
VIDEO LECTURE MODULE: THE LORD'S PRAYER

LECTURE 3: HALLOWED BE THY NAME

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The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Module

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Dr. Gerald R. Procee

Presented in 14 Lectures called
THE BEAUTY OF PRAYER

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2. Our Father Which Art in Heaven
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Lecture 3

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Welcome to this third lecture in the series on the Beauty of Prayer. Today we hope to focus on the first petition of the Lord's Prayer and that is "Hallowed be Thy name" (Matthew 6:9). It's amazing that this is the first matter that the Lord Jesus points out to us in prayer. The Lord Jesus doesn't tell us to first pray for our needs or for our physical needs. That often we do, but the first and most important matter in prayer is that God would be honored.

The totality of our lives must be focused upon God. He must be loved, glorified. We must learn to obey and love Him. He comes first, and that's why this first petition is a petition for the honor of God: "Hallowed be Thy name." 'Grant that Thou would receive all honor, praise, and adoration.' That should also be the aim of our life. That should be our greatest desire, that whatever happens to us that God would be glorified in our lives because our life is failed if we have not learned to glorify God.

That's why God made us, that we would not live for ourselves but that He would be glorified in us and that we must learn to glorify Him and to honor Him with our mind, with our heart, with our understanding, with our words, with our bodies, with all we have and with all we do (Mark 12:30). And sad to say, we have failed in that respect because so often we seek our own honor.

Even God's children who know grace, they can still so often seek their own honor and seek to elevate themselves, and they can become proud. But when God works in the heart, He teaches us to forsake ourselves and to have the aim of our life, the honor and the glory of God. That's how the Lord renews a sinner. He does it to the glory of His name. When the Lord enters the heart, the beginning is there that the Lord would glorify Himself, and then it becomes the longing of His people. If things are spiritually well, that longing will increase and become greater; and that's why the Lord Jesus teaches us "Hallowed be Thy name."

You know this is the most glorious thing in life. It is so good for us that we would learn to glorify God. It is the most blessed activity that man can do on Earth, that God would receive honor, praise, and adoration. So in order to hallow God's name, we need to know God's name. We need to know Who God is, and that's why the Lord reveals Himself to us in His word: that we would know Who He is, that we would know His Name.

It's especially in His name that the Lord reveals Himself. You see, we did not make up names with which we call upon God. God made up these names Himself; and in His Name, He reveals Who He is. The names that we bear, our fathers and mothers have given us these names. But these names do not characterize who we are. But when God gives Himself names, these names are a self-revelation of God. They explain Who God is.

So, the Lord reveals Himself with the name Yahweh. That's Hebrew. That name is actually Jehovah or Yahweh; that means I Am Who I Am (Exodus 3:14). That may seem to you to be a strange name, but that is a very beautiful name because that shows that God is always the same. We change. We cannot say of ourselves "I am" because we fluctuate. But the Lord God is the everlasting I Am and that shows that He is reliable. "He is the same, yesterday, today, and forever lasting" (Hebrews 13:8).

He is reliable. He is faithful. He is self-sufficient. That's why you may trust in Him. The Lord has also revealed Himself by other names. We can think of the name El Shaddai (Genesis 17:1), which means Almighty Ruler, or you have in Hebrew another name, Adonai (Genesis 15:12), and that shows Himself as the Owner, as the Master of Heaven and Earth. He is the Lord.

So, the Lord also calls Himself the Lord Sabaoth (Romans 9:29). That is a name that denotes that He is the Lord of Hosts and that all the angels are at His disposal, and He comes to deliver His Church with His heavenly host.

We may know Who God is from His names, but we also may know God from His characteristics, His attributes. And again, we see how the Lord reveals Himself in His attributes. That He is, for instance, the Eternal One. He has no beginning, no ending. He is the compassionate One. He has care for people. His compassions are genuine. They are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22–23). He is love. He is full of long suffering (Numbers 14:18) and that is having patience with His people, caring, loving patience.

