

## The First Petition

### Hallowed be Thy Name

*What does this mean?* God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

*How is God's name kept holy?* God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father.

### Devotion

In the name of Jesus. Amen. When our little family bought our first car, we were so impressed with the uniqueness of the color. The car was "sage green." We had never seen such a beautiful color. It was uniquely ours. Unfortunately when we got on the road, we saw our color car everywhere. I guess we never noticed the color.

That God is "holy" means that He is solely unique. There are no other gods but Him. No one is like Him. He is uniquely set apart, wholly other, distinct from everything, and different from everything else in this world.

He alone created the world from nothing. The Hebrew word used in Genesis 1 (*barah*) is only used with God as the subject. Only God *barahs*! He is the creator, we are the creatures. Before He created the world, there was nothing. He isn't dependent on the world, the world is dependent on Him.

The Lord is completely good, not a bit of sin is near Him. He is unique, special, without blemish, and pure. That's what "God is holy" means.

Since He is all of this in and of Himself, we pray that He would be holy among us too – that His Name would be on our lips when we pray, when we are happy, sad, or in trials. And with His Name holy among us, we are made holy by the death and resurrection of His Son. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

## Discussion

What does it mean for us that God's Name is holy? Is it good news for us? Is it bad news? Moses had a personal encounter with the holy God in Exodus 3:1-18. Pay special attention as you read this chapter to what the Lord is doing and how Moses reacts.

1. How does Moses first react to the burning bush? What does the Lord tell him about the ground? Why?
2. When God announces Himself to Moses in verse 6, how does Moses react? Why would we be afraid of God?
3. How does Moses stand in the presence of such a holy God?
4. At this point we might believe that God's holiness is bad news for us. What does God say to Moses that might show Moses that God is on his side? (see also Exodus 2:25)
5. When Moses seems a bit hesitant to go to the people, what does the Lord promise him? (Exodus 3:12)
6. What does the Lord tell Moses in Exodus 3:14?
7. The Hebrew name given for God in Exodus 3:14 is *Yahweh* ("Jehovah"). This name is so sacred that in Jewish tradition whenever they came to His name written in Hebrew, they instead said the Hebrew word for "LORD" ("*Adonai*"). Did the Lord give Moses His Name not to be used? (John 14:13-14)
8. Moses is sent with the saving Name of God to bring His people out of Israel. To have the Name of God is to have all that God is for us. Since we are given to call upon God's Name, how do we misuse the name of God? (Exodus 20:7, Jeremiah 23:31)
9. Read Matthew 28:18-20. How is the Name of God put on us?
10. What are some reasons that you put your name on things? Why might God put His name on us?
11. Reread the meaning of the First Petition. What two ways is God's name kept holy among us?
12. How do people who bear the name of God live? (Ephesians 4:1, Matthew 5:16)
13. What do we pray for in this petition? What does this petition teach us about prayer?
14. Could we pray this petition without the cross of Christ?

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us always to remember that you have put your name on us at our baptisms and promised to be with us always. Let your name be holy among us by putting Jesus alone into our ears and by helping us to lead holy lives according to your Word. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

# The First Petition

## The Small Catechism

Hallowed be Thy name.

*What does this mean?--Answer.*

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?--Answer.*

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.

## The Large Catechism

**35]** Hallowed be Thy name.

**36]** This is, indeed, somewhat obscure, and not expressed in good German, for in our mother-tongue we would say: Heavenly Father, help that by all means Thy name may be holy. **37]** 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.

**38]** 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.

**39]** 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.

**40]** Now the name of God is profaned by us either in words or in works. (For whatever we do upon the earth must be either words or works, speech or act.) **41]** In the first place, then, it is profaned when men preach, teach, and speak in the name of God what is false and misleading, so that His name must serve to adorn and to find a market for falsehood. That is, indeed, the greatest profanation and dishonor of the divine name. Furthermore, also when men, by swearing, cursing, conjuring, etc., grossly abuse the holy name as a cloak for their shame. In the second place, also by an openly wicked life and works, when those who are called Christians and the people of God are adulterers, drunkards, misers, envious, and slanderers. **42]** Here again must the name of God come to shame and be profaned because of us. **43]** For just as it is a shame and disgrace to a natural father to have a bad, perverse child that opposes him in words and deeds, so that on its account he suffers contempt and reproach, **44]** so also it brings dishonor upon God if we who are called by His name and have all

manner of goods from Him teach, speak, and live in any other manner except as godly and heavenly children, so that people say of us that we must be not God's, but the devil's children.

**45]** Thus you see that in this petition we pray just for that which God demands in the Second Commandment; namely, that His name be not taken in vain to swear, curse, lie, deceive, etc., but be usefully employed to the praise and honor of God. For whoever employs the name of God for any sort of wrong profanes and desecrates this holy name, as aforetime a church was considered desecrated when a murder or any other crime had been committed in it, or when a pyx or relic was desecrated, as being holy in themselves, yet become unholy in use.

**46]** Thus this point is easy and clear if only the language is understood, that to hallow is the same as in our idiom to praise, magnify, and honor both in word and deed.

**47]** 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. **48]** If now you pray for this with your heart, you can be sure that it pleases God; for He will not hear anything more dear to Him than that His honor and praise is exalted above everything else, and His Word is taught in its purity and is esteemed precious and dear.