamb (the Son), be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.’”

That will be the song we will sing forever. It never stops. Our prayers should begin with God’s glory because there is nothing in time or in eternity that is more important to God.

So we’ve asked and answered the question What does it mean to hallow God’s name, and Why does it matter, but there’s a third crucial question and that question is: How does it happen? The ultimate answer is that it is an act of God. God causes His name to be hallowed or treated as holy. Remember, “Hallowed be Your name” is what?--a prayer. That’s our recognition that we

don't have it in our power to do this. Only God can cause His name to be truly glorified. But in this area as in every other area, the same God who decreed the ends (in this case that He would be glorified) also decreed the means to that end. So how exactly does God cause His name to be hallowed? What means does God use to accomplish this? Now this is crucial for our study of the first petition of the Lord's Prayer because when you and I ask God to glorify His name or to set it apart, we are in reality asking God to do these things. Because Scripture tells us that there are specific ways God gets glory to Himself. Now I surveyed all of the Scripture and I came up with several pages of references on this theme. And then I condensed them, the vast majority of those references, to several major categories. Let me give you several specific ways that God is glorified in the world. I'm going to give you the phrase. I would encourage you to jot down the references and then you can look them up and make sure I'm telling you the truth later, okay?

Number one – this is the most obvious way. God's name is treated as holy or sanctified when we speak about God and His holy things with reverence. Exodus 20:7, the third commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain." The first and most obvious way to treat God as holy is how you use His name. Do you use God's name or His Son's name lightly, frivolously, or God forbid, as an expletive? Listen. God doesn't take it lightly when you treat His name in such a disrespectful way. "He will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain." We treat God as holy when we talk about Him and His holy things with reverence. How do you talk about the Scripture? How do you talk about the church? How do you talk about God Himself? Do you use phrases like *the man upstairs* or some modern equivalent? You'd better treat God seriously. He will be treated as holy.

Secondly, we treat Him as holy by praising, adoring and thanking Him. 2 Chronicles 5:13 says that "when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice (*this is in the corporate worship of God's Old Testament people. Listen to this*) to praise and to glorify the Lord," Do you see how those phrases are used? By singing their praises to God, they were doing what?--glorifying God. It says: "they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the Lord saying, 'He indeed is good for His steadfast love is everlasting,' then the house of the Lord was filled with the glory cloud..." We glorify God by praising, adoring and thanking Him. This, by the way, is a huge category in the Psalms. Let me just give you one example of hundreds I could give you. Psalm 22:23: "You who fear the Lord, praise Him; All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him..." You see again how it's used synonymously. To praise God is to glorify God. 2 Corinthians 4:15 – "May the grace which is spreading to more and more people cause the giving of thanks to abound (*which will lead*) to the glory of God." When people give thanks to God, it brings glory to God. Every time you and I lift our hearts or our voices in praise and adoration and thanksgiving, we are glorifying God. We are setting Him apart and treating Him as holy.

Thirdly, by thinking rightly about Him - Isaiah 8:13. "It is Yahweh of hosts whom you should regard as holy. (*This has to do with what goes on in your mind. You should regard Him as holy in how you think about Him*). And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread." You have a serious sense of the greatness and majesty of God. When you think about Him like that, it glorifies Him, it treats Him as holy. 1 Peter 3:15 – "sanctify (*there's our word, set apart*) Christ as Lord in your hearts..." This has to do with how you think about Jesus Christ. Do you think about Him, set Him apart as your Lord, your Master?

Number four: by responding in faith to Jesus Christ and the gospel. This, by the way, is where glorifying God begins. Jesus, in John 5:23, says: "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father" Listen. You can't glorify God if you don't believe in His Son and the good news He brought. Until you're willing to acknowledge your own sinfulness and that you deserve God's eternal wrath, and you're willing to turn from that sin and put your confidence in Jesus' perfect life, and in His substitutionary death, and in His resurrection, you cannot glorify God. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. When you refuse to believe God's Son, when you refuse to embrace His gospel, you are demeaning the glory of God. "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father." 1Peter 1:7 – "the proof of your faith... is going to be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ..." When you live through the trials of this life and your faith stays genuine and true, ultimately that faith in Christ and His gospel will bring praise and honor to God.

