

Draw Near With Confidence

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[0 : 00] Our Father, it is a humbling privilege to be here at this time and in this place together with these brothers and sisters and to have these particular songs to sing that have already begun pointing us to who you are, to the wonder of your majesty and your glory, to the uniqueness of your holiness.

We are so humbled to be here and grateful that you have called us your children and invited us, yes, even commanded us to come and to worship you.

Thank you for giving us these songs to sing and voices to sing them to you. Whether we think that our voices are great or not, you are so delighted to hear us lift our voices and celebrate who you are and what you have done for us in our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we give you honor and glory for who you are and for what you have done in accomplishing our salvation.

Please help us now as we turn our attention to the preaching of your word. Help us as we sit under the preaching of your word to listen and to listen not mindlessly, but discerningly and carefully.

[1 : 29] Help us to pay attention to the things that we're hearing and to check, to double check, to be sure that these things are true so that we are not led astray by any wind of doctrine.

Please grow us in our faith. Mature us in being more like Jesus as we have this time together in your word. Father, would you please help me as I have this wonderful privilege of serving your people in preaching?

Would you please help me to do so faithfully, humbly, graciously, kindly, boldly? Father, we want to hear what you have to say to us today.

We ask all of this in Jesus' name, giving thanks. Amen. You may have a seat and take out your Bible. And Jenny is going to serve us today.

We are in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 6, and we are looking for verse 9. And if this seems like it's a familiar text, it's because it is a familiar text to us, and all the more reason that we should pay careful and close attention both to the reading of this text and also to the preaching of this text.

[2 : 49] Because, as Ryan taught us last week from the opening verses of this portion of Jesus' teaching on the Sermon on the Mount, we do not want to read or hear these words or even recite or repeat these words in a mindless, thoughtless, hypocritical way.

So may God help us as we both listen to the reading of what we call the Lord's Prayer and also as we begin looking at it in detail together today.

This is Matthew chapter 6, beginning at verse number 9. Pray then like this, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

[3 : 53] Thank you, Janie. If you want to meet the President of the United States today, I'm going to let you down easy.

That is not going to happen. Nobody in this room is meeting the President of the United States today. And I can dare say, anybody who's going to listen, if you happen to be listening to this recording, you also are very likely not going to be with the President of the United States today.

Now that is, unless you happen to be one of our President Joe Biden's seven grandchildren. I suppose if one of those grandchildren happened to hear this sermon, then perhaps they would have opportunity today to say, I would like to see Grandpa, and maybe that could happen.

But for you and me, we are not going to meet the President. You can't get close to him. Why not? Because the President of the United States does not know you.

And even if the President does know you, he is not making time for you today. You are not welcome in the Oval Office.

[5 : 17] And if you try to make your way into the Oval Office, in fact, if you even just try to get on the grounds of the White House, where you don't belong, it is likely that you will be arrested and put in jail.

It is impossible for you to approach the President of the United States. And if it is impossible for us to approach our President, it would be even more impossible for those who lived under kings in the ancient Near East.

Perhaps you remember reading about this as you read through Scripture, or perhaps you have seen it sort of in a movie or something like that, where you can't just get access into the King's presence.

Nobody gets in to see the King. There are good reasons for this. Everybody wants to overpower and overthrow the King.

And so it is a good security practice to keep people away from the King. Right? Fewer visitors, fewer work for the guards, less work for the guards to do.

[6 : 26] They don't have so many backgrounds to check and so on. And so you just didn't let random people in to see the King. But secondly, there's something about the mystique of the King's presence that you, as a commoner, are not welcome into His presence.

The King is in a position of power. And you are not in a position of power. And in that position of weakness, it's good.

It's good for the sake of the mystique of what it means to be the King, to keep His distance from commoners like us. There's also a matter of order.

They needed to control who and when and under what circumstances someone would come in and visit with the King.

And there's just a matter of practicality, right? You're running this massive empire. You just don't have time for every visitor who says, I would like to speak with the King.

[7 : 33] The King is a busy guy doing important stuff. He needs to be able to focus without a lot of interruptions. Scripture gives us insight into just how impossible and risky it was for someone to approach the King in the book of Esther.

Do you remember that story? Esther has become the queen of Persia. The queen. She is the King's wife.

And yet, even when her people are about to be slaughtered by the wicked Haman, and her uncle Mordecai says to her, you got to do something about this.

You need to go to the King and appeal to the King. Do you remember what Esther said? You don't get it, man. I can't. I can't go before the King.

