

## “Our Father Who Art in Heaven, Hallowed Be Thy Name”

(06-23-13)

Let's begin by looking at what Luther says about these sections of the Lord's Prayer in his Catechism. As I read, please read out loud with me.

I, like many of you, have been saying the Lord's Prayer all my life. I remember hearing it as the Lord's Prayer in English and as the *Vater Unser* in German. It was not only part of our worship services, but also part of family and school devotions. I memorized it early and have continued to say it without looking at a hymnal or bulletin.

But then it struck me, did I have any idea what I was saying and what the prayer means? Open to Matthew 6. The disciples asked Jesus how to pray. Look how He responded before He gave this prayer. Verses 7-9, “*And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*” Today, we begin a journey through the Lord's Prayer that will look at every word in it and hopefully help us have a clearer understanding of what we're saying!

“*Our Father Who Art in Heaven!*” Father! When you think of a father, some of you will have a wonderful memory and some of you won't! But there's one thing we can be sure of in relation to this Father. To say, “*Our Father*” shows **a closeness** to having us as a child in His family! It shows **a connection** between His heart and ours. When we are seen as His child, we have **a oneness** with Him!

We have the right to call Him Father, not because of birth into His family, but by rebirth into the family through Baptism and faith in Jesus Christ. Paul in Galatians 3:26 said, “*for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God, through faith!*” All this relationship comes out of our Father's **great love** for us!

When Jesus said, “*Our,*” He meant *our!* Jesus didn't just teach people to pray; He Himself joined in. Joining in, He identified Himself with all of us our needs, our miseries, our mortal humanity. With that plural, *our*, all prejudice of others goes right out the window!

Our Father is the creator of all things. Genesis 1:1 said, “*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*” He is above all things! God also has some unique characteristics. He's omnipotent, He's all-powerful! He's omniscient, He knows everything about everything! He's omnipresent, He is always present everywhere! Our Father is in heaven and earth!

Does this mean He can be in the earth's atmosphere? Yes! Can He occupy outer space? Yes! Can He live in the realm, the lives, of the righteous? Yes! You see, God wants to live with us forever, no matter where we are!

When we pray, “*Our Father Who art in heaven,*” we're not appealing to someone way out there. Our Father is the God of the Bible! The Bible tells the world of His mighty acts and great love for His sons and daughters, who don't always act like sons and daughters! Our Father loves! In love He gave His one and only Son, Jesus Christ for a world out of control, to bring His wayward children back into His family through faith in Jesus Christ!

“*Hallowed Be Thy Name!*” The name of God describes Him as He is. The very first time the name of God appears in Scripture, it shows a sense of strength and power. The Apostles' Creed begins with the words, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” Even though He is the maker and creator, He is always Father!

When we say “*Hallowed*”, the word itself shows God is “*holy*”. He is perfect and without sin. He's “*compassionate*.” He cares for us deeply. That's why when He saw our sin and the death we deserved, He sent His Son to pay our price. He's “*understanding*”.

We deserve none of His blessings, but He sees us and supplies everything we need! He's *"loving."* He showed that in His plan of redemption for everyone. John 3:16 summed it all up, *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

When we say, *"Thy Name"* we get a glimpse of the difference between God and each one of us. God's name shows us who He is. When Moses asked Him what should He say when the people of Israel start to question him as to who sent him, God very simply said, *"Tell them I am sent you."* God is the true "I am." When we use His name, we are expressing His "title". He is our God and there is none other!

Many in our world today do call on God's name, but unfortunately, it's to criticize, complain, or condemn. That's in direct opposition to what God said in His second Commandment, *"You shall not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain."* You can never take the power or authority away from God, it always remains! When His name isn't used correctly by you, the only person who changes is you!

Open to John 14. In His name, God shows His "power", but also shows His *"reputation"*. Psalm 124:8 says, *"Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who created heaven and earth."* Look at verses 13-14, *"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."* God is always there ready and willing to listen and to guide! All these things give us a clear picture of God's *"character"*!

Live as His children! He said, *"I have called you by name, you are Mine."* Live to honor Him! Make sure you're doing everything in your power to have others see the power and majesty and love of their Almighty Father! Have your life show Him above all else! Live as one clothed in Jesus Christ! Be His witnesses that the world can also come to know Him as their Savior and Lord!

Faith in Jesus Christ and in the name of the Father are all-important! The name of the Father is written all over you who trust in Jesus! Pray—really pray and really mean it—*"Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name!"* Pray it holding each word closely in your heart!