

Good morning.

We are going to begin at the beginning of chapter 11 in the Gospel of Luke, with verse 1:

"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

Let's just take a moment and sit with that.

"Lord, teach us to pray."

What a beautiful, humble request. One of the disciples had watched Jesus pray. Maybe they heard the tone of his voice, or saw the peace settle over his face. And something inside them stirred. And they asked: "Will you show us how?"

How lovely that they felt *safe enough* to ask.

Now, let's be honest—public speaking is one of the greatest fears most people have. I'd bet that for many of us, praying *out loud* in public might be even higher on that fear list!

When I was a child, prayer in my house was very simple. We had two we used:

The first, before meals:

"God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food. Amen."

And the second, before bed:

"Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
His love be with me through the night, and wake me with the morning light.
And if I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. In Jesus' name, Amen."

That was it. That was what prayer looked like in our home.

But then church came.

Now, in each of the churches I grew up attending, prayer looked a little different. In some congregations, prayers were part of a sacred rhythm—ancient liturgical words that were recited week after week. Prayers passed down through generations. And while I recognize the deep meaning and reverence those prayers hold, I'll be honest—when I was a child, it kind of felt like that moment in the Charlie Brown cartoons. You know the one? When the teacher talks and all you hear is "*Whomp, whomp, whomp.*"

I remember reading those printed prayers in the bulletin, reciting them in unison with the whole church. But I didn't feel them yet.

Then something shifted.

As a teenager, I spent some time with a Church of Christ community. And the prayers there—well, they were different. They were spontaneous. They felt alive. People prayed about real things. Things that were happening in their lives. They poured out their hearts in real time.

And I remember thinking, *Woah*.
This is new.

This is real.

Church camp took it even further. If you've ever been, you know what I mean. Church camp can feel like this beautiful, euphoric bubble where the Spirit moves freely. We'd sing around the campfire, share our hearts, and yes—pray.

One night, I saw a teenager leading prayer.

A teenager. Not a pastor. Not a grown-up. A peer. And it hit me—*Wait, anyone can do this?*

That moment planted a seed.

Each of us comes to prayer from different places. We all have unique stories that shape how we pray, what we pray, and whether we even feel *comfortable* praying.

For me, prayer became a conversation. Over time, it stopped being something I recited and started becoming something I *lived*.

These days, I pray in gratitude—*all day long*. Sometimes out loud, but mostly in my heart.

I thank God for the good in my life—and the good that is on *its way*.

I pray for the people I see as I go about my day. Strangers I pass who seem like they're carrying something heavy. I ask God to help them find someone to love them, to help them know dignity, and to have enough.

I pray with my kids at night. Even now, with just Eric left at home, it's part of our bedtime rhythm. I go first. Then Steve. And then Eric—who always likes to go last.

And my hope in those prayers is this: that my kids will always know they can talk to God. Any time. Anywhere.

One of my very favorite ways to pray is with the church in Potomac. When we are here together in that small space for prayers of the people, and I invite what's on people's hearts. When we lift up the joys and concerns of our hearts—a kind of prayer quilt stitched together from many lives. That's holy. That's powerful.

So today, we continue our preaching series called 'Teach us to Pray,' reflections on *The Lord's Prayer*. Luke 11:1 – 4 NIV

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,

for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.

And lead us not into temptation."

We will sit again with the powerful opening line: "*Father, hallowed be your name,*"

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray—just as John taught his disciples. So Jesus did. And he began with these words:

“Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”

Let’s sit with just that one line today. Last week Dan shared a message focusing on God the Father. Today, we will focus on God’s holiness.

1. Reverence for God

The word *hallowed* means holy. Sacred. Set apart.

So when we begin our prayer with “*Hallowed be Thy name*,” we’re not just using formal language—we’re entering into prayer the way we might enter a sacred space. Carefully. Respectfully. Aware of who we’re speaking to.

Think about how we approach someone deeply important in our lives—someone we respect greatly. Maybe a mentor, a grandparent, a leader who shaped you. You wouldn’t barge into the room shouting demands. You’d enter with care. You might pause and offer a word of gratitude. There’s a posture of reverence.

Prayer starts that way, too. We don’t start by rattling off our wish list to God. We start by remembering who He is. That He is *holy*. That His name is *above every name*.

