

God's Glory

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[0 : 0 0] Good afternoon everyone. I'd repeat Fraser's warm welcome. Really good to have you with us today. As I said, we're starting a new series looking at the Lord's Prayer, this great pattern prayer that the Lord Jesus gave us.

And today we're looking particularly at what it tells us about God's glory. One of the great privileges of being a grandfather is that you get to do things you may not have done for many years.

One of these is Lego. Archie loves Lego and he also loves Batman. So he was delighted when he got given a Batman Lego kit. The only problem was it was a little bit old for him.

He would have struggled to make it by himself, so of course he came and said, Grandad, you do it. So we sat down together and we had a go. There are two types of ways you can do Lego. You can do kind of freestyle and build fancy towers or whatever it is and be really creative about it.

Or you can take the instructions that Lego give you and you can follow them to the letter. And if you want to build the model that you see in the picture in the box, then obviously you have to follow the instructions very carefully.

[1 : 1 0] And so Archie and I together, we followed the instructions and we just about managed to come up with the model that it was supposed to be. But we had to exactly do what it said in the instructions.

And when some people look at the Lord's Prayer, that's how they would see it. It is a prayer that we should follow, that we should say, that we should repeat and go through it exactly the way that the Lord Jesus said it.

Many churches, every week in their service, as part of their prayers in the service, the congregation would say together the Lord's Prayer. And in many ways, that's a good discipline.

I think we could probably do it more often than we do. But it is taking the Lord's Prayer and saying it as Jesus told it. Quite often in the slightly old-fashioned but very majestic language of the authorised version.

So that is one way in which we can look at the Lord's Prayer. This week I'm doing something else that I haven't done for many years. I'm doing a business presentation, but I'm not representing a business.

[2 : 1 6] I'm doing it as myself. And in many ways, that's quite liberating. I don't have to worry about whether what I'm saying ties in with what my employer's policy is. But it does create its own challenges as well.

And one of these is you need to develop your own PowerPoint. You can't just take the standard company one and use it. You need to develop your own. So I spent a bit of time looking through Microsoft's templates.

And I decided this was the one that I was going to use. Except not quite. So I took that template and I adapted a bit to meet my needs.

Now you can see the shape is different. The colours are different. The border is different. The fonts are different. But I think it is still recognisably the same PowerPoint template.

I've taken something that someone else had developed. And I put my own stamp on it. And I've used it for something that is relevant for me. And that ties in with the way that I would want PowerPoint to look.

[3 : 17] And that's the second way that people can look at the Lord's Prayer. It's not necessarily just something that we have to go through and repeat exactly the words of Jesus. It gives us a template, a pattern, a recipe.

You can use different terms depending on what things you're interested in. But it gives us something we can take. The basic ingredients are there. But we can adapt them to our needs and our circumstances.

And Graeme's very helpfully, as we've looked at this series, he divided the Lord's Prayer up into five headings. These are going to be the five weeks we look at it. And so he says, first part of the Lord's Prayer is about God's glory.

It's about you recognising who God is and desiring that other people recognise it as well. It's then about God's will. It's about submitting to God, recognising that he is king, recognising that he deserves our obedience and saying, your will be done.

It then talks about provision, God providing for us. Providing in the words of the Lord's Prayer our daily bread, but much wider than that, providing everything that we need.

[4 : 28] It talks about our need for forgiveness. That we're all sinners, that we do what is wrong, as we would seek to forgive others, so we seek God's forgiveness for us. And then it talks about guidance.

About the fact that we need God's help and God's direction in our lives, particularly to avoid us falling into wrong ways. And these five headings can be part of any prayer.

These are the five key things that we probably want to think about as we pray to God. To pray for his glory. To pledge our allegiance to him.

To recognise that he gives us everything we need and without him we have nothing. To seek his forgiveness and thank him that he gives it through the Lord Jesus. And to ask for his guidance, particularly in being able to serve him and follow him.

It is a template prayer. Now I think both ways of using it are perfectly legitimate and we may do them both at different times.

[5 : 33] But the key thing with both, which is what was in the video we saw a while ago, is it's universal. If we're repeating the Lord's Prayer as the Lord said it, then we can all identify with the words and understand them and think how that applies to me.

If we're taking it and using it as a template, as an example prayer that we can use as we build our own thoughts and our own needs into it. We can also see these are the same needs that everyone in the world has.

And so again it is a universal prayer. And I hope over the next few weeks we will be able to identify with what the Lord Jesus says in his prayer.

