

Hollowed Be Thy Name
Exodus 20:1-17
Matthew 6:9

Today is Mother's Day. Happy Mother's Day to all mothers here today! We celebrate and encourage all mothers. "Mother" and "mom" are wonderful words to call someone and to be called by someone. One day my daughter, Alice, when her son Benjamin began to speak, heard Benjamin whispering the word, "mom." She was so delighted by hearing "mom." So, she called us to tell us what Benjamin said to her. May the Lord bless and comfort all those who call and are called "mom" through our worship service this morning.

As we read the fifth of the Ten Commandments, "Honor your father and your mother...", we learn that we are supposed to honor parents. Honoring our parents is our way of living long and being blessed in this world. That is the Law of God. We have many laws to keep in life: social laws, natural laws and moral laws. If we broke any of our laws, we would have disadvantages from the law. For example, if you climbed up to the roof of a building twenty five feet high and jumped to the ground, your legs be broken, or at least hurt, because of the law of gravity. Honoring our parents is a commandment of God, which is a law given to us for our sake. Honoring parents is one of God's designed, blessed laws of life.

Today, we gather here to worship God. The Scripture says, "And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father – the one in heaven." (Matthew 23:9) God is our heavenly Father whom we honor and worship. Worshipping God is our purpose of life.

Today's sermon is continued from the last Sunday's "Lord's Prayer." Today's sermon title is "Hollowed be Thy Name," the first petition of the Lord's Prayer. I would like to share with you the grace of God who gives us His name. The Lord gave us His name so that we can call His name and ask for Him. There are three issues when we call His Name.

First, don't misuse or abuse His Name, God!

The Ten Commandments teaches us, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name."

Throughout history, human beings have misused God's name by attempting to replace the God of the Bible by inventing other gods that reflected their values. The ancient gods of the Egyptians represented what was important to them: the Nile, frogs, and sun. The Babylonians also valued the sun, but they also placed great importance on wisdom and literature, and their city. Each of these gods reflected the values of the cultures in which they were created. In modern times, Communism puts the state in the place of God, capitalism puts money in the place of God, and hedonism puts pleasure in the place of God. The world has become a marketplace for gods.

God introduced Himself to Moses at Mount Sinai when He spoke from the burning bush and commissioned Moses to speak to Pharaoh. Moses wanted to know God's name. That wasn't surprising. Egypt had its own gods, and if Moses said that God had sent him, Pharaoh would want to know which "god" he was talking about.

So God said to Moses, "I am who I am." (Exodus 3:14) In the original Hebrew, this was just one word, with the letter YHWH, which has been traditionally pronounced "YaHWeH." God's name sets Him apart from all other gods. These gods were inventions of human history, the products of cultures that sustained them. God, YHWH, was not created by our words. He created us by His Word, and that is why it is entirely right for Him to say, "You shall have no other gods before Me."

Throughout history, human beings have misused God's name as mean of living. God is our heavenly Father whom we honor and worship. If we use God's name other than worship or honor then we are abusing God's name. When I looked up the name Jesus in my Concise Oxford English Dictionary, there are two definitions. The two definitions are given as follows. Notice the order in which they occur.

{Jesus: [1] (vulgarity.) exclamation, expression, surprise, impatience, etc. [2] name of founder of Christian religion.}

The word "God" is also misused by people without even realizing it. It will astonish you. You are surrounded by the misuse of God's name. This may be natural to people who don't know God, but not for you. If you have gotten into the patter of saying "Oh my God," or "good God," or "Oh God" every time you are surprised, ask for God's help to overcome that habit, and ask a good friend to hold you accountable as you make the change. Do you know that the word you often use, "Gosh!" comes from the word "God"?

If someone used my credit card without my permission, it is awful criminal. In history there were many people who carried out violence in the name of God. It's easy to point the finger at Muslim extremists today, but you only have to read Christian history to realize that the problem comes closer to home. Western history is littered with acts of violence that were done in the name of God. Perhaps the most notorious were the Crusades, where thousands of Muslims were slaughtered by Europeans who fought under a banner bearing the emblem of the cross.

So, it is hardly surprising that many people, noticing that a great deal of violence in the world seems to be associated with the name of God, have concluded that His name is a liability. The most common abuse of God's name among evangelical believers is the presumptuous way in which we often claim God's direct guidance by announcing that "the Lord led me," or "the Lord told me." Stealing God's credit and abusing it are awful.

Second, call upon God, "the calling upon God in an appropriate way is blessing."