No one can get in and see the King. Not without an invitation. Not even his wife. Not even the Queen. And yet, Esther, being the brave woman that she was, and confident in God, invites God's people to pray, and then enters the King's presence.

[9 : 02] What was that like? I don't know. But she walks into the King's presence, and there had to have been a moment when we're wondering, what's going to happen here?

Is she going to die for this? And then the King, from his throne, takes his golden scepter and extends his scepter to Esther, and she is now pardoned for this infraction, and welcome to come into his presence.

This distance, this separation between the King and his subjects is reflected in how the Old Testament refers to God. Most often, God is referred to as the Lord, as Yahweh.

This is a name so special, so revered, that God's people refuse to even say it. When they got to that portion in their scripture reading, they would just pause, and not read this name of God.

Sometimes God is referred to as Elohim. This is kind of like our word for God. It is a word that describes his power, his majesty, the one who is the creator, and the ruler of the universe.

[10 : 33] That's Elohim. There is also the name El Elyon, and if you hear that repeated, El and then El again, that helps you understand a little bit of what is going on here.

This is the Most High. The Most High. The Supreme Authority. The Sovereign. And sometimes God is referred to as the Lord of Hosts.

It's kind of like our title, the Commander-in-Chief. Except Lord of Hosts means that God is the commander of the angelic armies.

What a title. What distance there is between people, creatures, and this God. This God who is high and lifted up and exalted and holy and supreme in his authority and sovereign in all of his control and the commander of the armies of heaven.

How much distance there must be between us and this God. And this is what makes Jesus so interesting in this particular text.

[11 : 56] Because with one exception. Because with one exception. Hear this. With one exception. Jesus exclusively refers to God as his Father.

The God who is high and exalted and lifted up and supreme and holy. Jesus arrives on planet Earth and exclusively refers to him as Father.

Now that makes sense, I guess, right? It makes sense that Jesus would do this. We find this the very first time in Luke chapter 2.

This is the famous story when Mary and Joseph leave Jesus behind in Jerusalem. They've come for a festival.

Like Passover perhaps? I assume they've come for Passover. And they have forgotten Jesus. And left and gone on their way back to Nazareth. And they don't know that Jesus is not with the company of people that are traveling back to Nazareth.

[13 : 07] So they make their way back to Jerusalem to find Jesus. And when they find Jesus, do you remember what he says? This is what he says in Luke chapter 2 and verse 49.

Jesus, 12 years old. Who's 12? Who's 11? Elam, are you almost 12? All right. Anybody else? You almost 12?

Think about this. Think about these words that come from Jesus' mouth. Verse 49. Why were you searching for me? He, Jesus, asked them, Mary and Joseph.

Didn't you know that it was necessary for me to be in my father's house? Where is he? He's in the temple.

And he says, this is my father's house. Kids, who do you think is the most famous person in your mom or your dad's contact list on their phone?

[14 : 22] The most famous person that your mom or your dad know? This was a little bit humbling to think about this. I mean, I have in my contact list a few lawyers.

A few doctors. I know a police officer or two. I know some people who work in medicine. Right? I know some people who work in construction.

I know some people who are biblical counselors. One or two of those. And I'm glad to have them in my phone. But when it really comes down to it, I don't know anybody all that famous.

What if I told you that I had Taylor Swift's phone number in my phone? Or what if I said, look, I can call up Steph Curry.

Right now, I can call Steph Curry. Or I can call up Dwayne Johnson. Or Elon Musk. I can get a hold of these guys right now.

[15 : 28] You would be probably very momentarily impressed. And then you would say, no. You are being entirely presumptuous.

You have made that up. You do not have any of those people in your contact list. But then what if my phone rang?

And we looked at my phone and it just said P-O-T-U-S. Do you know what that is? That's President of the United States.

What if it just said P-O-T-U-S? Now suddenly you would be impressed, right? The President is calling you? Now, when Jesus is in the temple and he says, this is my Father's house, we might look at Jesus and say, that's a little presumptuous, don't you think?

Something for a 12-year-old to say? But it was not presumptuous. Do you know why? Because Jesus was about to hear these words just a little bit later in his life.

[16 : 39] Chapter 3 of Matthew and verse 17. A voice from heaven said, Jesus was not being presumptuous when he said, this is my Father's house.

How do we know? Because God called him, if I can use those words. The Father called him in front of everybody and said, this is my beloved Son.

Now we might say, well, of course Jesus can call God Father because he is God's Son. Everybody knows that.

Well, not so fast because look what happens in Matthew chapter 6, verse number 9. Jesus is speaking and he says, therefore, therefore, you, you, should pray like this.