Number five: you treat God as holy when you live a life of righteousness and faithful service. In his catechism, Martin Luther asked, How is God's name hallowed among us? How does this happen? Here was Luther's answer: "When our life and doctrine are truly Christian. When what you believe and how you live match, and they both are characterized by righteousness." We saw in Matthew 5:16 – "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." John 15:8 – Jesus says, "My Father is glorified in this, that you bear much fruit..." Philippians 1:11 – "We are filled with the fruit of righteousness (*which results in*) the glory and praise of God."

Number six: we glorify God, we treat Him as holy by loving other Christians and ministering to them. Romans 15:5-6.

Now may God... grant you to be of the same mind with one another... so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we dwell together in unity as Christians, when we love each other, when we care for each other, it brings glory to God. 1 Peter 4:10-11. You have a gift you've been given, Christian. When you use that serving gift or that speaking gift for the good of the church, Peter says it results in God being glorified.

Number seven: by trusting God even in our trials and persecution, you bring glory to God. 1 Peter 4:16 – “if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.” Don’t be ashamed, but instead go through it and bring glory to God. John 21:19 – He talked about Peter and how he was going to die and He said, “He was signifying by what kind of death Peter would glorify God.” Even if they take our lives, if we trust God through it, we bring Him glory as the martyrs of the past have done.

And finally, number eight: by committing to live to His glory. You have to make a decision that you’re going to do what you do for the glory of God. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, that very familiar verse – it’s in a section on Christian liberty. And Paul says even in how you exercise your Christian liberty, determine this: “Whether, then, you eat or (*whether you*) drink or whatever you do, (*decide that you’re going to*) do it all to the glory of God.” David did this - 1 Samuel 17. Read his famous speech – 1 Samuel 17:46-47. He says, I’m going to kill you, Goliath. It’s a great speech by the way. You have to read it. He says here’s why:

in order that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s...

David lived for the glory of God. That’s what made him a man after God’s own heart, by the way, is, he lived for the glory of God.

And when we pray, “Hallowed be Your name,” we are praying that all of those things I’ve just recounted will become a reality in our own hearts, in our own lives, in the lives over which we have influence, and across this planet. I hope this challenges us all to begin most of our prayers by asking that God’s name would be hallowed. What does it look like in real life though? Let me give you an example. Here’s what it looks like. It means saying, Lord, may Your name be glorified even in the prayer I’m about to offer You in my heart as I go through this day, in what I think when I’m able to think my own thoughts and not driven by work or some other responsibility, by what I do in my words, how I speak. May You be glorified in my actions. May Your name be set apart and treated as holy in my marriage, how I treat my spouse, how I teach and set an example for my children, in my neighborhood, in how I do my work. May You be treated as holy in my church, in this city in which we live, in this nation and in the world as a whole. If we start here, the rest of our requests fall into line because we won’t come to God demanding our way. We won’t come to God saying, God, You’ve got to heal me. You’ve got to give me that job. You’ve got to save my spouse. You’ve got to save my child. Nothing wrong with asking any of those things, but we won’t come demanding. Instead, we’ll come saying something like this: Lord, here’s my desire, here’s my heart. This is what I want you to do. But more than I want you to answer this request, more than I want anything else, I want Your great name to be hallowed and set apart in my life. So whatever You have to bring, whatever You have to do, however You have to answer this request for that to happen, let it be so. Jesus has taught

us to pray and He says here's where true prayer really begins: Father, hallowed be Your name. Let's pray together.

Our Father, that is the greatest desire of our hearts – that You would be set apart, that You would be treated as holy in our hearts and minds and how we live and how we think and what we do. Father, help us to start our prayers there, but back up and help our hearts to be grounded in that as our chief goal, the chief goal of our lives even as it is Your own chief end. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.