In Romans 10:13 says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." His name is wonderful, salvation and blessing among those who call upon Him. That is the

message of gospel of Christ. Proverbs 22:1 says, "A good name is more desirable than great riches." Moses' Law tells us, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name." But, the Lord Jesus taught us differently and positively, to pray that God's name be glorified and hallowed through us.

I remembered that when my first daughter, Esther, started to speak and called to me, "dad." I was so moved on that day. I realized who I am, dad, and what dad meant. God also delights to be called by His children on any occasion. See how very much our heavenly Father loves us, for he allows us to be called his children, and we really are! (1 John 3:1)

One of the hottest issues in America today is the debate over values. Our values tell us what is right and wrong, and drives to certain actions. Where do you get your values? And, how do you know which values are the right ones? The God you worship will shape the values you hold, and the values you hold will shape the lifestyle that you choose.

In his book "The Screwtape Letters," C. S. Lewis points out that one of Satan's master strategies is to keep us from noticing the very different ways in which we use the word "my" when we speak about "my boots," "my dog," "my wife," "my country," "my God." When we use "my," we often mean that I am owner of something. The culture we live in lends to emphasize ownership. To be the owner tends to be worshipped in our culture. When ownership becomes worship, this means idolatry. When you say, "my God," this should be not meant that God is yours, but that you are His.

The Lord taught us to call the Father in our prayer. God wants to call us. God calls us by name and gives us His message. And God is sanctified by being calling in honor. Worship is a way of calling God in honor. The word God as used in Christian worship is the name of the One worthy of true worship. As children of God whenever we call upon God as our heavenly Father we honor Him and hallow Him.

Thirdly, God extends His family and includes us into His family.

The Lord opens our eyes so that we may see our lives no longer from our narrow sight, but from God's broader perspective, moving us from our "my-centered mind" to a "God-centered mind," from owning to sharing. The Lord teaches us to use the word "we" or "our" rather than "I" or "my." We are intended to see people in terms of our "my-centeredness". We introduce people to others, "My wife, my father, my son and daughter, my friend, my church pastor" and so forth. Those are all my-centered introductions.

The Lord taught us to call upon God, our Father, rather than my father. And, he also showed us to ask not only for myself but also for others. "Give us our daily bread," "forgive us trespasses against us," and "deliver us from evil." Consequently, the Lord taught us to pray our prayers. The Lord's Prayer is our prayers, not my personal prayer. Ours are to share together. Therefore, the Lord's Prayer is a communion prayer.

Jesus, our Lord, shows us that God extends His family and includes us into His family. You are formed for God's family. God wants a family, and he created you to be a part of it. This is God's second purpose for your life, which he planned before you were born. The entire Bible is the story of God building a family who will love him, honor him, and reign with him forever. It says, "His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave him great pleasure." (Ephesians 1:5)

While Jesus was talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." Jesus replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" These are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!" (Matthew 12:49-50) We belong to the family of God, eternal. The earthly family may be scattered, sooner or later. But, the family of God is eternal. The Bible says, "You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:26) "Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But, we have all been baptized into Christ's body by one Spirit, and we have all received the same Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12: 13)

The Lord God is our Father who is related and belongs to all of us. Jesus said to his disciples, when we place our faith in Christ, God becomes our Father. We become his children, other believers become our brothers and sisters, and the church becomes our spiritual family. The family of God includes all believers in the past, the present, and the future. Paul introduced said, "I want you to realize what a rich and glorious inheritance he has given to his people." (Ephesians 1:18)

A disciple asked his teacher, the holy man, "How can I know when the dawn has broken, when the darkness has fled? It must be the moment when I can tell a sheep from dog." But, the holy man answered, "No!" The disciple then asked, "Is it that moment when I can tell a peach from a pomegranate?" The holy man answered, "No, none of these." The holy man said: "Until the moment when you can gaze in the face of a man or a woman and say, 'You are my brother, you are my sister,' until then, there is no dawn; there is only darkness!"

If you go through a day without encountering brothers and sisters reflected in the face of each person we meet, strangers and friends alike, we are yet in darkness, we still live in yesterday. Within ourselves the dawn is broken when we realize brothers or sisters in the faces of all. Jesus our Lord who shows us that we will get to share in Christ's glory is wonderful. We have the name God, our Father, who created us; We have the Son whose name is wonderful, the Savior; and we have the Spirit who is among us, guides us and counsels us and that makes our worship possible to be offered to God. His name is wonderful!

Blessed be to God our Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Amen.