

**LORD'S PRAYER 1: HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME** 1 Kings 8:22,30,38-43; Luke 11:1-4 [MW20-30]  
Sermon preached by Rev Wayne Thornton at Mangawhai and Wellsford, Sunday 09 August 2020

Can you remember when you first heard or first learnt the Lord's Prayer?

I can't remember when I first heard the Lords' Prayer

- however I do know I learnt it two ways
- one was from a card I received at YMCA when I was six
- Dad would help me learn it off by heart when I said my prayers each night
- I don't know where that card is now – probably wore out!

I remember even more reading the Lord's Prayer

- in this book I was given for Christmas in 1961
- as you can see it's well read, probably not worth anything at a garage sale
- but to me it's priceless
- I remember looking at the pictures
- and trying to make out the meaning of the words from the pictures
- this is the cover [Slide 1]

The book is titled *Teach Me How Picture Book of Prayers*

- but there's only one prayer
- nowhere does it say: "Lord's Prayer" [Slide 2]
- just Jesus teaching his disciples to pray saying:
- "Our Father which art in heaven ..."

May be like me you've prayed these words so often they've become part of you

- you can say it without thinking, which in some ways is good
- in other ways it means the words are taken for granted, a bit casual
- which is why it's good to have a fresh look at this prayer from time to time
- and the reason behind this short series on some of what we call:
- "The Lord's Prayer"

If you desire to know all there is about praying – it's in this simple prayer!

- it's Jesus' answer to the request 'teach us to pray'
- over the years scholars have said it's all in there
- it's probably the most well-known prayer across all denominations and traditions
- even for people who are not followers of Jesus!

If you start out saying: "Our Father ..." most people will join in

- so that's where we'll start
- "Our Father which art in heaven ..." [Slide 3]
- this picture perhaps says more about heaven than the 'Father' bit
- and for me, and for Luke, "Father" is very important

Jesus was not the first to address God as 'father'

- in the Old Testament 'father' is used to describe God's relationship with the nation
- and occasionally individuals
- Rabbis in Jesus' time used 'father' to address God
- even in ancient Egypt, Babylonia, China, India, prayers were addressed to 'father'

However in the prayer Jesus taught 'father' encompassed a very special relationship

- a close, intimate relationship
- perhaps the very first page of my book is closest to it
- "to Wayne with love from Mummy and Daddy"

Jesus says we are to address the creator of heaven and earth

- the molder of stars and planets, the power behind the wind and waves
- the one who shaped human beings from the dust of the earth
- this awesome, all-powerful one for whom there is really no appropriate name
- 'I am who I am' being as close as we get
- Jesus says we are to address this one not just as "Father", but "Daddy"
- (try and remember when you last called out "Daddy")

Imagine meeting the President of the United States

- clapping him on the shoulders and saying "G'day mate!"
- (in reality you'd never get that close)
- and even if you did the President would have a look on his face that said: 'who the heck are you?!
- the President wouldn't have a clue who you are!
- in human terms the President of the United States is pretty big
- and you can't even call him 'mate' or 'buddy'

God, the creator of absolutely everything – bigger than big

- so much bigger than the U.S. President it's not funny
- well, you can call this God, "Daddy"
- and what's more He knows who you are, and where you live
- even if you're not too sure of Him, he desires to know you
- you may have seen this, which I think is kind of neat:
- "if God had a refrigerator ..." [Slide 4]

Are you beginning to get a sense of the RELATIONSHIP behind this prayer?

- O God, immortal, infinite, beyond our knowing and comprehension
- above and beyond us, who yet we may call Daddy
- Nah! says Jesus, cut through all that, he's my Dad and yours
- just call out "Hey Daddy", anytime
- he'll hear, he'll listen

An important aside:

The great reformer Martin Luther used to say

- he was unable to utter the word 'father' without a shudder
- because of what his father was
- this is true for many today, may be even for some of you here

However as Jesus represents it fatherhood is not favouritism

- nor is Fatherhood about the dispensing of disapproval and punishment
- nor is it waffly sentimentalism
- it is a relationship evoking love and trust and humble reverence
- we do not need to implore God to be good or merciful
- or to beg for that which we need
- God's very nature is love, is wanting the best for his children
- doing the best for his children

