



# SERMON OF THE WEEK

## First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu at Ko'olau

### September 16, 2012

#### "Hallowed Be Thy Name" (Gospel of Luke Series)

The Rev. Dr. Dan Chun

**M**att. 6:7 "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

Matt. 6:8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Matt. 6:9 "Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Matt. 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Matt. 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

Matt. 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matt. 6:13 And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

Matt. 6:14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you;

Matt. 6:15 but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

To live life without God, without Jesus, without the Holy Spirit is absolutely crazy! We think we are so smart without God, so why then why did it take us 5,000 years before we figured out that we could put wheels

on luggage so we can roll them instead of carrying them?

I just returned from Phoenix, Arizona for a Fuller Seminary Trustee Board meeting. I read about the highway called I-40, which crosses the top third of Arizona from the city of Winslow through Flagstaff to Kingman.

In 1963, as the California State Division of Highways was trying to get the I-40 through the adjacent huge Bristol Mountains to the city of Barstow, the division figured out how to save 36% on the costs over normal engineering methods. 36%--what incredible savings!

Here was their plan, and I am dead serious. The California State Division of Highways proposed setting off 22 atomic bombs to clear the way through the Bristol Mountains! That's crazy! (Patrick Cooke in his book review of *The Big Roads* by Earl Swift, *Wall Street Journal*, June 2011, page C9)

This is another example of how inferior humankind's thinking can be compared to God's.

And let me add another crazy. If people, especially Christians, don't understand the power, the impact, and the important, practical truth of the Lord's Prayer, then we are crazy, too. If we don't say the Lord's Prayer often and really meditate on each phrase of the prayer, we are foolish.

This is part two of my sermon on the Lord's Prayer. Last week I used the passage in the book of Luke to

delve into the meaning of the first line of the Lord's Prayer: Our Father.

As a reprise: It is essential to understand that God is our Father, not our boss, not our supervisor. Our life will be transformed and revolutionized when we understand that all of life is based on knowing God as the perfect heavenly parent. If we relate to God as anything but Father—like a boss, coach, or supervisor—then we will have a performance-based spiritual life.

If you missed last week's part one of this sermon, please get the CD of it, or listen or watch it on our website because it will complete today's sermon.

By the way, this past week some people told me they watch our preaching team on TV both in prime time and at 3 a.m. They said the problem with 3 a.m. is that our show competes with *I Love Lucy*, and sometimes *I Love Lucy* wins. Who would have guessed that *Ricky Ricardo* would be a competition to the Gospel?

Now I want to talk about the rest of the Lord's Prayer, which is more fully laid out in the Gospel of Matthew.

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, Jesus said, "Pray like this, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, HALLOWED be thy name.'"

Let's stop there. Hallowed. What does that mean?

"Hallowed" is an old English word that we don't use any more.

**Y**ou never hear someone say, “I just hallow Justin Bieber,” or “I hallow the San Francisco 49ers,” or “I hallow truffles or crepes or filet mignon.” Now, I hallow the USC Trojan football team, and that one might make sense even when they lose to the evil, nefarious Stanford team.

We may have heard the phrase “these hallowed halls.” but that really doesn’t capture it.

To hallow something is to treat it with utmost reverence and respect. It is to treat something sacredly. It is the ultimate of the ultimate. It is of supreme beauty. And part of hallowing something is to adore it and praise it.

When Jesus tells us that we should hallow the Heavenly Father, it means we should see the Father as incredibly important, sacred, ultimate, epic. We should adore Him, praise Him, respect Him. The praise and adoration of God is what all of life is about.

For many men (sorry guys I am going to out you on this) it is hard to say that they adore God, or that they praise God. It might sound wimpy to some, but it is NOT UNMANLY to adore and praise God.

During worship, I am inspired when I see Jerry Coffee lift up his hands and sing in complete abandon to give praise to God. And no one questions Jerry’s manhood. As we all know, he was a POW, a prisoner of war, for seven years in Vietnam where he was tortured. And yet he remained faithful to our country and to God. Jerry goes all out and praises God.

That is not to say that one has to lift one’s hands to show praise. Praise and adoration are matters of the heart, not the hands. And if coming from the heart, the praise, adoration, and respect for God must be all-out, complete, and without hesitation.

Why is hallowing God so important? It’s because if we hallow anything other than God, our lives will be a wreck.

