

Hallowed be Thy Name

Heidelberg Catechism Series

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Preached on: Sunday, April 22, 2018

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Congregation, we praise our children. I say, boys and girls, good job. You did it well. Thank you. You did it so well. Excellent. And they need that. They need to hear something positive, something good for them to build something of a healthy self-esteem. They need to be praised. We can't always be negative and say, "That's wrong!" And so that is why they need praise. That was a good meal. That was hard work. We read in Proverbs 31 that the children rise up and call her blessed. The children call their blessed mother. Blessed mom. Blessed. Her husband also and he praises her. It's important to be positive and warm and praising. People need that as all of us realize that. The Lord does not really need it. He doesn't really need it. He is all-sufficient himself. The Lord does not get bigger and holier and kinder and wiser. He is infinitely good and perfect. The Lord does not gain with any praise but we need it. We need it. We are made for that. We are made to praise him. We cannot be truly happy and satisfied and saved without praising him. We are made in his image and unto his glory.

So that's the subject this morning from the Heidelberg Catechism, "Hallowed be Thy Name." Lord's Day 47, page 84.

Q. 122. Which is the first petition?

"Hallowed be thy name"; that is, grant us, first, rightly to know thee, and to sanctify, glorify and praise thee, in all thy works, in which thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth, are clearly displayed; and further also, that we may so order and direct our whole lives, our thoughts, words and actions, that thy name may never be blasphemed, but rather honoured and praised on our account.

Hallowed be thy name. Six thoughts. Some shorter, some longer. Six thoughts. Hallowed be thy name. That's the heart of prayer. It's the heart. First of all, the heart is hallowed be thy name. Why is it so difficult? It's difficult to pray that, hallowed be thy name. There are obstacles and hindrances and resistance. Why is it so difficult to pray that, hallowed be thy name? In the third place, the benefits of this prayer. It's good. It's pleasant to truly praise the Lord. In what sense? In the fourth place, examples of this prayer from the Bible. In the fifth place, the gift of this prayer. It's not something that we can pray. We cannot. It's impossible. To truly pray hallowed be thy name can be true but if the Lord

gives it and he's willing to give it and we pray for that gift. And in the sixth place, the extent of this prayer. It's quite extensive. Further also, that we so order and direct our whole lives. Our whole lives are thoughts, words and actions, it's quite wide and extensive. Hallowed be thy name: the heart of this prayer; why it's so difficult; the benefits; the examples; the gift; and also the extent.

Congregation, let's first have a look at the Lord's prayer in general again. It's prayer, right? You talk about prayer, about holy, personal conversation with God. Quite something. To be quiet, to not think about anything else, to address the Lord himself as a personal God who has revealed himself in the word, and then to speak unto our Maker, to come into his circle as near, as close, "Lord, hear my voice." A closeness to God, a personal talking to the Almighty One. Not to a vague, a known God, to a God who has revealed himself in the Scriptures. Somehow we kind of know if it is well. So talking to a personal God. Personal. Very personal, he is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Triune. Three persons, one God. Isn't that something?

And how can we pray if we don't read the Bible, right? If the Bible is closed, you're done in a few minutes, you don't know what to say anymore, but if you have read the Bible, God's holy word and he reveals himself, that shows you something of his power, his might, his wisdom, what he has done, what he will do, his attributes, his perfections, and prayer is a response, it is an answer to what the Lord has said, we pray. With all the cracks in our lives and all the places in time that are left filled up with modern devices and emails and texts, do we pray?

And what a beautiful verse that was, "Our Father." What tenderness. Not my Father but our Father. Our. The church speaking as a whole. Our Father. We are thy children. A deep sense of being adopted. Do we pray that way in a true faith, "Our Father, which art in heaven." So glory at the same time. So intimate and so awe-inspiring at the same time. The highest Majesty being so tender. "Our Father, which art in heaven." Then, "Hallowed be thy name." Hallowed, that's an old word but it's a good word. The word holy is in there. The same as in Halloween. Hallow evening. Sacred evening. And so hallowed be thy name, let us treat thy name in a sacred way. It's a sacred thing. It's a holy thing. That name, we glorify it and sanctify it. Hallowed be thy name.

That's the first of six petitions. Six? Yes. Our Father, which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. The first three begin with "thy." Thy name, thy kingdom, thy will. It does not start with us, it starts with him. Lord, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. And after those three first petitions beginning with "thy," three petitions about us. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts. Lead us not into temptation. Do you see? Three and another three. Thy, thy thy. Us, us, us.