Remember: if God had a fridge, your picture would be on it  
- just call out “hey Daddy” and he’ll listen

So, having established the relationship  
- we move on to the first real petition of the Lord’s Prayer  
“Hallowed be thy name” [Slide 5]

Do you know about the young boy at Sunday School?  
- one of his classmates asked whether God had a name  
before the teacher could answer the boy said yes, God has a name: ‘Howard’  
- the teacher was somewhat taken aback and asked the boy how he knew that  
it’s in the prayer the boy answered:  
“Our Father which art in heaven, *Howard* be thy name ...”

“Hallowed” is not a word we hear often today – what does it mean?  
- here are some options [Slide 6]  
something else, any ideas???

What did “Hallowed” mean to a six year old boy? [Slide 7]  
- again the pictures are not that helpful  
although the children seem to be kneeling before something great and glorious  
and this one is staring in amazement, something’s really caught his attention

A while back a new ‘translation’ of the Lord’s prayer in our liturgy  
- had ‘holy’ rather than ‘hallowed’  
but that didn’t cut it and now we’re back to hallowed!  
- different Bible translations have different words too!  
from ‘honoured’ to ‘held in reverence’

There are also important links here with Solomon’s prayer in the newly completed Temple  
- part of which was our first reading  
1 Kings 8:40 “*your people will worship and obey you*”  
1 Kings 8:41-2 “*foreigners will hear about you and your mighty power*”  
1 Kings 8:43 “*everyone on earth will worship you*”  
- sounds a lot like “hallowed” to me!

But wait ... there’s more! God’s name is not just a convenient form of address  
- in Hebrew understanding the name means the whole character of a person  
as revealed and made known  
- God’s name stands for God’s inmost nature  
Psalm 9:10 “*Everyone who honours your name can trust you*”  
which means far more than knowing that God’s name is THE LORD GOD  
- it means those who know the whole heart and mind and character of God  
will gladly put their trust in him

God’s name also carries a sense of God’s power and authority  
- there is a part of this which means  
take care not to use God’s name loosely, irreverently  
- but more than a reminder not to use our Father’s name lightly or blasphemously  
Jesus is telling his disciples, and us, to count on God’s very nature  
- to paraphrase:  
let God’s name be treated differently from all other names [Slide 8]

The 'hallowing' of God's name is beyond words

- beyond what we say, how we pray, what and how we sing  
it involves action: how we live
- this 'hallowing' is not reserved for special times  
like Lent, or Sunday worship, or working for missions, visiting the sick
- the hallowing of God's name covers the *whole of life*

In her devotional on "The Lord's Prayer", Rita Snowden writes: [Slide 9]  
Jesus calls us to hallow our Father's name in the street as well as in the sanctuary,  
in the counting house as well as the cathedral, as mill-hands as well as ministers

Jesus calls us to make God's name known with all that is good, beautiful and life-giving  
- never with anything negative, selfish or hurtful

Evelyn Underhill wrote: [Slide 10]

Our response to each experience He puts in our path, from the greatest disclosure of beauty to  
the smallest appeal of love, from perfect happiness to utmost grief, will either hallow or not  
hallow His Name

Our response!

- our response will either point people to God  
or turn them away from God

The petition that God's name might be hallowed is double-sided

- on the one hand it is a prayer that God would act  
to establish God's own sovereignty
- on the other hand it voices the longing for the day  
when all people will revere God ... back to Solomon's prayer in the Temple

In praying "Hallowed be your name"

- we are expressing a desire, a longing, for that time when all people  
when the whole of creation, recognises and honours God in their living
- and, and  
pledging ourselves to live and act so as to bring that about

As they say in the sports shows: "it's a big call!"

- however it's the only call in town  
and it comes not as some 'nice idea'
- but from our Heavenly Father, our "Daddy"

From our Daddy who could live anywhere in the universe [Slide 11]

- yet chose your heart  
and, whenever you want to talk – he'll listen

"Father, hallowed be your name" Amen.