

Place Lurgan Baptist 24:5:2009

THE PATTERN PRAYER

Readings: Psalm 96 & Matthew 6:9-10

3. WHAT'S IN A NAME ?”

I heard about a college student, who was the very first person in his family to go to college. When someone offered this student some illegal drugs, saying, “ *Go ahead try it, it will make you feel good,*” the student refused point blank. But the drug dealer kept pushing him, “ *Don't be so upright, noone is going to know that you have tried a little dope and got a little high.*” “ *That's not the point,*” said the student. “ *The point is that my mother cleaned houses, washed floors and worked hard to send me to this college. I am here because of her. I would not do anything that might demean her sacrifice for me.*” Do you know what that student was doing ? He was hallowing his mother's name. Now “ *what's in a name ?*” That is what Shakespeare asked in Romeo and Juliet. “ *That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.*” What he was saying was this. The essence is not so much in the name, but in the product, but that isn't necessarily true when you delve into spiritual things. So what's in a name ? Our names are very important to us but sometimes we get things mixed up.

One summer at the Ridgecrest Conference Centre, the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, Mississippi,

was being introduced by Dr. A. V. Washburn. When he got up introduce the pastor Dr. Washburn said, “ *We are so glad to have as our preacher for the week, the Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, Tennessee,*” instead of Mississippi. When the quick thinking pastor came up to the pulpit he said, “ *Dear friend, I correct. I am pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jackson, Mississippi, but that is all right Dr. Washpot.*” You see, names are very important, and the Pattern Prayer begins with the name of God. Indeed the first three petitions relate to God and His glory, and the last three relate to Man and his need. Do you see how our Lord Jesus begins this prayer ? Do you see what our first concern in prayer must be ? It is not sin, or Satan, or self, or even the situation we face at the moment. The prayer does not begin by focusing on you, the prayer begins by focusing on God. Our Lord lays it down that our first and greatest concern in prayer should be that that Lord's name should be hallowed.

My we must never forget that. Our first concern is not to feel better or even to feel blessed. True prayer always puts God in the centre of the picture. Arthur W. Pink says, “ *How clearly, then is the fundamental duty in prayer set forth: self and all its needs must be given a secondary place and the Lord freely accorded the preeminence in our thoughts, desires and supplications. This petition must take the precedence for the glory of God's name is the ultimate end of all things.*” Now is this how you begin in prayer ? Do you begin by God at the centre ? Is the glory of God your main concern ? The Lord Jesus says, (6:9) Now you may have heard or said the phrase

“*hallowed by Thy name,*” many times. But do you know what it means ? Do you know what is implied when you say that ? Some people think it’s like saying, “*long live the Queen,*” or that it is an epithet attached to God’s name to give homage. However, when Christ said, “*Hallowed by Thy name,*” He was saying something rich in meaning. You see, in this petition,

(1) THE CHARACTER OF GOD IS REVEALED

In the Bible names always meant something. For instant, Jacob’s name meant “*cheater,*” or “*deceiver.*” Later when he got right with God, God gave him a new name. Israel which meant “*Prince of Israel,*” or “*Prince of God.*” Simon meant one thing, Peter meant something else. The name of God means something. It represents His nature, His character and His attributes. You see, here we have,

(a) A REVELATION OF GOD:

The psalmist wrote, “*They who know thy name will put their trust in thee.*” (Ps 9:10) If the word name is literally taken to mean God’s name itself, we would be saying that everyone who knows the word God trusts in Him. But that’s not the case. Rather the emphasis of the verse is, “*Those who perceive the fullness of who God is put their trust in Him.*” When a person comes to understand the Lord’s character, he will trust Him. David said, “*I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.*” (Ps 7:17) The word “*name,*” in that

verse refers to all that God is. Do you recall how our Lord Jesus prayed in His great high priestly prayer ? He said to the Father, “*I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me.*” (Jn 17:6) What did Christ mean when He said, “*I have manifested thy name ?*” Well, Christ had revealed who God was. He said to Philip, “*he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*” (Jn 14:9) Jesus Christ is the manifestation of all that God is. So when we say, “*Hallowed by thy name,*” we respect God for who He is, not just His name. Christ is referring to the person of God as set forth in the Scriptures. So in Biblical times the “*name,*” stood for much more than the name by which a person is called in the modern sense of the term. The name stood for the whole character of the person as it was known, manifested or revealed. Of course when Christ instructed His followers to pray, “*Hallowed by thy name,*” He did not specify which of God’s names should be hallowed. We learn much about God from His names in the Bible. Do you recall some of His names in the Old Testament ?

