

“The Prayer of Recognition”

Text: Matthew 6:9

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

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PRAY!

We continue our series looking at the way Jesus taught us to pray, which we call The Lord’s Prayer. And how He taught us to pray to the Father. This week we’re going to look at the phrase, *“hallowed by thy name.”* We’re going to talk about what it means to honor God’s name.

Jesus made God’s name a big deal. Look at Matthew 6:9 at the way Jesus began The Lord’s Prayer. *“This then is how you should pray, ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.’”*

- Looking at that phrase and two questions hit my mind immediately. Why is God’s name so important? The second question is, What in the world does the word “hallowed” mean? When I hear the word hallowed, I think of Halloween or the hallowed ground of a battle.

What does it mean for God’s name to be hallowed? Hallowed is an old English word and it just means important, valued. To hallow God’s name is to honor God’s name; to see it for its true importance and value. What’s so important and valuable about God’s name?

Names in Jesus’ day used to indicate who a person was. If somebody was named Carpenter that meant they were the carpenter in town. God’s name indicates who God is. Names represent character. When we talk about valuing God’s name, we’re talking about valuing who God is. We’re saying, “God, let me value You and who You are above all others.”

Do you want peace? I want peace. If you want peace, you begin by recognizing who God really is. Before you even make all your requests through prayer, recognize who God really is.

The logical question then would be, “How does honoring God’s name reduce the stress of everyday living, and bring peace in our everyday lives?”

This morning we’re going to talk about a couple of things that happen when we pray, what I like to call the Prayer of Recognition—recognizing God’s name for what it really means. How does recognizing God’s name bring peace into my life when I pray this prayer? By two ways:

1. Praying the Prayer of Recognition, recognizing God's name, means I recognize that God is able to meet my deepest need.

- A. The amazing thing about God's names, and there are hundreds of them in the Bible, is that for each of God's names there is a need in our lives. God's names show how He can meet the deepest needs in your life.
- B. For instance, in the Old Testament, God has a name Jehovah Shalom which means "God is my peace." That name tells us what God wants to do in our lives, how He can meet that need in your life. That tells us that God wants to reduce my stress. God is our peace. God wants to reduce my stress in life.
- C. Jesus talked about that in John 14:27, "*The peace I give you, it isn't fragile like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled, don't be afraid.*" The difference between the world's kind of peace and God's peace is this:
 - 1. The world's peace is based on the circumstances that are good sometimes and bad others. So some days you're at peace and some days you're in anxiety. God's peace is based on God's character which is always there, because His character never changes.
 - 2. God's name – Jehovah Shalom – reminds us that God wants to meet that need for peace in your life.
- D. God has another name, Jehovah Rophe. That means "God is my healer." That reminds us that God wants to heal my hurt. The deepest hurts in life are not physical. They're emotional. They're relational. You may have had an emotional or relational hurt in your life this very week. Or there may be one you've been living with for a long time. Wherever that hurt came from, whenever that came into your life, God wants to heal that hurt. God sees and God cares and God wants to help you start fresh. God can do in your life what no one else can do.
- E. So we say Honored be God's name. When you think about honoring God's name, don't forget it is the one Jesus talked about at the very beginning of the Lord's Prayer "***Our Father in Heaven.***" Father is one of God's names. One of the ways you and I honor God's name is by acknowledging God is our Father.
- F. Those of you who are parents. Suppose you're driving home and one of your kids – let's say your eight year old is sitting out on the street corner and holding a sign scrawled in crayon that says, "Will work for food." How would you feel as a parent, driving past that? You'd stop and go, "*What are you doing?!?*" And they'd look up at you and say, "You've taken care of me for eight years now. I figure I'm on my own." That's crazy. You'd say, "Get back in the house! First of all you're embarrassing me being out here. And secondly, I want to take

care of you. It's my job. I like to take care of you. I like to meet the needs in your life. It's what I'm supposed to do."

1. Psalm 79:8, "*Let Your tenderhearted mercy quickly meet our needs.*" Did you know that God has a tender heart toward you and because of that He wants to meet the needs of your life? He is your Father.

