

## **The Lord's Prayer: The First Petition**

Hallowed be Thy name.

*What does this mean?* God's name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may become holy among us also.

*How is this done?* When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God also lead holy lives in accordance with it. To this end help us, dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father.

Luther picks up on the two dimensions to the holiness of God's Name: It is connected with the holy lives and worship of God's people (Leviticus 20:3; 22:2, 32). But it is connected also (and first) with His giving us true knowledge of His identity and work so we can trust and worship Him (1 Chronicles 16:10, 35; 29:16; Psalm 32:21; 98:3; 102:1; 104:3; 105:47; 110:9; 137:2; 144:21; Isaiah 29:23; 47:4; 48:2; 57:15; 60:9; Luke 1:49). Often these themes are tightly interwoven (Ezekiel 20:39; 36:20–22; 39:7, 25; 43:7–8)—as it is written (1 Peter 1:16; Leviticus 11:44), “You shall be holy, for I am holy!” When you pray, “Hallowed be thy name,” where and how does God promise to answer this prayer for you?

### **From Luther's *Large Catechism* (III: Lord's Prayer)**

<sup>37</sup> But what is it to pray that His name may be holy? Is it not holy already? Answer: Yes, it is always holy in its nature, but in our use it is not holy. For God's name was given us when we became Christians and were baptized, so that we are called children of God and have the Sacraments, by which He so incorporates us in Himself that everything which is God's must serve for our use.

<sup>38</sup> Here now the great need exists for which we ought to be most concerned, that this name have its proper honor, be esteemed holy and sublime as the greatest treasure and sanctuary that we have; and that as godly children we pray that the name of God, which is already holy in heaven, may also be and remain holy with us upon earth and in all the world.

<sup>39</sup> But how does it become holy among us? Answer, as plainly as it can be said: When both our doctrine and life are godly and Christian. For since in this prayer we call God our Father, it is our duty always to deport and demean ourselves as godly children, that He may not receive shame, but honor and praise from us...

<sup>47</sup> Here, now, learn how great need there is of such prayer. For because we see how full the world is of sects and false teachers, who all wear the holy name as a cover and sham for their doctrines of devils, we ought by all means to pray without ceasing, and to cry and call upon God against all such as preach and believe falsely and whatever opposes and persecutes our Gospel and pure doctrine, and would suppress it, as bishops, tyrants, enthusiasts, etc. Likewise also for ourselves who have the Word of God, but are not thankful for it, nor live as we ought according to the same.