

*Matthew 6:9b / "Howard Be Thy Name"
Focus: How God is honored in prayer.*

Intro:

1. A little boy rushed home from church excited by the fact that he believed he has learned God's name. When His mom asked him what God's name was, he shared with her the prayer he had learned in Sunday School. Bowing his head he said, "*Our Father who are in heaven, Howard be thy name ...*"
2. Others share this little boy's confusion about prayer, though not always in the same humorous fashion.

Body:

"Our Father..."

- Jesus began His prayer with the recognition of His connection to God.
- Remembering the importance of relationship gives a new perspective to prayer.

This was Jesus' point.

- Jesus' presentation of prayer was as a personally intimate act between two people in relationship. - Luke 11:5-12

The "Friend" who asks for help
The son asking of his father

- Relationship affects the manner of one's prayers.

There is not need for formulaic praying for a prayer to be honored.

- Relationship affects the attitude in which one prays.

One can pray believing God hears, not because he or she is "worthy," but because he or she is His.

- Relationship affects the issue/person/situation being prayed for.

One is not focused on prayer being the affecter of change. Instead God is sought as the change agent.

- At the heart of prayer, like any form of communication, is relationship. James 5:16

- Meaningful prayer hinges on a relationship with God.

"...who is in heaven (the heavens) ..."

- When we think of God and heaven, the picture that comes to mind is fluffy clouds and a city of God off somewhere. - **The Abode of God.**

- This is one understanding of Heaven.

- This is the "*third heaven*" Paul referenced in 2 Cor. 12:2.

- However, the abode of God is also the Cosmos - Psalm 139:8 (same word as Psalm 8:8)

- The Abode of God includes this world - Ex. 33:20-23 (Moses and the cleft of the rock)

- Air is also a reference to this world - Eph 2:2

- What is the affect on prayer to understand that God is not far off somewhere removed from humanity instead of being imminent, present with, and among His creation?

"...*hallowed be Your name.*"

- "hallowed" is an archaic word. We don't use it much anymore. Abraham Lincoln used it in the Gettysburg Address,

"We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract."

- Hallowed means to make holy, sacred, consecrated, or honored.

- Jesus highlight that in prayer, a person in relationship with God who realizes He is ever present, seeks that the name of God would be revered and honored in their life as well as His creation.

- This goes to the heart of prayer from humanity's perspective. By praying, people tend to ask that their will would be fulfilled, that their name would be honored.

- It is not possible to proceed any further into the model prayer without surrendering ourselves to the goal that God be honored.

Closing:

1. When you pray, are your thoughts on the person, situation or need or are you focused on God?
2. Losing sight of the central relational center of prayer, prayer becomes cold, formal, and listless.
3. Jesus' desire is that prayer be an intensely personal encounter with god and a realization of His the nearness.