G. What is the greatest need in your life? Write it down and say, "God, for this one, I am depending on You." That's the Prayer of Recognition. Recognizing that God alone can meet my deepest need; that He is greater than my biggest problem.

2. The second way that recognizing God's name brings me peace is the fact God calls me to be part of His family.

- A. God calls me. Here's the amazing thing. This great and holy name that God has, He invites us to share it. God's name is God's reputation. There's a difference between reputation and character. Character is what you are. Reputation is what other people think you are. The amazing thing to me is that God has put a great deal of His reputation in our hands. We're called by His name. We're His family. Ephesians 2:19, "*You are members of God's very own family.*" We're called Christian after Christ. We are called by His name.
- B. If you don't believe God put His reputation on the line by giving us His name, just talk to some friends; maybe some friends of yours who would tell you, "The reason I'm not a Christian is because I've met some hypocritical Christians and I don't want to be like that." If you don't believe God put His reputation on the line, just listen to what Gandhi said during his life, "I might have become a Christian if it were not for the Christians I've met." God's reputation is on the line in our lives.
- C. To be called by God's name should make a difference. In fact, it should make a difference in two primary ways and don't get these out of order.
 1. One is to recognize and realize how deeply God, my Father, loves me. I'm part of His family. I'm loved more deeply than I could ever imagine
 2. Secondly, it should make a difference in the way I live.
- D. Once you begin to understand the depths of God's love for you, then you live as a child of God. You live out that love. Ephesians 5:1-2, "*Follow God's example in everything you do because you are His dear children. Live a life filled with love for others, following the example of Christ who loves you and gave Himself as a sacrifice to take away your sins.*" We're God's children. We represent God's name. We're part of His family.
- E. God sends us out into the world saying, "Go out as I would live. Go out and show some people. Put a face on the name of God."

1. I encourage you this next week to remember that at the office, the gym or even at the Little league field.
 2. Remember that when the checker in the checkout line takes ten minutes longer than you think it should have taken.
 3. Remember that when you miss your connecting flight somewhere in the middle of the country and you're stuck.
 4. Remember that when you're on a business trip alone in a hotel room with your thoughts and a cable TV channel.
 5. Remember you represent God's name. There's no greater privilege than to represent His name.
- F. If you're a Christian, and you're thinking, "This is a sermon about peace? And you're talking about living up to God's name? That's a lot of pressure to put on me." If living the Christian life is one big pressure to you, you're doing it wrong. God didn't mean for it to be a pressure. Jesus said, I mean for it to be a life of peace, a life of rest. My commands, he said, they're not burdensome. They're light.

This is The Prayer of Recognition. You need this prayer in your life.

- It is a worthy goal to pray, God make my life honor Your name.
- It's a worthy goal to write down something like, "I will act like God's child by ... what? How do you need to act like God's child this week? By asking forgiveness of somebody in your family? Or forgiving somebody in your family? God is forgiving so His children should act forgiving.
- Act like God's child by taking a step of integrity at work? Even if that step of integrity means you might lose your job. God has integrity. He expects his children to have integrity.
- Or maybe you need to act like God's child this week by simply realizing he loves you even though you don't feel it now. God's love isn't dependent on my feelings.
- Or maybe you need to become God's child today by taking the step of faith, realizing God wants you to be a part of His family. He sent Jesus Christ into this world to say, "I'm willing to open the door. I'm willing to forgive you of the wrong things you have done if you'll trust Me to do that. I'm willing to be your Father and begin to lead and guide your life if you trust me to do that." As you trust Him in that simple way through prayer, you come into God's family.

I invite you to pray along with me the Prayer of Recognition, recognizing God for who He is in your life and asking for God's peace. Let us pray together:

Father in heaven, today I choose to make Your name something more than just to talk about. I choose to trust in your name. I trust you as my savior. That's Your name. I trust You as the one who is willing to forgive my sins. I trust You as my Lord. That's Your name. One who's willing to lead and guide my life, who has the power to make me the kind of person You created me to be. I trust you as my provider. I trust you as my healer. I

trust you as my rock of security. I trust You as my Father in heaven. And I pray that Your name, your character, will be recognized as of greatest importance in my life. May my life be a continual invitation for others to join Your family. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.