

MATTHEW 6:9-13

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| 9 | Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name. | 11 | Give us this day our daily bread, |
| 10 | Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven. | 12 | and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors. |
| | | 13 | And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. |

“First, let us attempt to consider the petitions as a whole. Let us notice that their order is, in a certain sense, analogous to that of the Ten Commandments. There is a clear difference between the first three and the last three... The first three petitions deal with the glory of God... his name, his kingdom, his will... On these first three requests hang the freedom, the joy, the alacrity, and the certitude of the other petitions. All our entreaties presuppose that we ask to participate in God’s cause.”

Is the “tone” of your prayers set by the God-centeredness of these first petitions? Do the shape and order of your prayers follow the shape and order of the Lord’s Prayer? Do the shape and order of your lives follow the shape and order of the Lord’s Prayer?

“When we speak of God, the name signifies the glorious representation of God in the created world... Is this name hallowed? We understand that this is an accomplishment not in the realm of possibility for the creature... ‘It is God who knows how to speak of God’ (Pascal)... [So we pray accordingly] May we stop leafing through the Bible instead of reading it. May we moderate a little our habit of quoting the Bible instead of living with it and letting it speak. May we pray that the Bible will not cease holding our attention. May the Bible not begin to make us yawn, and thy word, in all its parts, not become a boring matter in our minds and in our mouths; may it not become a bad sermon, a bad catechism, a bad theology.”

Do you know God’s name? Has it been hallowed (honored as holy) in your life already? Do you know your need of God’s help if his name is to be hallowed by you? Can you hallow God’s name without speaking of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

“The kingdom of God in the NT is both the life and the purpose of the world according as they agree with the intentions of the Creator... The kingdom of God is the final victory over sin. It is the reconciliation of the world to God (2 Cor. 5:19). And here is the consequence of this reconciliation: a new world, a new aeon, a new heaven, and a new earth, which are new because they are surrounded by the peace of God... [Jesus Christ] will be, he is already now, the head of the new humankind in the new world. We know this, but we do not yet see it. We wait to see it; we walk by faith, not yet by sight.”

How does your experience of God’s kingdom cause you to long for his kingdom to come?

“[God’s will is] to legitimize himself, to glorify himself as Creator and Lord, and at the same time to justify and glorify his creature... In heaven his will is perfectly done. Why not among us? ... ‘Come to give us freedom and, someday, extricate us from these contradictions in which we find ourselves—we who know that thy will is done and how it is done in heaven.’”