Our Father. Our Father. Our Father. What comes to mind when you think of the title, Father?

[18 : 15] Mercy. Compassion. Security. Confidence. Safety. The source, the one who is providing, the one who is looking out for the family as a whole, the one who is concerned about the people in his family.

And Jesus says to the people gathered around him on the mountain and by extension, the Spirit says to us through the mouth of Jesus, you need to pray like this.

Our Father. When John writes his letter, the first time, he says this in chapter 3 and verse 1, see what great love the Father has given us.

Us. That we should be called God's children. Do you see what John is calling out there?

He's calling out this massive distance that ought to exist between creatures, humble, broken, sinful creatures and holy God.

[19 : 37] And John says, do you see what kind of love the Father has given us? That we, that sinful creatures like us, should be called God's children.

Pause. Just pause for a moment to wonder at the one who hears you pray. God's children. God's children. Now, I acknowledge that your relationship with your Father may not be what you wished it was.

And for some of us, there could be deep hurts there with fathers. And that's very real and very honest.

it can feel hard for us sometimes to navigate this gap and to say, yeah, God is my Father, fine, but I've got a Father here.

And that relationship doesn't comfort me the way that you're telling me this relationship ought to. How kind of Jesus to add these words in verse number nine.

[21 : 04] Our Father in heaven. Our Father in heaven.

This corrects our perspective and it comforts those of us who have distant or difficult or non-existent relationships with our fathers here on earth.

Our Father in heaven. You see, earthly fathers are limited. They are limited in their money. They are limited in their power.

They are limited in their ability to fix and to help everything. They just can't. Earthly fathers are limited because of their own inadequacies.

They have a limited amount of time. They might have a short amount of patience. Maybe their knowledge of you and your life and the things that you're going through is inadequate.

[22 : 07] Earthly fathers have flaws. They have their own sins to deal with. They have their own weaknesses to deal with. They have their own hurts that they may be working through that we just don't even know about.

So when Jesus says, pray like this, our Father Father in heaven. He is inviting us to draw near to God as our Father, but in the most perfect sense of that word Father that you can imagine.

A Father who has unlimited resources. A Father who has no inadequacies because he is eternal and infinitely loving and all-knowing and all-wise and flawlessly holy and just and good.

A Father who is both, hear it, and if you like tensions, walk with me in this one. A Father who is both merciful and majestic. and that's the tension that we are invited to walk into.

This Father is the one who welcomes us into his presence. God is your Father and your Father is God.

[23 : 37] Pause, dear brother and sister, and wonder, wonder at the one who hears you pray. Jesus continues, Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.

Your name be honored as holy. This recognition that God is our Father leads us to this first request. And just for the sake of consistency, Lyd, if you would switch to the next slide.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. I think this is the term that we're most familiar with when we think about the Lord's prayer. So this is the one that I want to try to unpack just a little bit for us.

Hallowed be your name. Now when we think about name, we need to be mindful here because name carries with it everything about that the name Walt Disney.

Most of us are not thinking about the letters that actually go into his name. What do we think about when you think about the name Walt Disney?

[24 : 58] What comes to mind when you think about Walt Disney? This should be an easy one. Disney World, what else? Movies, right? Cartoons, what else?

Mickey Mouse, very good, Tim, that was in my notes. You might come to mind Disney Plus, if you happen to have that on your TV.

You might call to mind Star Wars, since now Disney owns Star Wars. There's lots of these things that come to mind. And all of this kind of comes into our mind when we think about the name Walt Disney.

Similarly, in Psalm 115, which was part of our call to worship this morning, we said this, not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.

Now the author of this psalm is not talking about the letters that make up his name. He's talking about everything that it means to be our God. All of his character, everything associated with his name.

[26 : 11] Similarly, in Psalm 20, we read this from the ESV, some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

Not the letters, but everything about him. What does Jesus say that we ought to pray for?

We ought to pray that his name be hallowed. Hallowed be your name.

What does this word hallowed mean? It means to be honored, to be respected, to be glorified, to be recognized as holy.

We should be careful about this, right? This text is not telling us that God needs to be made holy. God is already supremely and perfectly holy.

[27 : 16] What's broken? Well, we're broken. This world is broken. People who don't yet believe in Jesus, we're all broken. Why? Because we don't recognize God rightly as hallowed.

we don't honor him as the holy God that he is. We don't recognize him as the supreme ruler of the universe. So when you pray, hallowed be your name.