God is also the high and the lofty One. And yet He delights to dwell with the lowly. Isaiah 57:15, that well-known text, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

God is also the Mighty One. We know God by His power. Look, for instance, at creation. God by His power wrought creation. He called all things to be brought forth from nothing, and He did it by speaking (Genesis 1). His Word is with power. We see that in creation, but we see that throughout Scripture that He is the God Who speaks, and it is. He speaks matters into existence. He speaks to the wind and the sea, and they obey Him (Mark 4:39). It's by His Word that He raises up the dead (Mark 5:41–42; John 11:43–44). It's by His Word that He shows His power.

God is also wise in all His dealings and works. He leads His people, guides them in a wise manner. Maybe you have noticed that in your life how the Lord led you upon paths you would have never chosen, but how wise was the Lord in doing so? How caring, how loving? So, we also see God's goodness, that He cares for this world. He cares for all people. He opens His hand. He feeds every living thing. He lets His sun rise upon good and evil (Matthew 5:45). He gives rain and sunshine. He does that to people who love Him, but He is also good to people who do not love Him. How good has the Lord been for you and for me?

When we are called to know God by His characteristics, we also see His justice. He is so just that He cannot stand any injustice, that He would rather have sin not go unpunished, and therefore have sin punished in His Son. That is so sinners will be reconciled to Him. God loves that which is just and righteous, and so He saves His people along the way of righteousness and justice. All their sins have to be paid for, and they are paid for in His Son.

And so, God is just. He punishes sin in His Son or in the sinner, but He will punish sin. But at the same time, God is also full of mercy because He tells us in His Word that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked would turn to him and find mercy in God (Ezekiel 33:11). In spite of our unworthiness, the Lord still invites us to receive salvation in Him. He delights in mercy.

God is also true. He is full of truth. His Word is the truth. The Lord Jesus says of Himself "I am the truth" (John 14:6), and that's why His Word will always be fulfilled. And so, we see Who God is in His attributes. We see His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His justice, His mercy, and His truth. This is all clearly displayed. There's so much in God.

We read in the Bible then Who God is. Ultimately what is needed is that this good, powerful, loving God has dealings with us. You see, then you experience Who God is. Then you experience the truth of God's Word in your own life. Then you see how God is just. Then you experience how God is merciful, how He is loving, how He is wise in His dealings with you. Then it's not just that you want to believe the Bible because it's the Bible, but you experience in your heart that this is all very true, and that's how you learn to know Who God is.

That's what we call the knowledge of faith. It is trusting in God. That's not just a matter of the mind, but it's a matter of the heart; and then you know Who God is, and that's why you love Him and you wish to know Him more and you wish to love Him more. Then He becomes the aim of your life. Then you learn to live for God, and then you want to have Him and His Name hallowed in your life.

This knowledge of faith is translated in love to Him. Ultimately the Lord reveals Himself to us in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. For the apostle John says in John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." And those who have seen Christ have seen His Father. In Christ we see the reflection of God the Father. Therefore, if you want to know Who God is, be often at the feet of Christ and look unto Jesus. You will learn to know Who God is through His Son, Christ Jesus.

It's essential for us to know God. When you know something of His love and grace, you desire to be made like unto Him. Then you wish to be clothed with Christ. Then you pray that God would impress His image upon you, and then you understand why the apostle Paul said that the aim of his life was actually to know Christ and the power of His resurrection in Him (Philippians 3:8-14).

Have you become desirous to know the Lord? Have you tasted that the Lord is good? Have you learned to love Him? Then you will desire above all things that His Name will be hallowed in your life. So, we need to honor God in the totality of our life. That is what this petition actually means: "Hallowed be Thy Name." That means that we learn to honor God in everything we do. And so, we need the Lord God to work out this obedience in our lives.

But, as I said before, we have this wicked nature within us that we so often, in a very subtle manner, we want to honor ourselves. We would rather promote our own name and our own honor instead of honoring God. This is sin against the first commandment: No other gods before Me (Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 5:7). It's also sin against this first petition: Hallowed be Thy Name. Because in life, it's not about our name. It's about the Name of God.

