

The Lord's Prayer: Hallowed Be Thy Name  
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First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha  
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**Psalm 145:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> I will extol you, my God and King,  
and bless your name forever and ever.  
<sup>2</sup> Every day I will bless you,  
and praise your name forever and ever.  
<sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;  
his greatness is unsearchable.  
<sup>4</sup> One generation shall laud your works to another,  
and shall declare your mighty acts.  
<sup>5</sup> On the glorious splendor of your majesty,  
and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.  
<sup>6</sup> The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed,  
and I will declare your greatness.  
<sup>7</sup> They shall celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness,  
and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.  
<sup>8</sup> The LORD is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.  
<sup>9</sup> The LORD is good to all,  
and his compassion is over all that he has made.  
<sup>10</sup> All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD,  
and all your faithful shall bless you.  
<sup>11</sup> They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom,  
and tell of your power,  
<sup>12</sup> to make known to all people your mighty deeds,  
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.  
<sup>13</sup> Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.  
The LORD is faithful in all his words,  
and gracious in all his deeds.

**Matthew 6:9-13 The Message**

This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

Our Father in heaven,

Reveal who you are.

Set the world right;

Do what's best—

as above, so below.

Keep us alive with three square meals.

Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.

Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.

You're in charge!

You can do anything you want!

You're ablaze in beauty!  
Yes. Yes. Yes.

What is in a name? The last time I stood here before you, I mentioned that the Hebrew people, including modern Jews, write the name of God as G-d because God's name is too holy to speak or even write. This care around the name of God emphasizes the hallowed-ness, enhances our understanding of "hallowed." Such a phrase as "Hallowed be thy name" makes so much sense in the context in which it was spoken for hallowed is another word for holy, which is another way of saying set apart or special.

While Shakespeare may have written that "a rose by any other name would still smell as sweet,"<sup>1</sup> the simple truth is that a name matters. We use phrases like "make a name for oneself" or "ruined his good name." Psalm 145 opens with "I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever." A name is a representation of ourselves so blessing God's name is to bless God. A name matters. Naming children, and even pets, takes serious consideration, often months of pondering, so even if we might dislike the name someone has chosen for their child, be it family member, neighbor, or celebrity couple, we cannot argue that the name was given without thought.

Our name is synonymous with who we are. How many of you have heard, or have told, stories of a name being chosen and, when the child was born, he or she "just didn't look like" the selected name? Our Jim is grateful that we had a couple of names lined up, including his James William because he despises our first choice, Flynn Alexander. He just didn't look like a Flynn. A name matters. One of Jim's favorite teachers this past year is expecting her second child. Her first, a daughter, has a unique first name and she intends that her second should, too. Her reasoning? She doesn't want to have a student with the same name as her child who ruins, or even mars, the name. I can certainly think of a couple of names which have very distinct associations for me, so I can understand her reasoning.

And when we die, whether or not we choose to have a marker or our ashes scattered, our name is the most lasting thing we leave behind, connected to our legacies, to every story recounted, to every photo kept. A name matters. For some people what they do or say lingers in the public arena long past their mortal lives, people like some of those whose images I showed to the kids this morning. Some we would call celebrities; some we think of as leaders, as people who changed history. In the church, in our faith, the biggest name of them all is God. Although we have no images to hold up, no photos, we recognize God in other ways. The psalmist of this morning offers a plethora of evidences of God's unsearchable greatness: wondrous works, awesome deeds, abundant goodness, righteousness, grace, mercy, and compassion to name but a few. God's name is upheld in these ways; God is seen.

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<sup>1</sup> *Romeo and Juliet*

When we say “Hallowed be thy name,” “Holy is your name,” “Sacred and special is your name,” “Hallowed be thy name,” with these four words we are summoning the words of the psalmist, we are making the promise of the psalmist: “I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.” After going on at length about God’s greatness (though who could ever speak to its boundlessness?), the author comes back to this promise, saying, “All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you. They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power, to make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.”

When I was a young girl, my mother was always worried about what I was wearing. You know the familiar, “Is that what you’re wearing?” It mattered to her how I looked because I was a representation of her, what I did as a child reflected upon her. We, as those having been created in God’s image, haven’t outgrown being the reflection of our Creator. When we say, “Hallowed be thy name,” we are reaffirming and remembering that what we do is meant to reflect, and not poorly, on God’s name, that we give God honor by speaking of the glory of God’s kingdom, telling of God’s power, making known to all people God’s mighty deeds and glorious splendor. Four little words: “Hallowed be thy name.”

If we’re honest with ourselves, those four words serve as a confession, too, as an acknowledgment of what we know to be true and our admission that we have failed to speak, to act, to live the truth of God’s holiness, that the holiness of God’s image is sometimes lost because we make our own image, separate, we think, and put it above God’s. We’ll get to it this summer but you know that we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” This prayer that Jesus taught is not meant to be an occasional prayer. With a plea like “give us this day our daily bread,” surely we are being urged to pray it each day. If we do “pray then like this,” then we make both confession and promise each day. “Hallowed be thy name.” We remember each day those good things, like the author of Psalm 145. We promise to reflect God’s holiness through our own actions. And we confess when we could do better.

And to whom do we confess and promise? Our Father. Jesus teaches us, above all, first and foremost, of God’s love for us, God’s love like a parent, yet even more so. Assured of God’s love, and reminded by the psalm that “The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,” we come with confidence and not fear to make our confession. And so, for now, we have come before God, before love, and made our confession. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name... What comes next will wait until we gather here again.

Let us pray: Hallowed be thy name, we promise. Hallowed be thy name, we confess. Amen.