And yet we also can make a different division. Instead of 3 + 3, it can also be 1 + 5, right? I think we can say that too, 1 + 5. The first on this unique, hallowed be thy name. Will thy kingdom, will thy will, about bread and temptation and forgiveness is by thy name. What is so unique about that? Our God's name is God himself. It's that, O Lord,

thy name may be hallowed. God's name dwelleth and we sing and we call upon his name. The name of God is the presence of God, is the person of God, is God himself. God himself.

So that's the start, "Lord, it's all about thee." Not about thy kingdom only and thy will, it's about God himself and if you can pray that first, then the whole rest is different. You're not so tense and so focused anymore on anything else, then the pressure is in a sense off or on. It's different if God is first.

Hallowed be thy name. Do you know why you're in trouble? We are [unintelligible] If you could start with Lord, hallowed be thy name, that's more important than anything else. If you could pray that first because usually you begin with what bothers you the most, right? What's most important, we are praying and saying, "Lord, it's so painful. We're in trouble," and in different ways you say, "Lord, it's so difficult." And I see that and I'm not saying it's wrong either. There are prayers in the Bible beginning with the need and the urgency of God's help. Do you see my point? [unintelligible] you could pray, "Lord, thy name be hallowed," that's more important than my help and my problems I'm experiencing.

So that's the heart. The heart is in hallowed be thy name. Thy name being glorified. We are made for that. We are made to glorify him. We are made in God's image and he loves that image yet the Lord is asking for an image and the Lord wants adoration. Our Father, who is God in heaven, hallowed be thy name. I adore thee. I glorify thee. I marvel. I'm stunned. I read in Psalm 47:7, "For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding." Not just singing praises but with understanding. Knowing who God is. Hallowed be thy name that is, grant us first rightly to know thee. That's the most important thing in hallowed be thy name, to know him, to sing with understanding, your understanding being enlightened by the Spirit to know who you're talking about and to whom you speak.

So read God's holy word and ask the Lord for understanding so you may call upon the Lord understanding and praise him with understanding. And I read in 1 Peter 2:9, "But ye are a chosen generation," God's church, "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." So that's the purpose of soul regeneration, of conversion. God converts people and draws them out of the darkness to his marvelous light, his stunning light, his pleasant light. He draws the light so they may show forth the praises who has called them out of that.

So that's the heart and how difficult it is to pray that because it's our lips. May my name be hallowed. May my kingdom come. May my will be done. It has to go my way. It's all about me. We fell so deep in paradise. We became so selfish, so proud, and now to pray hallowed be thy name, that is so foreign, so strange, so difficult, rather impossible. Impossible. You can't fake it. You can say it but to mean it from the heart, there is no way you can do that. Obstacles. Hindrances. [unintelligible] to first think of the Lord, but do you know why they were building that Tower of Babel? About their own name, right?

What's our purpose in life? My happiness. I would like to be fine and good and blessed. It's about me and if something goes against that, something that bothers us, we get upset because we love, we really love ourselves. Consequently things are out of focus if we change the order of this prayer and we say, "O holy God, hallowed be my name."

So that's why we need a change of heart. We are so unthankful, so independent. We like to figure things out ourselves and go in our own strength, our own will, for our own kingdom or our own glory. Now to be humbled and low to the ground with a contrite spirit and a broken heart, being a bruised reed, that's against our nature. So we can try to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," we can say it all the time but to say it from the heart is something that needs to be given.

The Lord Jesus Christ, he prayed it. "Father, I thank thee." The Lord Jesus Christ in his human nature was so dependent on his Father. It was all about his Father. It was his meat and drink to glorify his Father. It was his will, his life, to follow the Father's footsteps, to be obedient unto him. Difficult. Very difficult. Impossible, and yet it is so beneficial. There are so many benefits in that. It puts things in perspective. You have complaints and things go wrong the wrong way, you are suffering, you complain, right? "O Lord!" You complain. "Why is this happening? It's bad! It hurts! I'm not doing well at all." But now to first say, "Lord, I have no complaints about thee." You're suffering. Anyone suffering here? I think many are suffering. I recommend this, say, "Lord, give me," to pray this first, "I have no complaints about thee. God knows best. Thou art God. Hallowed be thy name. Thou art such a holy God, such a good God." Mention what he has done, what he has given, who he is.