Jehovah-Tsidkenu: the Lord our righteousness: (Jer 23:6)

Jehovah-M’kaddesh: the Lord who sanctifies: (Ex 31:13)

Jehovah-Shalom: the Lord our peace: (Jud 6:24)

Jehovah-Shammah: the Lord is there, He never leaves us: (Ez 48:35)

Jehovah-Rophe: the Lord who heals: (Ex 15:26)

Jehovah-Jireh: the Lord who provides: (Gen 22:14)

Jehovah-Nissi: the Lord my banner: (Ex 17:15)

Jehovah-rohi: the Lord who is my shepherd: (Ps 23:1)

Jehovah-sabaoth: the Lord of hosts: (1 Sam 1:3)

Do you know something ? If we took one of those names every day hallowing it, we would develop such a better understanding of who God is. For example, *do you have a sin problem* ? Then you need Jehovah Tsidkenu, who is your righteousness. Do you have a problem *being as holy* as God is holy ? Then you need Jehovah M'kaddesh, who is your sanctification. Are you *anxious* this morning about something ? Then you need Jehovah-shalom who is your peace. Could it be that though there are lots of people in your life that you are *lonely*, then you need Jehovah-Shammah, who is always there for you. Are you going through *physical weakness* ? Then you need Jehovah Rophe, your healer. Perhaps you have needs in your family, then you need Jehovah-Jireh, the One who provides. Maybe at times you are *not really sure* who you are in the kingdom of God, then you need Jehovah Nissi, who is your Banner.

Are you wondering how you can *handle the problems* that this week will bring ? Then you need Jehovah Rophi, the shepherd who is your constant guide. Do you feel the *heat of the battle* ? Then you need Jehovah-sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts. My as these names not reassuring ? They all speak of His attributes, they set before us the fullness and completeness of who God is. Yet God's greatest revelation of Himself was the gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus. For the writer to the Hebrews says, "*God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.*" (Heb 1:1-2)

My is the New Testament not full of descriptive names for Christ ? He is the Bread of life (Jn 6:35) the Living Water (Jn 7:37) the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (Jn 14:6) the Resurrection (Jn 11:25) the Good Shepherd: (Jn 10:11) the Branch (Is 4:2) the Bright and Morning Star: (Rev 22:16) and the Lamb of God: (Jn 1:29) Now when we rehearse the names of God and Christ, we don't just memorize a list, we get little pictures of who He is. And we praise that part of God's nature that is closest to the greatest need we have at that moment, we hallow His name and grow in our appreciation of His character. (a)

(b) A RESPECT FOR GOD:

What does the word "*hallow*," mean ? Well, the first thing people think of is Halloween. Others might think of musty churches and mournful music. But the word "*hallowed*," comes from a Greek verb which means "*holy*." When Christ said "*Hallowed by thy name*," He was saying "*Holy be thy name*." In Biblical Greek this word had two basic meanings. One way is to take something ordinary and tie into something extraordinary, and by the relationship the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Like the man who entered his mule in the Kentucky Derby. One man said to him, "*Hey, why are you doing that ? That mule has not a chance in the world of winning.*" The other man said, "*I know it, but the company will do him so much good.*" You see, before a person becomes a Christian he is unholy, but he becomes holy when he comes into contact with God who is holy. Are we making God holy through our prayers ? No.