How so? If we base our lives on anything other than the unconditional, all-forgiving, empowering love of the Heavenly father, our life will always be half full.

Let me put it in context. Pastor and author Tim Keller helped me with some of these thoughts. Look at the order of the Lord’s Prayer. It shows us that adoration must always come BEFORE petition—meaning prayer requests—and always before confession.

Adoration sets everything into healthy motion. When we get on our knees and say, “Lord, I must have this or else I will not be fulfilled,” then that is a clue that we are adoring something more than God. What we pray for in secret shows what is the true priority of our heart and what we put our trust in.

“Lord, if I don’t get that job, that business deal...if I don’t get that boyfriend or spouse...if I don’t get that house...I will be so hurt, so discouraged. I will feel like a failure.”

What do we ask God on our knees that we have to have? “I am anxious, I have no peace; I gotta have that job or car, or my life is over.”

But if we have hallowed our career or that car more than God, then certainly we won’t get any peace. People often say, “I have prayed and prayed and I have no peace.” Maybe it’s because we have not learned to trust God whether we get that one thing. Or worse yet, maybe we believe God is a mean God who doesn’t want to give us what is best for us.

Imagine a father who takes his child to the world’s biggest toy store (imagine the biggest Toys R Us, the biggest FAO Schwartz Toy store on the

mainland), and the father says, “Look at all of this! But guess what? You can’t have any of them. In fact, I am going to spend my life making sure you don’t get ANY of this.”

Is that what God is like to you? Or are we more like this: A little girl asks for an ice cream cone. And the Father says, “No, honey, not now.”

The child gets petulant and screams, “I want ice cream now!”

And the father says, “Not now; but tell you what. We can go to the zoo instead, or the aquarium or to the beach or the Sea Life Park or to Manoa Falls or a walk up Diamond Head or see a movie.”

And the little girls stamps her feet and cries, “No! I want my ice cream cone now!”

Where does that attitude come from? That parent is not abusive or overly controlling. The girl is mad because she can’t have that ONE THING she wants even though her father is offering her so much more.

That attitude is actually in all of us as adults and as children, and it affects our hallowing of God from the beginning of time.

How do we know that? Let’s go to Genesis 3. That story of the little girl is told in a different way in the Bible. It’s our story. It’s the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

God the Heavenly Father says to Adam and Even, “You can have anything in this huge world. The animals are yours; the rivers are yours; the lakes, the mountains, the freshest and cleanest air and water, the garden, the forest, the trees and their fruit, they are all yours; except for one. JUST ONE tree and its fruit.

**E**verything, everything else is yours, except this one thing: the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Don't eat that one in the middle of the garden or else you will die."

Here's what it says in the Genesis story:

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made.*

*He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?"*

*The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'"*

*But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:1-5)*

And so it happens. Just like the petulant child who had to have the ice cream cone even though her loving daddy is offering her the world, Eve and then Adam go for the ONE THING God told them not to eat while He offered them a trillion other things!

Today we, like Adam and Eve, also struggle with trusting God when we don't get that one thing we hallow more than God. Many of us today might feel more distant from God.

I ask you: Is it because we put our desires and our trust in something else rather than God? Is it because God didn't perform or give you things the way you wanted?

Adam and Eve wanted more wisdom, power, and status than hallowing and trusting a loving God. Sometimes we hallow something more than God—our checking account, our assets. When we are challenged to tithe, we say, 'No, don't touch my precious assets. God, You can't have that, not even one tenth of it. It's mine!

"Don't touch my house, God; it's mine not Yours. It's MY car, MY education, MY accomplishments. And my time is mine to decide on how to use it. I hallow recreation more than spending time with You in prayer, or in volunteering time for ministry.

"And don't interfere in my decision on who to marry either, for I hallow that person more than You."

Hear this: If you can trust God, you can trust Him in everything. But the flipside is this: If we can't trust Him we will blame him for everything.

The petulant child who didn't get her ice cream cone will probably say to her father, "Then I hate you. I don't want to be with you. I don't like you. I don't trust you." Is that how we feel toward God today in some area of our life?

This all leads to the fact that if we CAN'T trust God we will be ungrateful for many things.

If we hallow anything more than God, it will show in how we pray. According to our Bible passage, what we pray in secret shows what we hallow more. Is having God in our lives, loving Him and receiving His love the ultimate in our lives? If so, we would pray all the time. Hence, that is why adoration must always precede petition and confession.

