

**Sermon preached by Canon Jim Holbeck at the Healing Service in St. Andrew's Cathedral
on Wednesday 23rd November 2005. Reading: Mat 6:7-15.
Topic: *Hallowed be Your Name.***

The Times They Are A-Changin'

- Bob Dylan once sang, *For the times they are a-changin'*. He sang it many years ago in a time of rapid changes in the world. But the changes that came then have led to more and more changes.
- As someone put it *The only thing that remains constant is change.*
- Some of those changes have been alarming. Because of that many Christians have found a growing sense of urgency in their lives.
- They want to see something happen in today's world. They want to see the power of God bring transformation to human lives and to our human situations.
- Many want to see God at work in His world in a dynamic way. They know God has the power to bring incredible changes in His world.
- They also know that prayer invites God to bring His power into our human situations.
- They want to pray with real effectiveness to see breakthroughs in the world as well as in their own lives and the lives of their families.

How To Pray In Times Of Change.

Jesus taught us a pattern of prayer in the Lord's Prayer that as we pray it, can bring tremendous changes in the lives of those for whom we pray. We can pray with real effectiveness if we understand what we are praying when we pray it.

- In the Lord's Prayer the focus is first of all on God Himself. "*Our Father in heaven*". We looked at that last week and we saw that God wanted us to see Him as a loving Heavenly Father who delights in His children and wants to bless them. As Paul wrote of the Father's love, *If He gave us His Son will he not freely give us all things in Him? Rom 8:32.*
- As we continue in the Lord's Prayer we are really making a total commitment of ourselves to God.
- The three phrases which follow ("*Hallowed be Your Name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done*") can be our way of inviting the Lord to rule in our human situations.
- They express our sincere desire for Him to reign in His world and to exert His power in us as individuals.

Tonight we look at the first of those phrases, "*Hallowed be Your name.*"

- How do we hallow the name of the Father who is in heaven?
- To "hallow" something is to treat it as special. There are football grounds of all codes around the world where you are not permitted to walk because they are hallowed grounds. There the foot-balling heroes of the nation fought bravely against those from other nations. Only the present foot-balling heroes can walk or play on that hallowed soil. The word "hallow" means to sanctify or to set apart, to be different.

1. TO HALLOW HIS NAME IS TO BECOME WHAT GOD WANTS US TO BECOME

- The word was used in the OT in the sense that God had chosen His people to be His own possession.
- He was going to show the world how great He was through His people.
- They hallowed or sanctified His name by living in the way He wanted them to live.
- When they lived in the way God wanted them to live, He was honoured among them. His name was respected among the other nations as a God who could make a difference to people.
- Moses recorded the words of God, (*Lev 22:32*) *You shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel: I am the LORD; I sanctify you.*
- When they didn't live as God wanted them to live, His name was dishonoured among the nations. Ezekiel wrote of God's concern with His people, (*Ezek 36:23*) *I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes. The people of God were meant to demonstrate the presence of God among them by living lives that reflected what He was like.*

- The word *to hallow or to sanctify* was used in the NT to describe how people or things were set apart for God.
- Jesus prayed for His followers in Jn 17:17, *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth*. As they obeyed the truth they would become different, people set apart for God and showing the influence He had on their lives in a growing holiness.
- Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth of the change God had made to their lives when they opened their lives to Jesus. *1 Cor 6:9-11. Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers--none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*
- Many of them had come from that terrible background of gross sin and evil, but they had responded to the gospel about Jesus and had been changed by God to become righteous and holy people.
- Now they were set apart to God and showing the power of God in their changed lives.
- Many of them had prayed "*Hallowed be Your name*" and God's name was being hallowed, respected and honoured through their radically changed lives.

2. TO HALLOW HIS NAME IS TO HONOUR HIS SON JESUS. TO GIVE HIM HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN OUR LIVES.

- There's so much nonsense in today's world about Jesus. He is seen to be by some at best, just a good teacher. Others say he was a misguided religious fanatic, that's all.
- But we hallow the name of God by honouring Jesus in the same way that the Father does.
- God spoke at Jesus' baptism, *And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."* Mark 1:11. He IS the Son of God.
- God spoke at Jesus' transfiguration, ... *behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."* Mt 17:5. ie., He is My Son. His words have My authority. Keep on listening to Him.
- Jesus said of Himself, Jn 5:22 *The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honour the Son, just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him. Ie., If you fail to give me respect and honour you are guilty of failing to respect the Father who sent me.*
- To reject Jesus' message was to reject the Father in heaven. *24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*
- To *hallow* the name of the Father was to honour the Son whom the Father had sent into the world with a message. If people received Jesus' message and trusted in God who had sent Him, then they would pass from life to death. Jesus' message was a life or death message.
- You and I *hallow* the name of the Father when we receive Jesus into our lives as Saviour and allow Him to become the Lord of our lives. That was and is the purpose of God for us.
- Indeed until you ask Jesus into your life as Saviour and Lord, you have no right at all to say, *Our Father in heaven*". Nor can you say "*Hallowed by your name*" because you are not honouring His Son.

3. TO HALLOW HIS NAME IS TO TAKE HIS PROMISES SERIOUSLY

i. What God promised through Jesus. Mat 11:28-30 *Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

- If you know you are labouring and feel heavy-laden, you hallow the name of the Father by accepting Jesus' invitation to take His yoke on you so that you can enjoy the rest He gives.
- If you want to carry the burden alone then you dishonour Jesus who invited you to share it with Him.
- You also are not hallowing the name of the Father who sent Him for this express purpose of helping people in their need.
- His name is *hallowed* or honoured as we honour Him in every aspect of our lives as we trust His promises and act on them.
- Peter wrote, *but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord*. Make Him special in Your life. Make Him the Lord of every part. (*1 Pet 3:15*)

ii. What God promised through Peter. 1 Pet 5:6 *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

- If we are anxious or carrying a whole kitbag of cares, we are meant to humble ourselves and cast them all on Him rather than trying to carry the load ourselves.
- If you carry a whole lot of cares so that you are saying *Life is just so hard, so difficult, I am burdened with anxiety, overcome with cares*, you are not being a martyr. You are being a fool because God wants to take them off you and you've refused to let Him help you.

iii. What God promised through James in James 5.

- It was a promise to those who were sick. James 5:14 *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save (or heal) the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*
- That's what this service is about.
- Those who recognise they have a need, whether it be physical, emotional, spiritual or any sort of need come before elders who know how to pray for the sick and needy, and offer their prayer in faith. *15 And the prayer of faith will save (or heal) the one who is sick.*
- We *hallow* the name of the Father by accepting His invitations in His word and by acting on them.
- We *hallow* the name of the Father by believing His promises to those who act on His promises.

My experience of coming into healing over 30 years ago. Carole came home from work with a migraine.

- Two passages in my mind.
- James 5:14 *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save (or heal) the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.*
- Mark 11:24 *24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received [1] it, and it will be yours.*
- I prayed "*Be healed in Jesus' name.*" Carole "*It's gone!*" I looked up and said, "*What's gone?*"
- *I have to take these promises of God more seriously.* And I have since then.
- Will you *hallow* the name of the Father by believing and acting on His promises?