How wretched we are that so often we can be puffed up, and we seek our own honor and that we think that we ourselves are so important. What a blessing it would be to be delivered from that evil and to learn what it is to be meek and lowly of heart. If only we would learn to seek God's honor first. That would be such a deliverance to be liberated from that seeking our own honor.

Have we learned to see that we are so self-centered? Have you already become aware that we so often seek ourselves and that we sin against a good-doing God? Have we learned to have grief and sorrow because of that inclination within us? Have we learned to resist this inclination? Because when you know the love of God in your heart, you will want to honor him. Then you will be at the feet of Christ and you will ask Him to be delivered from this seeking of ourselves and of our own honor.

Think of the Lord Jesus. He never sought His own honor. He was meek and lowly of heart, and He tells us to learn of Him, to be meek and lowly of heart (Matthew 11:29). At the feet of Christ, looking up to Him, you will look into His face, and you will see Him Who sought not His own honor but the honor of the One who sent Him. And there, shame will fill your heart and at the same time a desire and a longing that the Lord Jesus would fill you with His Spirit; and what a blessing it is to be comforted by this Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

It's not only that He washes the sins away, but He also changes your nature. Through His Spirit, He teaches you step by step to seek the honor of God. He teaches you to pray, 'Teach me, Lord, to live according to Thy will. Lead me in Thy righteousness (Psalm 5:8) and cause me to honor Thee with all that I have.'

You know, to seek God's honor is also to seek the wellbeing of people around us. We need to be genuinely concerned about other people. We should suffer along with them. When they are in need, we should be close to them. People out of love to God will show love and concern for those around them. And by doing this, they will honor God. That's how God is honored in their lives, when they have love and compassion to those around them.

Is that not what the Lord Jesus said to His people in Matthew 25 when he will refer to His people as the ones who helped others in need, who gave them to eat, and who gave thirsty people to drink? And when others were naked, that they gave them clothing and that they visited the sick and those who were imprisoned. The Lord Jesus says there in Matthew 25:40, "Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

You see, it's honoring to God when we show love and compassion toward the neighbor and when we have care for others around us. This is hallowing God's name in the daily practice of our life. And so, we need to honor

God in the totality of our lives. But in order to do this, we need to be humble. We need to be humbled by God. He teaches humility. And He does that by showing us that we realize that in all things we are dependent upon God and that only the Lord God can fulfill our every need.

And so, we recognize His greatness, His goodness, and His mercy and that we, ourselves, can do nothing without Him. And so, we are brought to humble ourselves before God. The Lord causes us to be humble by revealing Himself to us in His greatness and goodness, love and mercy. But on the other hand, the Lord teaches us humility by showing us who we are, and there's a growth in the knowledge of God and in the knowledge of ourselves. So, the Lord uncovers more sins in our life and shows us more and more our sinful nature.

On this side of the grave, we will never outgrow our sinfulness. Think of the apostle Paul who was a holy, righteous man, but he calls himself the chief of sinners (I Timothy 1:15). You find this so often in Scripture that people learn to humble themselves before God, especially those who know the greatest measure of grace. They are the ones who will humble themselves the most before God. Because the Lord shows His people more and more that they greatly fall short of the glory of God.

In ourselves, we are nothing more than lepers who in Israel had to cry out "Unclean, unclean" because we always carry this unclean nature along with us. Although the Lord lives in us, although the Lord is impressing His image upon us and we bear the fruit of God's Holy Spirit, there is also that old nature working in us that we are in ourselves unclean. With our thoughts, words, and actions, we still so often go against God and that gives the deepest grief in life: that I cannot love and honor God as I should. And so, I pray, 'Lord, let Thy Name be honored in my life. Let Thy Name receive all glory. Hallowed be Thy Name.'

And so, we are called to love the Lord God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, with all our strength. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves, but we fail in these things. On this side of the grave, we will not be able to do this perfectly. And so, we see that also in God's Word: how children of God, who were greatly privileged and who had received much grace and much faith and much trust in the Lord, that they still have their sins. That's why as we listen to how they pray, that they continually are humbling themselves before God.