This is the request that you are asking God to grant. I want you father in heaven to be known and acknowledged and honored for all that you are and all that you do.

That's the request here. I want you to be hallowed. Your name be hallowed. I want you father in heaven to be hallowed.

You might think of it this way holified. I just took the word holy and added the end of glorified to it because I think it could be helpful. I want you to be holified. I want you father in heaven to do whatever it is that maximizes your glory on earth.

[28 : 38] That's the request. Hallowed be your name. Now here's the thing. If I pray hallowed be your name, would it not be terribly hypocritical not to assess how our father in heaven might answer that request in my life.

I mean, if I just pray these words absentmindedly, thoughtlessly, without reflecting on whose presence it is that I am coming into, and without reflecting on the reality of this request, in saying, hey, I want your name to be glorified maximally, if I don't also want that for my life, then I am praying this the way that Ryan taught us last week, not to pray it.

I'm just praying this like a hypocrite. when I pray, hallowed be your name, I want God to answer that request in me, through me.

Let's work on this a little bit. Do you have specific clothes, or maybe specific shoes, that are only for special occasions?

Yes, I'm getting some nods. I think Tim's shoes, very nice. Those are for special occasions. They are very white, very good. I noticed that this morning, and I was thinking about this spot in the sermon.

- [30 : 28] Those are good-looking shoes. We might have special clothes, special shoes, that are reserved for special occasions. You might even say that those are hallowed.
- They are set apart. I am saving them. I am reserving them. I don't wear them all the time. And then we might also have some clothes or maybe some shoes that we just throw on when we really don't care.
- This happens sometimes on Saturdays at our house, right? You just kind of put on something so that you're wearing clothes, but it doesn't really matter because we're not going anywhere. We're just doing chores today.
- Maybe it doesn't matter what shoes you're going to wear. Just throw on some Crocs because who cares really, right? You're just throwing on something to get yourself out to the garage to get something from the freezer and then you're coming right back in.
- It doesn't really matter. We would call those types of clothes and those types of shoes, are you ready for this? Profane.
- [31 : 34] Now, just think about this for a minute with me because we're trying to set up an opposite here. On the one hand, we have some clothes and some shoes that are set apart, that have a particular purpose.
- And then the other hand, we have some shoes over here that are just common, usual. They're everyday shoes and clothes. It doesn't really matter. And you would refer to those, or you could, as profane because that's what the word profane means.
- It means common, regular, usual, typical, nothing special about it. This is the opposite then between hallowed. Hallowed and profane are opposites.
- On the one hand, we have God who is holy and utterly unique and spectacular and worthy of worship and all glory. And on the other hand, we have this idea of profane, which means common and usual and typical and everyday like a pair of crocs.
- If I expect the Father to answer, hallowed be your name in my life, then I should ask this question.
- [32 : 52] How do I profane God's name right now? Walk with me. How do I profane? How do I treat God's name, God's character, who God is, all of the things associated with God?
- How do I treat all of those things as common? common? Now an easy one, I think you'll all get this one, an easy one is if I use a what?
- A profanity. If I take God's name, something associated with God, or God's character, or God's attributes, and I bring them down, and I associate it with other words that are common, and usual, and everyday words that I would just use any time, without regard, without any respect, then I have spoken a profanity.
- That is profane. I should want the opposite of that. I should want to regard everything associated with God as holy, and unique, and special, and not at all something that I would just use as a throw away word.
- if I'm going to be mindful of profaning God's name, then I would be careful about setting this God among other gods, and sort of leveling the playing field, and making him just another God among other gods.
- [34 : 39] God I would be mindful about making him just another religion, because instead, Jesus said, I am the way, didn't he?
- What is Jesus doing? He is hallowing God. He is hallowing him. He is not profaning the way to God. He is not making the way to God common, or usual, or typical.
- Jesus says, I am the way, and you can't get to God except through me. This is exclusive. If I were concerned about profaning God, then I would want my life to look different from every other person who is not yet a follower of Jesus.

Does that make sense? I'm not trying to puff myself up and say that I'm better than anybody else. I'm saying I want my life to look different. I want my responses to tragedy to be different, unique, not profane, not common, not usual.

I want my responses to be a hallowing of God's authority and sovereignty in my life. If I were concerned about profaning God's name, then I would be concerned about doing the wrong thing in God's name.

[36 : 09] I would never want to use spiritual authority to sin against others. And instead, I would seek to call out abuse in God's name and comfort those who have been injured because God's name has been profaned by associating it with sin and abuse.