You can't take the name of God and make it more holy than it already is. God's name is already holy. So that leaves one other possibility. We can take that name and set it apart, reverence it, respect it, exalt it and lift it up. To hallow God's name is to give to God the reverence, the honour, the glory, the praise, the exaltation which His character demands. My do we not have to confess that this petition usually receives the least attention in our praying ? It is all too easy for us to be consumed with ourselves, our work and worries, our homes and families, our bodily and material needs, that what Christ sets before us as our chief concern hardly gets a mention. Yet was this not the consuming passion of Christ Himself ? He says, "*I have glorified Thee on the earth,*" (Jn 7:14) "*I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.*" (Jn 17:6) He was always concerned about the glory of His Father. He said, "*I seek not mine own glory.*" (Jn 8:50)

Is the hallowing of God's name, the glory of God's person uppermost in your mind when you come to pray ? You see, this will protect us from being too sentimental about God as our Father. For this phrase "*hallowed by thy name,*" follows after the words "*our father.*" Did you know that some preachers tell us that we should really address the Lord as "*Dad,*" or "*Papa,*"? People drag God down and make Him into some kind of a buddy. My God is not your buddy, Sure, there is intimacy "*Our Father,*" but there is respect, "*Hallowed be thy name.*" And it is this balance of intimacy and awe that Christ sets before us in this first petition. (b) My by in large, has reverence not gone from our churches ?

One man said that when he went to visit Lenin's tomb in Moscow, he learned that you are not allowed to speak when you are in that line. There are two soldiers very two or three feet apart. He watched the people as they filed by to look at the face of Lenin, and he said, "*I have never seen such reverence as those people had for a dead leader.*" My how much more should we reverence, honour, and glorify the name of our God.

(2) THE CHILD OF GOD IS REMINDED

He is reminded that "*man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.*" You see, this first petition reminds us to glorify God in,

(a) OUR WORSHIP:

For when we pray "*Hallowed by thy name,*" we ask "*cause us to worship Thee with holy reverence, with holy fear.*" My such is God's majestic holiness that even the sinless angels in heaven cannot contemplate the Lord without reverent worship. Do you recall that Isaiah records his vision of "*the Lord High and lifted up.*" (Is 6:1) "*One (seraph) cried unto another and said Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory.*" (Is 6:3) At the sight of that vision Isaiah was at once smitten with godly fear and cried, "*Woe is me ! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.*" (Is 6:5) My is this holy reverence not the essence of worship ? And do we not recognize this, every

time we pray “ *Hallowed be thy name.* ” God says, “ *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.* ” (Lev 10:3) That is, “ *I will be sanctified with that very worship which I have appointed.* ”

Do you ever think of the things that pass for worship today ? Pomp, the exhibition of the flesh, the countless repetition of some song where perhaps the Lord is not even mentioned, flag waving, charismatic healers trailing people along the ground. My is this what Christ meant when He said, “ *Hallowed be thy name ?* ” We need to be careful about innovations in worship, for our worship needs to be regulated by the precepts, prohibitions, principles and patterns of Scripture.

(b) OUR WORDS:

A little girl went to Sunday School for the first time. She had never heard the story of Jesus before and when they got through sharing it she said, “ *why is the name of such a sweet baby used as a curse word ?* ” Do Christians take the Lord’s name in vain ? One thing is sure, the Jews had such a sense of the greatness and glory of God that it had become a custom not to use the name “ Jehovah.” My That name was sacred to he Jewish people that some Bible historians say it was only pronounced once a year when the high priest would go into the “ holy of holies,” and whisper the name Jehovah. The Jews never spoke that name audibly. When a Jewish scribe was translating the Scripture, when he would come to the name Jehovah he would set down his pen and get a new pen just to write the name Jehovah. What a contrast to our day. For the tragedy

of today is that the name of God is defiled in society in so many ways that it is exasperating. The name of God and His Son is ridiculed, held up in contempt, used as a swear word, used disrespectfully on television and sometimes used even carelessly by Christians. Listen, the Bible says, “ *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* ” It means to be irreverent. My what about your tongue ? Do you need to ask God to clean up your speech ? Do you need to ask the Lord to give the right kind of words to say ? (a) (b)

(c) OUR WALK:

Do you know what Paul said concerning the Jews ? “ *The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.* ” (Rom 2:24) Just think of it. It was because of their inconsistent, ungodly, unattractive lives, that the name of God was dishonoured. My in the early days the only way in which the Christian faith could spread and conquer the world was by the individual believer living a life of such beauty, and truth and goodness, that others might wish to share the secret of that loveliness. The one thing which was fatal was a life which brought the Christian faith into disrepute. You see, when we pray, “ *Hallowed be thy name,* ” we are asking, “ *let us not do anything that is unworthy of the great and holy name we bear.* ” We express our desire to walk worthy of God. (1 Thes 2:11-12) A famous German pagan philosopher said a thing which flings the challenge at every professing Christian, “ ***Show me that you are redeemed and then I will believe in your redeemer.*** ” My do you reveal the name and character of God by the books that you read ?