And to recognise their relevance to us. And so that as we pray, whether we pray in the words of the Lord's Prayer or whether we use our own words in the spirit of the Lord's Prayer.

That we will pray believing that God hears and that God answers and that our prayers are powerful. So today we're looking at the very first part of the Lord's Prayer, which is in verse 9 of Matthew chapter 6.

[6 : 44] And it says quite simply, the Lord Jesus says, This then is how you should pray, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. And Graham's given this the title, God's Glory.

And I think that's entirely appropriate. We see God's Glory in the description that is given to him at the beginning. And we see our desire for God's Glory in our prayer that his name may be hallowed.

So let's take the two in turn. Our Father in heaven. Very simple introduction as we come. Very simple description of God.

And yet so, so profound. So the first thing it says is God is our Father. He's not just the Father, our Father.

He is our Father. We could say he is my Father. Now let's remember the Lord Jesus is talking to people here who are his followers, his disciples. So he's not saying that God is the Father of everyone in the world.

[7 : 49] Whether they believe in him, whether they've accepted him or rejected him, completely regardless. God is the Father of those who have chosen to trust him and to follow him.

And in particular, God is the Father of those who have come to him through the Lord Jesus and had forgiveness of sins through the Lord Jesus and his death on the cross for us. And so are able to call God our Father because of our relationship with Jesus and through that our relationship with God.

John in his first letter, he marvels at how great the love of God is for us. That we should be called the children of God.

But he says that is what you, what we are. If we know the Lord Jesus, if we are depending on him for our future, for our salvation, then we are God's children.

God is our Father. And we can come to him and address him as our Father, as my Father in our private prayers and know that he cares for us each individually and that he wants what is best for each of us as individuals.

[9 : 01] Our Father in heaven. Then God is our Father. Now, I expect in a congregation like this, there are lots of different experiences of what a father is like.

Some of us have had fathers who have been great examples to us, who we've been able to look up to and whom we can respect and see as people who we would want to be like.

And although not perfect, we can see, yes, that gives a little bit of a picture of what God is like for us. Other people, sadly, have had fathers who weren't so good.

And they may look back on their childhood with very unhappy memories and think that their father really didn't do what a good father should and isn't a very good person or a very good model that they should follow and respect.

Others may never have known your father. You may never have known him, so you don't have someone in that kind of role you can look back on. Whatever our experience, we can take God as being the best father that there ever could be.

[10 : 09] Showing love for us all individually and collectively. And in particular, as I put up on the screen, doing two things. He provides for us and he protects us.

These are two fundamental parts of the role of a good father, aren't they? Providing for you and protecting you. So we have, later in the Lord's Prayer, we have give us our daily bread.

That is God's provision for us. Without God, we have nothing. Without God, we couldn't exist in this world. Without God, we would have none of the luxuries that most of us enjoy.

We wouldn't have the basics of daily life. We depend on God's provision entirely. And God is the great father who provides abundantly what we need and who is always kind and always caring and always doing what is best for us.

And our father in heaven, too, is one who protects us. Again, it comes in the prayer when it talks about delivering us from the evil one. And if we have our lives in God's hands, whatever may happen to us, whatever circumstances we may face, we can be confident that he will work them for our good, that his will is best, and that if we just willingly submit to him and allow him to direct our ways, then he will give us what is best.

[11 : 39] He will protect us. He will bring us safely to be ultimately with the Lord Jesus when we leave this world. He is a father who provides for us and who protects us and does it, as we said, for each of us personally.

But it's not just our father. Sometimes we just say these words, our father. Perhaps we should say the full words. He is our father in heaven. Now, in heaven isn't meant to be just a geographical comment.

We're here on earth. God's up in heaven. He's a long way away. That is not at all what the meaning of it is. Again, I think there are two things that are really important from the fact that he is our father in heaven.

The first is that he is holy. Holy really just means different, separate, of a different kind. And I think part of the reason why the Lord Jesus said our father in heaven was as a reminder that we are not to become too familiar with God.

Take God for granted, almost as if he was one of us. When we come before God in prayer, we come before the great creator and sustainer of the universe.

[12 : 55] We come in front of the one who is all-powerful, all-loving, and holy, you can't even look on sin. And coming to God as our father is a wonderful privilege that is only possible because we come through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so we need to come to him with reverence, with awe, and with an understanding of just how great this God whom we are praying to is.