Look how Abraham, the friend of God, is praying in Genesis 18. He is praying not for himself. He is there praying for Sodom, and he is actually praying for his nephew, Lot, and his family. See how he humbles himself before the Lord God. He says there in verse 27, "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, and I am but dust and ashes." How he humbles himself.

We think also of Jacob, who had received visions of the Lord, who had received the promises that God would be his God. Then see how Jacob says in Genesis 32:10, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant." And we read also of Job, who was a righteous, God-fearing man. He says in Job 40:4, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer the? I will lay my hand upon my mouth."

And think of the prophet Isaiah in chapter 6:5. There he says, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." And the apostle Paul says in Romans 3:10-12, "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

And so when we seek the honor of God, we must do this with humility, with an awareness of who we are really. But at the same time, as we approach God, we may do this with hope, with expectation. We may come before the Lord as a child comes before his father or mother. We saw that in the previous lecture. But when we seek to approach God in prayer and we seek the honor of His Name, we may be expecting all good things from Him because He is a benevolent, a good-doing God.

He is willing to give us all things we stand in need of. We may be greatly encouraged because there is forgiveness with God (Psalm 130:4), and He has promised to redeem His people from all their iniquities (Psalm 130:8), and God will not despise a broken heart and a contrite spirit (Psalm 51:17). And so, we may humble ourselves with expectation, with true genuine hope upon God because the Lord God is willing to give. He will give so much. Ultimately, He must receive all honor, and He will receive all honor. Every knee will ultimately bow before him (Philippians 2:10), but now He is willing to give. He is willing to care.

Think of how the Lord Jesus cared for His disciples, that He even humbled Himself, willing to wash the feet of the disciples. And so, He is willing to give us far above what we deserve. All your needs, you may lay before

Him. And when the Lord Jesus was willing to humble Himself before the disciples, how we must be willing to humble ourselves before others, and so we must seek the wellbeing of others. We must be willing to be their servant. We must pray for them. And we must lay, as the apostle Paul says, supplications and prayers and intercessions before God.

And we do that for all men in First Timothy 2:1. And God's children may come in humility and with confession of their sins. They may acknowledge their unworthiness and at the same time realize that God, their Father in Heaven, will give them all things they stand in need of, that He is a faithful and a good-doing God and that it's so glorifying that we so come with anticipation before this God. We honor God.

So, as we seek to honor God, we must do that by knowing His characteristics. We must honor God in the totality of our lives, that everything in us may be devoted to Him, and we must honor God by showing reverence and being humble and humbling ourselves before Him. But we also honor God when we lay all our needs before Him.

We see that continually in God's Word, that God is honored when we lay our needs before Him. God's Word is full of people who had no strength, but God called them to fulfill a certain calling. Whatever the Lord calls you to do in life, you don't have the strength to do that; and the Lord will teach you also to realize that you don't have strength to do it, that you need God to help you, to sustain you.

And so, we see repeatedly in God's Word that great men of God were in themselves weak, and they laid all their weakness and all their inability before God, and that was honoring to God. Even when it seems that God did not answer them, they still laid their needs before the Lord continually, and this is honoring to God: Lord, I can do nothing without Thee (John 15:5).

For instance, look at Moses, that great man of God, the mediator between God and Israel of the Old Testament. He could not even speak properly, and that's what he said to the Lord, but the Lord said, "I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12). And Joshua, he was a slave in Egypt. He was led through the wilderness, and very soon in the wilderness he was appointed as captain over the armies of the Lord, the Israelites. He had to fight against the Amalekites. Later on, he had to capture Jericho, a huge fortified city.

He couldn't do that. He had never gone to military school. He didn't know anything about strategy or warfare. And yet the Lord taught him and gave him strength. The prophet Jeremiah was young, and the prophet Isaiah considered himself to be a man of unclean lips, and Daniel saw the iniquities of himself and of the people. So, they were all unsuitable, but the Lord chooses often unsuitable, unequipped people to serve Himself.

Let that be a comfort to you when you maybe as a pastor wonder, 'How can I ever fulfill this calling?' Well, you cannot, but He can through you, and that's honoring to God. That's how God hallows His Name in your life. Think of the apostles. Many of them were just Hebrew fishermen. How could they proclaim His glorious gospel to a pagan world? We are all unsuitable, all unqualified.