It’s like looking up at the night sky—have you ever had that moment, just staring at the stars, where you feel very small and very loved all at once? That’s reverence. That’s awe. That’s “*Hallowed be Thy name*.”

2. Respecting God’s Name

In biblical times, a person’s name wasn’t just a label. It represented their *character*. Their *reputation*. Their *identity*.

So when Jesus teaches us to pray, “*Hallowed be Thy name*,” He’s teaching us to honor who God is. To speak about Him—and to Him—with respect. Because God’s name *means* something. It carries the weight of His love, His justice, His mercy, His faithfulness.

Think about how we react when someone misuses our name, or misrepresents who we are. It feels dishonoring. In the same way, when we use God’s name casually—or even carelessly—we’re forgetting who He is.

It’s like when someone you love deeply is being spoken of. You want people to get it *right*. You want their name to be honored because of how deeply you value them.

And here’s the amazing thing: the One who created galaxies, oceans, and every heartbeat... invites us to call Him *Father*. He’s not distant. He’s near. And yet, we’re still called to honor Him fully.

3. Setting God Apart

To *hallow* something means to set it apart. To treat it as different—unlike anything else.

Let’s be honest: in our culture today, we tend to make everything casual. We like what’s easy, familiar, and accessible. That’s not necessarily bad—but when we approach God that way, we can forget that He is *not* just another friend in the group chat.

God isn't "the man upstairs." He's not our backup plan or our spiritual vending machine. He's not there just to fix what's broken or give us what we want when we want it.

He is God. Creator. Sustainer. Holy. Perfect.

Imagine if you received a handwritten letter from someone famous—someone who shaped the world—like a personal letter from someone like Maya Angelou or Nelson Mandela. You wouldn't treat that like junk mail. You'd hold it carefully. You'd read it slowly. You'd maybe even frame it. Why? Because it's *special*.

In the same way, we're called to set God apart in our hearts. To recognize that when we say, "*Hallowed be Thy name*," we're acknowledging that there is no one and nothing like Him.

4. Our Attitude in Prayer

This line—"Hallowed be Thy name"—shapes our whole posture in prayer. It's not just about the words we say. It's about *how* we come to God.

Do we come with humility? Do we come with awe? Or do we come like we're talking to customer service?

God wants us to be honest. He wants us to bring our burdens. But Jesus shows us that the first step is surrender. It's recognizing *who* God is and *why* we're turning to Him.

It's a lot like entering into a sacred conversation. You don't need to pretend to be perfect. But you do need to be real—and respectful.

Sometimes our prayers are hurried. Sometimes we rush in with panic or lists of things that feel urgent. And God hears all of that with compassion. But Jesus invites us to pause first. To take a breath. To say: "*You are holy, God. I remember who You are. I trust You.*"

That pause re-centers us. It reminds us that prayer isn't just about *getting something* from God. It's about being with God.

5. Desire for God's Glory

Finally, this line isn't just a statement. It's a longing. A request.

"Hallowed be Thy name" means, "God, may the whole world come to know and honor You." Not just me. *Everyone*.

It's a prayer that God's name would be lifted up—not only in the sanctuary, but in the workplace. In classrooms. In hospitals. In homes.

This is a shift from a self-focused faith to a kingdom-focused heart. It's saying: *God, may my life reflect You in such a way that others are drawn to Your holiness. May people come to know Your goodness through the way I live and love.*

It's like when you discover a beautiful place or a wonderful book—you don't want to keep it to yourself. You want to share it. Because something that good *should* be known.

"Hallowed be Thy name" is that same kind of prayer—*God, may Your name be honored everywhere. May people come to know how good and holy You are.*

So each Sunday as we say The Lord's Prayer together, we're not just repeating words.

We're aligning ourselves.

We're remembering who we're talking to.

We're asking for our hearts to be shaped by God's holiness, His goodness, and His will.

My prayer for this sermon series is simple:

That we don't just say the Lord's Prayer.

That we begin to *live* it.

That it roots us more deeply in connection, meaning, and trust.

And that every prayer—whether whispered at bedtime, spoken around a campfire, or recited in this sanctuary—brings us closer to the One who loves us beyond measure.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.