

The First Petition



Opening Prayer

Father, dear Father, if your name is not proclaimed as holy and if you do not give us your own holiness by virtue of Jesus' sacrifice for us, then all is lost; then we are doomed to an eternal night of suffering. It will give way in the end to the vile unholiness of the devil and the filth beyond cleansing. So Father, dear Father, do not forsake us and leave us bereft of your holy name, found in the gospel of forgiveness by which alone we are declared holy and fit for heaven. Amen.

Lesson Aim: What are we asking God to do when we pray the First Petition?

Part One

Read Jeremiah 23:25-31.

1) What were the prophets that God is talking about doing?

Sometimes God's prophets receive their revelations from God in dreams, but revelation dreams that are from God always agree with the rest of God's Word.

2) What does God tell those who have his Word to do?

God tells us that his Word is far more powerful than the dreams or words that any person makes up.

3) How does God feel about people who tell lies about him?

4) What benefit is there in telling lies about God?

Read Numbers 20:1-13.

5) What is the problem that the Israelite community is facing?

6) God had a solution for this problem. What did God tell Moses to do?

7) But Moses didn't quite do what God told him to. What did Moses do?

8) Was God doing something nice for them or something that was mean?

9) When Moses spoke to the people did he sound nice, or did he sound mean?

10) Because of this, God tells Moses and Aaron that they will not be allowed to go into the promised land. What does God say that Moses did wrong? (See also Psalm 106:32-33)

The sin of Moses was a failure to distinguish law and gospel properly. The holiest part of God's holy name is that he is the God of forgiving, saving grace. One of the things we pray for in the first petition is that God would guard us against horribly defiling his holy name by obscuring his gospel or wrongly withholding it. God wanted to do something good for his people and show them his love, but in his anger Moses burdened the Israelites with the law. By doing so, Moses failed to hallow God's name.

Read 2 Samuel 12:9.

David had sinned, and spent a year trying to cover it up. God sent his prophet, Nathan, to David to tell him that he knew about his sin.

11) By sinning and doing what is evil in God's eyes, what had David despised?

KEY POINT 1 - God's name is his titles and everything else he has revealed about himself in the Bible.

What I've learned so far:

Part Two

Read Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2.

The First Petition = "Hallowed by your name."

This petition is difficult to translate. Jesus' words of prayer literally mean "may consecrated (or made holy) be the name of you." Imagine a father coming home from work and saying as he walks in the door, "Honey, at last at home is me." The children respond, "Daddy, happy to see you are we." Then the mother says to her husband, "Good was your day? Ready is dinner." We don't talk that way. Plus, "to hallow" simply is not a word typically in our vocabulary. Consider these alternate translations;

Sanctify your name.

May your name be recognized as holy.

May your name be shown to be holy.

Show the holiness of your name.

1) List all the names you can think of which we use to refer to God.

Read Exodus 34:5-7.

2) What is God's name?

The only way for us to adequately know God and his name is by learning his Word. God's name is his self-revelation, his reputation, everything that we use to refer to him and everything we know about him.

Read Isaiah 29:22-24.

3) What is God saying his people will do when they see his work?

Read Ezekiel 36:22-23 and John 12:28.

4) Who makes God's name holy?

God is the primary sanctifier of his own name. Of course it is also true that God sanctifies his name through us when he leads us to honor his name as holy.

KEY POINT 2 - God's name is hallowed, or kept holy, only when Christians teach God's Word faithfully and live according to it.



What I've learned so far:



Part Three

Study pages 248-253 in the Catechism and answer the following questions in your own words.

- 1) Why can't we make God's name holy?

- 2) Consider things that work against the holiness of God's name.

The Catechism says that God's name is dishonored among us when anyone teaches contrary to God's Word, and when anyone lives contrary to God's Word. Heretics preach, Christians sin, enemies blaspheme. Upholding God's pure teaching is not easy. Critics confront us with arguments we cannot answer to the satisfaction of reason, we have doubts and struggles ourselves. We ask in this petition that God would keep us faithful to his Word until the day when he vindicates the holiness of his name and banishes all doubts from our minds forever.

Helpful Passages

Matthew 5:16

3) We keep God's name holy in the way we, his people _____.

1 Corinthians 10:31

4) In what way are we to live to keep God's name Holy?

Romans 2:23-24

When we sin against God, we also _____ God.

Deuteronomy 4:2

5) Are we being faithful to God if we ignore part of what he teaches s in his Word?

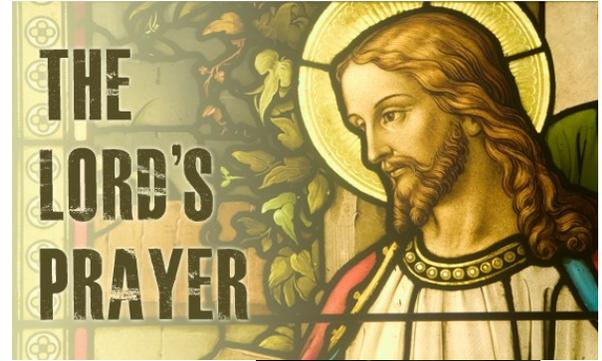
God's name is holy already by itself, so when we pray "hallowed be your name" we are asking that God's name isn't made holy, but that it is _____ holy.

In this petition we pray for exactly what God demands in the Second Commandment...So this point is easy and clear if only the language is understood: to hallow means the same as praise, magnify and honor both in word and deed...If you pray for this with your heart, you can be sure that it pleases God. For he will not hear anything more dear to him than that his honor and praise is exalted above everything else and that his Word is taught in its purity and is considered precious and dear.—Luther, *Luther's Large Catechism*

Main point – I ask God to help me keep his name holy by teaching and living God’s Word faithfully.

Final Considerations:

Just as all of the commandments could be summed up in what is commanded in the first commandment, so also the first petition serves as a good summary of all that is prayed for in the entire Lord’s Prayer. If God’s kingdom comes, and if his will is done, then his name will be made known, recognized, and honored as holy. We’ll learn more about that in the next lessons.



1) Examine yourself in order to reflect on all for which we pray in the first petition;



What blessings do we desire be given with these words?

What blessings ought we recognize and appreciate with these words?

From what evils do we ask to be kept and delivered with these words?

What sins must we confess with these words?



What do you think?

2) Since we are sinners, we might not always be able to teach God’s Word perfectly because it is impossible for us to avoid misspeaking at times.

3) Jane quit going to church. When someone came to talk with her, she said, “you people at church care too much about right teaching. What God really cares about is what’s in people’s hearts, whether they love other people or whether they’re sincere in their faith.” How would you respond to her?

4) Look up Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18-19. How do these passages apply to the First Petition?

5) Write an expanded or amplified version of the first petition. Here’s an example;

Lead us to honor your holy name with godly lives and faithful testimony to your Word. Restrain the scoffers and false teachers who find fault with your name. Overcome our doubts, and finally vindicate your holiness at the end of time by revealing yourself fully. Amen.

What I’ve learned about the First Petition of the Lord’s Prayer:

Commit to Memory:

- 1 Corinthians 10:31
- The First Petition (with *What Does This Mean* and *How is God’s name kept holy?*)