May I elaborate on that? Hallowed be thy name is, "Lord, thou hast done so much. Thou hast made all things. Thou hast made black holes in the universe, the galaxies and the nebulas and the farthest star," and God is bigger than the universe. Mind-boggling. "Hallowed be thy name." The Lord has made thou out of nothing. All the energy. Limitless I would say, almost infinite. God has made it. "Hallowed be thy name." In spite of all the suffering and all the problems we experience, we first say, "Lord, hallowed be thy name." That takes the focus off our pain. That keeps us from self-pity, right? Self-pity, "Oh, it's so hard! It's so difficult!" You may suffer, that's fine, you may suffer and express it but that's not the same as self-pity and it's to focus on my pain and the Lord says, "Now pray first in all your pain, hallowed be thy name."

To have things in perspective and to have also another foundation. Remember the word "foundation" last Sunday? The Lord saying, "Begin that prayer now with, Our Father, which art in heaven." Begin that way because that excites that trust and that's the foundation of prayer, to trust in the Lord, to hallow his name. So hallowed be thy name, that means, "Lord, no complaints about thee." It means, "I depend upon thee. God thou art so great, thou art so good."

A few texts about this, about how praise to God benefits, it brings people. Psalm 135:3, "Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant." It really is. If you may do that from the heart, then the Lord gives that and the Lord

invites us to come unto him and you can truly praise the Lord, "Hallowed be thy name." The sweetness, it's pleasant, it's good. "Lord, thou art good." So you mention Lord it says in the Catechism, mention the Lord's power, "Lord, there is such a power, I'm stunned; such a wisdom, I'm impressed; such a goodness, I'm touched; such a justice, I tremble; such a mercy, I long; such a truth, I trust." Pleasant.

And I think of the Apostle Paul in prison in Acts 16 suffering, his feet in the stocks, hardly anything to eat, darkness, night, and at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. So he was suffering and he was not only praying, saying, "Lord, help us! Help us get out of this place! It's awful!" They sang praises unto God in prison.

Or think of Psalm 68:4, "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him." Have you ever rejoiced before him and said, "Lord" in the joy of your heart, "God is so good. So wise. So merciful. I love thee."

You know, example, young people, you read a good book. I hope you do. I hope you read many books. You read a good book and you read it in a few hours. It was so beautiful and you closed the book and you said, "Wow. Here, you have to read this! You have to read this, mom. It's such a good book. Dad, brother, read this book! It's good. It's beautiful. I'm impressed. I love it!" Why do you say that? Why don't you just close the book and put it on the shelf? Why are you talking about it? You feel something, right? You are excited. You are moved. You have to talk about it. You have to say, "Read this!" You have to recommend it. If you can close a book and just forget about it and don't recommend it to anyone else, then it's not a good book. And if your hearts are touched by God's glory, about who God himself is, then you say hallowed be his name, recommending that name also to others and saying, "Seek him. It's good. His service is the best. Hallowed be thy name."

Also in the Psalms we have read already. The last five Psalms in the book of Psalms repeat it, "Praise him. Praise him. Praise him." And that's not superficial. That's not meant [unintelligible] that's meant he's worthy of it. He's a glorious God. He's an almighty God.

And those are beautiful examples, right? The Lord Jesus also gives those examples. For example, he was standing before the grave of Lazarus and he prayed. Then they took away the stone from the place that the dead were laid and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." So from the heart. He had to say that. The Lord Jesus spoke to his Father, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." He had prayed for this and now he thanked his Father. Or think of the words, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and has revealed them unto babes." It was the Lord Jesus' life to pray and to render things, give glory to his Father all the time his entire life.

Back to the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms is so ordered in a certain way and it begins with, "Blessed," and the first Psalm ends with, "perish," and speaks about

meditating upon his love day and night. Why is that? Why does Psalm 1 in the first Psalm speak about meditating upon the word? You need that in order to pray. So the whole book of Psalms is a book of prayer and it ends with, "Praise him. O praise him." That's what heaven will be like and is, and the holy angels exclaimed, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts," with delight, with joy. They mean it, and all the saints joining in those choirs before the Lord, giving glory to the Lamb from the heart.

That's a joyful thing but it's a gift, our next thought. Congregation, it's interesting, hallowed be thy name. It does not say, I hallow thy name. It doesn't say that. It does not say, thy name will be hallowed. It does not say, thy name is worthy to be hallowed. It says, hallowed be thy name, meaning, "cause thy name to be hallowed because I can't. I cannot hallow that name. Lord, cause thy name to be hallowed. Let thy name be hallowed." It's a prayer. It's a supplication. It is a request, "Lord, help me. Lord, give it. Grant it." Do you see that in the Heidelberg Catechism? "That is, grant us," give us, "first, rightly to know thee. Lord, give us to know thee and give us to sanctify thee and give us to glorify thee and grant us to praise thee for all thy works in which thy power, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy and truth, are so clearly displayed. Lord, grant us."