If we don't get our hearts straight with God, if we don't see the importance of hallowing or revering the name of God, exalting Him, or praising

Him, then we will have peace and contentment ONLY when we get what we want.

We will have a hard time trusting the loving God who may not readily give us what we ask for, but may give it to us later or replace it with something better.

Christianity is not just a set of disciplines; it is not just believing in doctrine; rather it's trusting a real, personal God.

If we know this, then we will understand that when we put our requests before a loving God, we trust that His loving responses are always in this context of love to us. Whether He says no or yes to us, He is still answering our prayers.

God's answers to our prayers can be:

- No, not now.
- No, I love you too much to give it to you.
- Yes, I was waiting for you to ask.
- Yes, and here's more.

These are the four ways God answers each and every one of our prayers. Yet, we get mad and think God has a deaf ear if the answer is anything but yes.

Adoration, thanksgiving, gratitude, mighty mahalos must ALWAYS come before petitions and confession. For when we put our trust in God, then we can more readily confess what we have done wrong. Our confession should normally talk about our problems of adoration, for we put our trust in the wrong things.

Now if we understand that God is like a loving Father and that we must hallow His name, then all the rest of the Lord's Prayer makes sense.

**M**att. 6:9 *“Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*

*Matt. 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

Only when we truly trust God and are thankful for him can we say, “Yes, Your will be done. Your way is better than mine for I am limited in what I can see or feel.”

*Matt. 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.*

See, when we hallow God and we are full of gratitude, then, of course, we trust Him to daily give us what we need to survive.

*Matt. 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

It is in adoration and thankfulness that we then fully understand forgiveness. When we understand that God gave His life for us to remove our sin so that we can be in His Holy Presence in heaven forever—even after all that we have done or thought or lusted after—then now it makes sense how we can forgive others. He forgives us our sins, so we must forgive others!

We realize that we all have this disease called sin that started way back in the time of Adam and Eve when they wanted the one thing that God told them not to have. We realize that we are the same today; we are not satisfied till we get that one thing we really want even though we have been blessed with many other things.

If we don’t get rid of this sinful, selfish, petulant attitude that we ALL have inside of us, we will never forgive others. We will always think we are better than they, which is a real

clue that we haven’t forgiven someone, especially if in our thoughts we say, “Well, I’ll forgive the jerk. At least I am not as bad as he.”

No, we are all unworthy. We are all sinners, and if we think we are better than someone, check our hearts to see if we really have forgiven them. Forgiving others and knowing that God has forgiven us is crucial.

Pastor Tim Keller tells this story. He once talked to a woman after a worship service who said to him, “I can’t believe in a God who would send people to hell. I believe in a God but it has nothing to do with Jesus.”

Time Keller responded, “What does it cost your God to forgive you?”

She answered, “Nothing.”

He asked her, “Do you believe God forgives you?”

“Sure.”

Tim asked, “What does it cost you?”

She answered, “I don’t believe in a God who sends people to hell.”

Tim said, in essence, “You will say God is a holy God, a perfect God, who will not abide in evil. If He is perfect, then He would never wink at a lie, never shrug at cruelty. He is also just so every sin must be judged and punished, so there must be a hell.”

“What does it cost your god to forgive you?”

She said, “Nothing. There is no hell.”

Tim said that if you don’t believe in hell then you don’t believe in a God who would take away the sin of this world and place it all on His Son

Jesus who came to this earth to be tortured and crucified and whipped and beaten and killed so that you might have eternal life and a fulfilled life here on earth.

When we grasp this truth then it makes sense that, “No one knows the Father except through the Son and anyone to whom the Son reveals Himself.” (Matthew 11:27)

It doesn’t mean you can’t live a life here on earth where one can’t be wise or happy without Jesus, but you won’t know the Father as Jesus knows Him.

How does God accept you if you are a sinner? He doesn’t expect us to be perfect. His church is a hospital for us sinners not a museum for saints. You miss the point of a friendship with Jesus unless you believe that Jesus died for you. Through Jesus, God put all of your sin on Him to ultimately pay the price, serve our prison time so that we can be free, unencumbered and be in the presence of a loving holy Heavenly Father.

If we understand how God did all that for us, then we can really adore Him and honor Him. And that’s great news! That’s the Gospel! Amen!

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