Doesn't mean we don't come to him as our father. And that is still the case. And we know that he loves us and he cares for us. But we come recognizing that we are weak, we are insignificant, and God's glory is so great that we can only begin to scratch the surface of it in our thoughts.

He is holy. I think Father in heaven too is the idea of the power of God. A human father, however loving, however caring they may be for their children, there's no way they can do everything the children need or be everything to their families.

And yet God can. God is all-powerful. There's nothing that is too difficult for God. And when we come to this God in prayer, we come to the one who is the master of all things, who is able to do everything and to do much more than we could ever think or expect from him.

[14 : 24] So we come with awe, but we should also be coming with expectation, recognizing that God is so powerful that nothing is beyond him, that nothing is too difficult for him.

So we come to our Father in heaven, our glorious almighty Father, but our Father who cares for each of us individually and intimately and wants the best for all of us as a good Father does.

And we come with confidence that he is glorious and that he will glorify his name and even that he will do it through us, weak and sinful as we are.

He is our Father in heaven. Then the Lord says, Hallowed be your name. Now I suspect this is the part of the Lord's Prayer that even in the modern translations, people struggle a little bit to understand.

Although in the New International Version they try to use modern English, the word hallowed isn't really one that trips off your tongue as something that we use in everyday life. It is slightly archaic in many ways.

[15 : 36] We could paraphrase this, May your name be revered. May your name be held in the highest esteem. May your name be seen as important as it is and never abused.

That is the import, that is the thought of what is being said here. Now we just know when we talk about the name of God, it's not just thinking of the letters G-O-D.

It's not just thinking of the name as we might think of someone's name in our society today. Rather in Jewish culture, the name stood for the whole of the person.

And the name of God speaks for all of God's personality and character, his power, his glory, his excellence. All of that is encompassed in his name.

And so really the prayer is that God himself may be revered and worshipped and that people may recognise him for who he is. Starting with me, that I may recognise God as the great God of heaven and that also those round about me may come to understand that as well.

[16 : 46] But what does it mean, your name be revered? In practice, what does it mean? Well, let me suggest three things. It will affect what we say, our speech. Now, the most basic of levels.

In our society today, the name of God is most often used as an expletive. It's used as an expression of shock or of anger or of something equivalent.

I think it goes without saying that if we are Christians, if we're followers of the Lord Jesus, we would not want to use God's name in that way. That would not be revering God's name.

It would also be contrary to the third commandment which says that we shouldn't misuse the name of God. Can I go a bit further? I think we shouldn't just accept that that's the way things are in our society.

That everyone else uses the name of God in that way and we just have to live with it and there's nothing we can do about it. Now, I'm not saying every time someone abuses the name of God that we immediately need to jump on them and criticise them and put them down in some kind of way.

[17 : 56] But if we're Christians, if we're followers of the Lord Jesus, I think it's important that people realise that when they use God's name in a way that is inappropriate, that that is hurtful to us.

It is not something that we feel is acceptable. And there will, I'm sure, be opportunities at times when we can talk to people and explain why it is that it's inappropriate to use God's name in that way.

In some ways, that is what it means to be salt and light in our world. That we show the example by our own speech of how we should speak and how we should avoid abusing God's name.

But also, that we explain to other people why it is that it's inappropriate. Perhaps something to take away and think about during this week. But it's wider than that in our speech, isn't it as well?

It is not just the pure situation where God's name may not be revered as in his name, the word God, or in his name Jesus. It is also in the way that we generally speak and talk to other people.

[18 : 59] And perhaps particularly the way that we talk to him about God, if we do. We need to make sure that when we do that, that we're not too familiar or that we're not too light in the way that we use God's name and talk about him.

That people recognize that here is someone who is really, really important to us, the most important person, God and the Lord Jesus in our whole lives. And we talk about him in a way that reflects that.

Through our speech, we need to revere, to hallow the name of God. And then there are attitudes. Sometimes it seems that people's attitude is not so much hallowed be your name as hallowed be my name.

That people are very self-centered and it can happen to Christians as well. That we're so, so centered in ourselves and what people think of us and our reputation that we forget that much more important is what they think about the Lord Jesus and how they view our God.

And by our attitudes of life, by the humility that we display, if we know the Lord Jesus, by our attitudes towards others, but particularly by the way that we show our attitudes towards God.

[20 : 14] We can hallow his name through our lives and we can encourage others to do the same. And then finally, there are our actions.

What we do. What we do in so many ways defines how people look at us and view us? What are our priorities? What are the kind of things that we enjoy and seem to relish the most?