Who can raise children in our own families as we should do that? Who is able to be a faultless husband or wife, a godly spouse? Regardless whatever the Lord calls us to do, we lack the strength to perform it, and now it's so good in life to be dependent upon God, to seek all help from Him. He is the God Who lifts up the needy, Who hears them when they cry to Him (Psalm 72:12). Therefore, our strength is not in ourselves, but it is in God. Therefore, whatever the Lord calls you to do, He will be there to strengthen you. Do not shy away from any calling in your life. Prayer will give you strength, and it will be hallowing the name of God.

And so, when we lay our needs before the Lord, what should we actually be praying for? Well, we should pray, as we will later on see in this Lord's Prayer, we must pray for personal forgiveness of all our sins. We need to be renewed after the image of Christ. That's how God is glorified, that the image, the reflection of His Son rests upon us, that people may see of us, that we have been with Christ as they saw of the apostles.

People may tell that you have been with God in your inner chamber in prayer because of the reflection of the Lord Jesus, not in a literal way that something happens to your face. No, but in the way you behave, in your actions, in your demeanor. You know, you may not even be aware of it yourself; and that's often the best thing, that you don't even see it yourself because easily you will become proud. But that others do see it in you, and that's because you were with the Lord in your inner chamber pouring out your heart before God, begging the Lord for the image of Christ upon you, that He would encourage you in the life of faith, that He would make you brave, that He would equip you with insight and wisdom; and so, you may plead of His goodness and His willingness to give you all things you stand in need of.

So, in your prayers you may rely upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ that for Jesus's sake, God will forgive your sins. God will equip you with all your needs, as He has said, "Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find" (Matthew 7:7). This is all hallowing God's name. He receives the glory, the praise, and the adoration; and you will be led in a new life of obedience to the Lord Jesus. And so, the Lord gives us grace to deny the world, to forsake ourselves, and to love and seek Him above all.

And so, let us pray continually for the Holy Spirit in our lives. That's what God has promised. He will give his Holy Spirit to those who ask of Him. In Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" You know, it's only through God's Spirit that we can live as Christians.

It's through God's Spirit in you that God will be hallowed and honored in your life, because the Holy Spirit gives love, grace, and mercy. He provides for all things in life, and He leads God's people. He protects them. He is with them when they even have to leave this life (Psalm 23:4). And through His Spirit, God will instruct you and teach you the way you must go. Through His Spirit, you will be kept from falling into sin; and it's through His Spirit that you will learn to resist the temptations of the evil one. Through His Spirit, you will bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life.

And through His Spirit, you will receive wisdom and grace in your daily life. And through His Spirit, the fear of the Lord will be increased in your life; and you will walk humbly with the Lord, and the eternal God will be your refuge, your reliance. He will be your everything, your all in all (I Corinthians 15:28), and that's how God is honored and hallowed in your life. He will do all things good, and it's therefore a rich privilege so to come before the Lord in prayer and that you may pour out all your supplications before Him and that He is a God Who will do all things well (Mark 7:37).

You know when you will see it? You will see it at the end of your life when you come before Him. It's like a boy, a son of a farmer, and the farmer takes his son along, and together they are plowing the fields. When the father has plowed a furrow in the soil, then he gives the plow to his son; and his son holds the plow, but father lays his hand upon the hand of the son; and then the son, he draws a furrow through the field, and it's a straight furrow. At the end of the furrow, then the son looks up at his father with a smile, and the father looks down at his son and says, "Well done, my boy." But it was the hand of the father upon the son, and the son knows it is my dad, my father, who did it all.

And so, when God's people will enter into Heaven, we read in the Parable that then the Lord will say, "Well done, thou faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21). But in reality, His children will say, "Thou has done it all. To Thee be all the honor. Thou hast carried me through life. Thou hast done it all. Hallowed be Thy Name for all eternity." And they will lay their crowns at the feet of God, for He must be glorified. He did it all from beginning to the end. Amen.

Thank you.