If I were concerned about hallowing God's name, I would never want to see God's name as some kind of a mix and match deal, like a two-for-one deal where we say, well, you can have God and you can have money.

You can have God and you can have all of the pleasure, all of the comfort, all of the satisfaction, all of the happiness that this world offers. You can have God and you can have political power.

You see how this becomes like a two-for-one mix and match deal and we take God's name and we associate it with a secondary thing and we end up profaning God's name.

hallowing God's name means refusing to leverage God, means refusing to leverage the gospel, refusing to leverage spirituality as a means to an end.

[37 : 43] another way of thinking about hallowed is fearing the Lord.

Remember reading about that in scripture? This doesn't mean that we are afraid of God. Remember, he is our father. But it means living with awe and respect and reverence for God.

That's what hallowing means. And Proverbs 9 tells us this. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. How kind, how gracious of Jesus to give us this request, that if we pray this request and sincerely mean it and ask God to fulfill it in our lives, then we are on our way to knowing God's will for our lives and not only that, to having the wisdom and the discernment we need for making hard decisions in this world.

If you want God's will for your life, then start with hallowing God. If you want discernment for how to live, what decisions should we make, then start here.

Hallowed be your name. maximize your glory in my life. On another occasion, Jesus prayed this particular request this way.

[39 : 22] In John chapter 12 and verse 28, I love how succinct this is. Father, glorify your name.

for Jesus, this meant the shame and the suffering and the agony of the cross, didn't it?

When Jesus prayed, glorify your name, for Jesus, that meant shame and suffering and agony of the cross.

Now, I remind you of this moment not to scare you, but to prepare you. Asking our Father to hallow his name in our lives.

It may mean that life becomes very hard. It may mean that you will endure injustice. justice. It may mean trusting in the Father's goodness even when his timing seems off.

[40 : 32] It may mean life change that you did not expect and could not prepare for. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

are you familiar with the phrase familiarity breeds contempt? It means that the better you know something, the less likely you are to appreciate it.

This can be true of people, right? People they were very close to. We can become very familiar with them, and at some point we can become contemptuous of them.

Familiarity tends to breed contempt. We can also become very familiar with sugary cereals. If you have sugary cereals all the time in your house, then when you get a sugary cereal, you're like, don't care, I have sugary cereals all the time.

But what if you only have sugary cereals once in a while, when that crazy guy at church buys them for you, and you're like, what is with that guy? Right? Then you're not familiar, and when you get the sugary cereal, you're like, eat it all, right?

[41 : 52] This can also be true of places that we go and visit. I traveled to Salt Lake City for work one time. And living here in Fargo and in Moorhead and so on, I had not seen mountains.

And when I saw the mountains that surround Salt Lake City, I was wowed. I was in awe.

I wanted to look at them all of the time. I walked into this office, in this office building, I walked into an office, and I knew that right there, just outside of this office, there's a massive mountain.

And this office had a beautiful window window with vertical shades pulled across it. And I thought to myself, what is going on here?

And I said to the guy, how come you don't have those shades open? Ah, the sun gets in my eyes. I'm like, what? Have you seen that mountain that is right out there? What has happened to him?

[43 : 04] Familiarity has breeded, has bred contempt. He doesn't care about looking at the mountains anymore. Is it possible, church, that familiarity with God as our Father has in some way bred contempt in our hearts, where we just don't care?

I will not be visiting the Oval Office today, and there are no truly famous people in my phone's contact list, but I invite you to pause and wonder at the one who hears you pray.

Jesus himself invites you to approach God's presence as Father. Your Father cherishes you. Your Father in heaven delights in you.

He knows you through and through, and yet he cares about you. You matter to him. Your Father in heaven extends his scepter towards you, and because of your Savior, Jesus, the Father will never withdraw his scepter.

So when you pray, pause and wonder at the one who hears you, and then pray like this.

[44 : 58] Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be your name. Help us to glorify you with our lives as we grow in seeing you, understanding you, and appreciating you as holy and supremely just, and consistently good, and wonderfully loving, and uniquely holy.

Help us to hallow your name. Father, we desire that you are glorified in our lives, in our marriages, in our parenting, in our homes, in our workplaces, in our coming and going, whether it's to the lake, or to the store, or to the coffee shop, or to a restaurant, in all of our coming and going, we want you to be glorified here in this church, and in every church where this gospel is proclaimed.

Father, we ask that as we go with this gospel, and freshly mindful of your grandeur, your majesty, and your mercy, that we will go faithfully and tell others about our Father in heaven.

It is in Jesus' name that we ask this. Amen.