

# Hallowed Be Thy Name

**Luke 20:9-20** <sup>9</sup> Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. <sup>10</sup> "Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. <sup>11</sup> "Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty-handed. <sup>12</sup> "And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast *him* out. <sup>13</sup> "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect *him* when they see him.' <sup>14</sup> "But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' <sup>15</sup> "So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed *him*. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? <sup>16</sup> "He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others." And when they heard *it* they said, "Certainly not!" <sup>17</sup> Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone '?" <sup>18</sup> "Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." <sup>19</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people-- for they knew He had spoken this parable against them. <sup>20</sup> So they watched *Him*, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.

The first thing we ask for in the Lord's prayer is that His name would be kept holy.

Luther points out in his small catechism that God's name is already holy. We can not make it holy or unholy. The problem is simply that we treat it as unholy. Thus what we are really praying is that we would learn to keep it holy in our lives. That we would learn to stop misusing God's name.

This parable is an excellent reminder to us of how we often misuse God's name and therefore what we are praying for when we pray, "Hallowed Be Thy Name"

**Luke 20:9-10** <sup>9</sup> Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. <sup>10</sup> "Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed.

The owner very reasonably expected the vinedressers to care for the vineyard and offer its fruit in the right time. The vinedressers for whatever reason did not do this. Eventually these workers are removed, and the vineyard is given to men who will "bear its fruit."

Jesus speaks this parable primarily to the leaders of the Jews to remind them what will happen to those who ought to be faithfully serving God's word but are not doing it.

When we pray hallowed be thy name, one of the things that we are praying for is that God's name may be kept holy in the mouth of those whom God has sent as pastors, teachers, Sunday school teachers, elders, etc. In short anyone who ought to be teaching God's word.

For those of us who are in such a position of authority we pray for forgiveness for those times when we have failed to honor God's name and that God would give us faithfulness to Him in the future.

For those of us who are not pastors, teachers, etc we pray that God would give us faithful workers. And we even pray that God would remove, like He does these men, any who are not faithful to His word and faithful in their duties.

We were just discussing the story of Samuel the other day in bible history class. Before Samuel became a prophet Eli was high priest of Israel. Eli's sons greatly dishonored God's name by stealing from the people and seducing the women who came to worship at God's temple. So great was the sin of Eli and his sons that God stopped talking to the people and the people stopped coming to the temple to worship the Lord. After Eli Samuel served the Lord faithfully. During Samuel's time the people flourished because God's name was hallowed by Samuel. But then Samuel sons once again dishonored God's name, taking bribes instead of judging honestly.

Later during the time of Jeremiah most of the so-called prophets of the Lord would tell the people, "everything is going to be fine, God isn't going to punish you." Even though God had said that he was going to send the Assyrians as punishment on the people. All the people perished because they listened to the false prophets instead of Jeremiah.

This is what happens when God's name is not kept holy by pastors, teachers, elders etc. Sometimes they dishonor God's name with their lives and actions and sometimes by teaching contrary to God's word. In either case the vineyard, that is the people of God suffers.

But this happens so easily, as in the case of Samuel, where his own sons fell into sinful practices. Because Satan loves nothing more than to lead pastors and teachers astray. He knows full well how easy it will be to devour the sheep once the shepherds are unfaithful in what they teach or in their lives.

Therefore we pray "Hallowed by thy name, "asking the Lord to keep His name holy in the mouths and lives of our pastors and teachers, that we may have pastors like Samuel and not like Phineas and Hophni.

**11-13 11 "Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. 12 "And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him**

**out. 13 "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him.'**

This parable has quite a lot in common with the parable we studied last Sunday. That is the parable of the prodigal son. In that parable we saw how the father lavished his love and grace upon his sons even to an extent that we would say was absurd. So much love did the Father give to his sons that they were not afraid to take advantage of the father's love.

The same thing is true in this parable as well. Actually, it might well be argued that the vineyard owner in this parable shows even greater love and even greater mercy than did the father of the prodigal son. Three times the master sends servants to receive the fruits of his vineyard and each time the vinedressers send them away empty, even beating them. Once should have been enough. One time and the master should have returned and removed them. But so great is God's love for us that he continues to send prophet after prophet.

In Exodus the Lord told Moses

**Exodus 34:5-6 <sup>5</sup> Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,**

The name of the Lord is mercy, grace and love. Love so great that is quite easy to take advantage of it. The sons take advantage of it. The vinedressers take advantage of it. Let us pray that we do not take advantage of it.

When we pray "Hallowed be thy name" we are praying that we would appreciate and love God's mercy and not think of it as something take advantage of.

Not just some but many people think that the meaning of the Gospel is that I can do whatever sin I like and as long as I repent afterwards it is ok. The vinedressers in the parable certainly think this way.

Note the progression in the parable. At first the vinedressers only beat the servant and sent him away, then they beat and treated him shamefully, then they wounded him and cast him out, and finally they killed even the son.

Because in his mercy and grace the master did not return to punish these men they became bolder and bolder in their sin.

God's name is mercy and grace. And that mercy and grace is so great that we can take advantage of it. We can continue in sin. We can go out and sin as we like and ask for forgiveness, and God does continue to forgive us. We can take advantage of God's mercy up to a point.

But we pray in the first petition that we would not be like these men. That we would honor God's name of mercy and love. Not because we are afraid of His wrath but because we love His grace. We do not want to be like the men of this parable, but rather like the prodigal son, who finally saw that God's love was not a thing to be taken advantage of but a precious jewel to be treasured.

Hallowed be thy name. May God teach us to treasure His love.

**14-20 14 "But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' 15 "So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 "He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others." And when they heard it they said, "Certainly not!" 17 Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone ' 18 "Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." 19 And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people-- for they knew He had spoken this parable against them. 20 So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.**

Before I said that we can take advantage of God's love up to a point. What point is that? How far does God's love extend? The answer is here. It extends up to and including but not beyond his only begotten Son Jesus Christ.

As ridiculous as it sounds that the master of the vineyard would send his son, that is what he does, and that is what God does as well.

This parable has a lot in common with the "prodigal son" from last Sunday, however, there is a very different tone to the parable. Instead of a tone of sin and redemption there is the tone of judgment.

What is the difference? Jesus himself tells us the major difference between the parables

**"Whoever falls on that stone will be broken, but on whomever it falls it will grind him to powder."**

The lost son stumbled over the stone and fell and he was broken but not crushed and was also healed. We saw his brokenness and he saw his brokenness. But he returned to Jesus. The Word of God is full of real life examples of the prodigal son. Men who were lost, fell on the cross and were broken by it, but were also healed.

Peter was broken by the name of Jesus but also healed. The Apostle Paul was broken by the name of Jesus but also healed. King David, Jeremiah, Jonah, Job, and so many more were broken by God so that he might heal them.

But these vinedressers are crushed beneath the name of Jesus. They refuse to be broken by his law and are crushed. That is the difference between this parable and last weeks.

Jesus is a rock of offence and a stumbling stone. His law breaks us with the knowledge of our sin. But it also heals us with the proclamation of forgiveness through His death. Those who will not be broken, who will not confess their sins and turn to Jesus will be crushed instead.

Ultimately for us the name of God is the name of Jesus who died for our sins. When we pray “Hallowed be Thy name” we pray that we may honor and treasure the name of Jesus. That we may always hold it dear to us.

Hallowed Be Thy Name. We pray that God’s name would be honored in the lips and lives of our called workers. We pray that we may not despise His mercy and take advantage of it but treasure His love. We pray that we may not be crushed beneath his judgement but that we would repent and cling to the name of Jesus.

Amen