Are these things which are consistent with revering, with hallowing the name of God? What I do on a Monday or on a Friday evening or on a Saturday, if other Christians were to see it, would they feel that was an appropriate thing for someone who is a follower of the Lord Jesus to be doing?

Or sometimes, do I pay homage to the Lord Jesus and to God the Father on a Sunday and in what I see in church? And yet, at times, if you looked at my life the rest of the week, it would be very different and I wouldn't be hallowing God's name.

I wouldn't be showing reverence for my God or being obedient to him. I think there's a challenge there for all of us. How do we view our God and how does that impact in our speech, our attitudes and our actions?

[21 : 39] And frankly, we can't really begin to start praying properly for others and that they will revere, hallow the name of God unless we have shown in our own lives the importance that he has to us and our desire to follow him and to live for him and that his name, that his glory may be revealed to others through us.

Let's this week very consciously think in what I say and how I treat others in my actions. Are these things bringing reverence to the name of God?

Do they make me a good ambassador for the Lord Jesus? Or are there some things I need to change in my life so that I may truly be able to pray, hallowed be your name?

We started with instructions and with a template. Let's end with something that I think is even more powerful, a role model. So here's someone who's a great role model in many ways.

You probably recognise Roger Federer. Federer, probably the greatest male tennis player ever. Someone who is known for his skill, his fitness, his dedication, his focus, his style, and his good attitude in many ways to things.

[22 : 59] Someone who, an aspiring tennis player, would do well to look up to and to copy, not just in the ways he plays tennis, but also in the way he lives his life and the way he treats others.

a good role model. And the question then is, am I a good role model? Can people look at me and when they see how I am and the way that I speak and the way that I act, can they see something of the Lord Jesus in that?

Can they see something that is worth following? Or do they sometimes look at me and say, I'm not wanting anything to be anything like that. That's what a Christian's like.

I don't want to be part of it. All of us, if we know the Lord Jesus, we're called to be role models for others. By our lives, to show who we love, who we serve, and who we want others to come to know.

We're called to be those who through the way we live and the way we act, we bring glory to the name of God and we attract others to him as they see the difference that he makes in our lives.

[24 : 17] So I leave the challenge with you. Are you, if you're a Christian, are you a role model? Are you someone others can look up to and can see something of Lord Jesus in and can think, I want to be like that because of the way this person lives.

I want to give glory to God for the fact that he has made such a difference in their lives. I kind of come back finally to what I talked about a little bit earlier, which is that we need God to be our personal father.

It's not enough to say that God is the father of the world or to think God is the father of all mankind or whatever. We need to have that personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus.

We need to recognise our fear, our need for forgiveness, which is in the Lord's Prayer. We need to recognise that Jesus' death is the only way we can be forgiven and we need to come and to trust in him.

And only when we do that can we fully understand the glory of our God. And only when we do that can we fully come to appreciate all that the Lord Jesus has done for us, all that God has done for us and all that he can continue to do for us.

[25 : 31] Let's make sure we're trusting in the Lord Jesus and let's this week go out and seek to live lives that bring praise and glory to our God.

We're going to pray now and at the end of the prayer I'd invite us all to say the Lord's Prayer together. We're going to do it in the modern version rather than the additional one and the words will be up on the screen.

So if you're comfortable please join in as we say together the words of the Lord's Prayer after I've prayed to begin with. Let's pray together. Our Father we thank you that you are a great a mighty and awesome God.

We thank you that you are holy that you are separate from everything else and that you are above everything else. And yet we thank you that too that you are our Father.

That if our trust is in Jesus we can come to you as your children and we can know that you care for our every need and that you are eager for your children to bring our praise and our request to you.

[26 : 37] Our Father this morning we would want to pray that your name may be hallowed that it may be revered that it may be seen for what it is and that you may be recognized as the great and the glorious God.

We pray that that will happen first in our own lives that through our faith in the Lord Jesus and through seeking to follow him and by the power of your Holy Spirit that we may live as those who are a good role model for others and to glorify God through what we say and what we do.

And we pray too that there may be a greater reverence for your name in our land. That there may be a turning back to you. That there may be a recognition of how far we have fallen as a nation and that there may be a real desire that your name may be hallowed, revered throughout our land and not just used as an expression of irritation or a shock or something else.

We pray that you will move in our land that your name truly may be hallowed, may be revered, may be respected. And we ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus and we now pray the prayer that he has given to us.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as in heaven.

[28 : 07] Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.