“ *Hallowed by thy name,* ” by the music that you listen to ? “ *Hallowed be thy name,* ” by the habits that you practice ? “ *Hallowed be thy name,* ” By the places that you go ? “ *Hallowed be thy name,* ” by the relationships that you form ? “ *Hallowed be thy name,* ” Do you by your lifestyle reveal the name, character and glory of God ?

(d) OUR WITNESS:

I mean, should our first aim in Christian service not be the Lord’s glory ? Alan Redpath says that the only reason God doesn’t take us to heaven the moment he saves us is so that for the rest of our lives we can live in reverence of that Name, so that others can be brought to Him. Was this not the attitude of John the Baptist ? He was content to be eclipsed that Christ might shine. He said, “ *He that cometh after me, is preferred before me.* ” (Jn 1:15) “ *I am but the herald, He is the Prince, I am but a lesser star, He is the sun, I baptize with water, He shall baptize with the Holy Spirit.* ” Is this your attitude ? Do you say, “ *He must increase I must decrease ?* ” (Jn 3:20 Ps 115:1) 1, 2,

(3) THE COMFORT OF GOD IS REALISED

I mean, why is it so important to “ *hallow God’s name,* ” and to “ *glorify God’s person ?* ” Because of,

(a) THE CONSOLATION WE WILL EXPERIENCE:

I can remember taking my father to Newcastle to see Pastor Jim Irvine before he died. They had been good

friends down through life. I listened to them as they reminisced about the good old days. Then God’ servant said something that I never forgot. He said, “ *Jack I am not going to get better, but as I look back over the ministry and the journey, I have no regrets.* ” Won’t it be great to get to the end of the journey and have no regrets ? Do you recall what Christ’s comfort was a little before His death ? It was this, “ *I have glorified thee on the earth.* ” (Jn 17:4) Here was Christ’s comfort before his death, that He had hallowed God’s name and brought glory to Him. Will this be your comfort at death ? When you stand on the threshold of eternity and look back, what will you see ? Will you see that you loved Christ with all your heart, praised Him with your lips, honoured him with your life ? Will you conscience witness to you, that you have hallowed God’s name, and glorified God’s person ? If so what sweet peace will be yours in the hour of death. To be able to say with Hezekiah, “ *Remember Lord, how I have walked before Thee with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight.* ” (Is 38:3) (a)

(b) THE COMMENDATION WE WILL RECEIVE:

Do you realise that there is nothing lost by what we do for God ? If we bring honour to His name, He will honour us. As Balak said to Balaam, “ *Am I not able to promote thee to honour ?* ” (Num 22:37) In just the same way, if we hallow God’s name, is He not able to promote us to honour ? He will honour us in life. (1 Sam 2:30) He will honour us at death. (Lk 16:22) He will honour us at the judgment seat of Christ. (2 Cor 5:10) He will say, “ *Well done, good and faithful servant enter thou into the joy*

of thy Lord.” (Matt 25:23) My are you ready for that day of examination ? Have you hallowed, and glorified God’s name in your worship, words, walk, and witness ? Have you given God the glory in everything ?

***When we are called upon to stand
Before the Lord someday
Will we anticipate His praise
Or dread what He will say***

When D. L. Moody gave an invitation in one of his gospel crusades, a young man came forward and stood at the front. Mr. Moody went over to him and said, “ *Son, what caused you to come to Christ tonight ?*” The young man said, “ *Sir, it wasn’t so much your good message but my godly mother. Her favorite verse was ‘ I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.’ My mother not only loved that verse, but she lived it, and that is what brought me to Christ.*”

I wonder when the unconverted, where you live and work, look at your life, do they see you hallowing God’s name ? Do they see you glorifying God’s person ?