So I don't have presumption. I'm not saying it's always wrong that you can never say, "I praise thee." I'm not saying that but in this prayer, the emphasis is on a petition, the first petition being, "Lord, give me. May I? Help me. Grant us to do that." That's encouraging. So the Lord does not come with a new law, the law, "Do your best in prayer and behave like a Christian." And your duty, you say, "Okay, I will pray this. I will pray more. I will pray more consciously. I will do my best, Lord, to pray according to the Lord's prayer. I will force myself. I coerce myself. I pressure myself. I will be a good Christian. I want to go to heaven." That's not how it works. You can't make yourself a Christian by praying better and more precise and doing your best. There is a cry, "Lord, hallowed be thy name." In the consciousness of our inability and approaching the Lord's name and to the Lord himself, asking the Lord, "Lord, make me."

Does it help you? Do you feel kind of, "I can't pray. I just can't. I'm so fake. I'm so counterfeit. I'm so lazy. I'm so worldly. I say words and I often wander off in my thoughts. I just cannot pray." I can't either and time and again we must say, "Lord, give me the prayer, the spirit of prayer and supplication. Hallowed be thy name. Lord, cause me to praise thee. Let me glorify thee. Let me know thee."

The Lord Jesus did not have to pray that way. He could say, "I praise thee." No limits, "I praise thee. I glorify thee." He didn't have to say to the Father, "Father, give me that I may glorify thee." He did it anyway. He was perfect and therefore then he prayed. Let us pray by him, through him. His prayer and his hallowing of God's name is perfect. So I read in Hebrews 13, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." By him therefore. So you bow your knees and you feel, "I should acknowledge the Lord, not complain about God." Magnify his name, realize through him, through the Lord Jesus Christ, he prays at the right hand of the Father and he is such a thankful high priest. He prayed so perfectly, so continually.

So ask the Lord for prayer. Pray, also ask, "Is that in the Bible?" We must ask [unintelligible] forget about asking, just ask. Both. Both. "O Lord, open thou my lips. So closed. Open my lips and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. Open my lips. Open my heart. Grant me that I may sincerely pray and give thanks to the Lord." At home, privately, by myself, in church, in school, enter into the gates with thanksgiving and to his courts in praise. Be thankful unto him and bless his name. A big part of the worship service is to glorify his name in prayer, in singing, in preaching. In preaching my focal point needs to be also, "Hallowed be thy name." This morning when I prepared a little bit more for this sermon, I looked up and I thought again as I always think, "I can't. I can't preach. It's a disaster." And then I remembered I should not be so concerned about myself and my service but begin with, "Hallowed be thy name," and I did this morning. Hallowed be thy name and I felt it. Maybe it doesn't go as well, as long as the Lord's name is hallowed it takes some of the pressure off me.

In everything we extend, in everything and further also that we may so order and direct our whole lives. It's not only about prayer and worship services, it's about our entire lives, everything. Our thoughts, words and actions, "Lord, let thy name be hallowed. In my actions. In my words. In my thoughts. In everything. Not only in prayer, in everything." I think our forefathers must have read 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God." For everything give thanks. Or think of 1 Corinthians 10, you also read about this same subject. That's not an exaggeration. 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That's everything. Everything. If a meal this afternoon, you eat and you prepare and you clean the table, in everything it should permeate us, it should be in us to walk circumspectly. "Lord, that thy name may be hallowed. Our whole lives, thoughts, words and actions, that so thy name may never be blasphemed and they will say, 'Look at that. See that. I heard that.' Never to be blasphemed but rather honored and praised on our account." On our account. They will say, "See, I saw something that is glorifying to God," and they never will say, "Is that a Christian? Is that a biblical church?"

Congregation, I asked a few times before, will you pray? You say, "I can't pray." Say, "Lord, hallowed be thy name. Cause me to praise," and don't let go and wrestle and ask the Lord for that pleasant experience. It is good to praise him if it is from the heart. Nothing in us. Everything in the Lord and especially because of his gift, the gift of his only begotten Son as a sacrifice for sin. Amen.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thou art an awe-inspiring, a great, a wise, a truthful God. No complaints about thee. But Lord, we ask thee give that work of thy Spirit in us that we may truly humble ourselves for your great majesty and seek refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ and live godly lives. We thank thee for thy help. Apply thy word. [unintelligible] to preach of the glory of his name and that pray to God. Bring them safely back home and back to thy house. In Jesus' name alone. Amen.