

Cheltenham  
Ps Rob Buckingham  
11 & 12 February 2017

**THE LORD'S PRAYER (2)**

**PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD**

**Message Notes**

Text: Matthew 6:9-13

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*

*For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,*

- Two Questions:
1. Where is God?
  2. What's in a Name?

### **1. Where is God?**

*"Our Father in heaven..."*

---

---

---

---

The word "heaven" is also translated as "air" in many places in the New Testament...

*Ephesians 2:1-2, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."*

---

---

---

---

God is not "up there" He's as close as the air we breathe

*"Our Father, who's as close to us as the air we breathe..."*

Where is God? He's in us and around us just like the air

This is so important because prayer rests on the foundation that God is near and that God hears (we're in partnership)

*"Our Father, who's as close to us as the air we breathe, hallowed be your name"*

## **2. What's in a Name?**

A couple of things:

A person's name is the first point of communication

For us to fully communicate with others and develop relationship its important that we know their name...

---

---

---

---

*Exodus 3:13-14, "Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"*

*Exodus 6:2-3, "God said to Moses, "I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty [El Shaddai], but by my name the Lord [Yahweh] I did not make myself fully known to them."*

In other words, God was communicating in a whole new way to Moses than He had for the past 500 years since he introduced Himself to Abram...

El-Shaddai (God of the breast) denotes the past and the present...

---

---

---

---

YHWH / Yahweh / Jehovah (Latin): *"I am He who will be"*

Yahweh is prophetic and announces who God will be (future)

---

---

---

---

God then progressively reveals Himself to people as to what they need Him to be for them...

Yahweh-rapha (Ex. 15:22-26) = I AM the One who will heal you

Yahweh-nissi (knee-see; Ex. 17:15) = I AM the One who will give you victory

Yahweh-M'kaddesh (Lev. 20:1-8) = I AM the One who will sanctify you

Yahweh-shalom (Judges 6:24) = I AM the One will give peace

Yahweh-rohi (Psalm 23:1) = I AM the One who will be your Shepherd

Yahweh-tsidkenu (Jer. 33:16) = I AM the One who will be your righteousness

Jehovah Shamma (Ezekiel 48:35) = I AM the One who will be there for you

---

---

---

---

Jesus is the ultimate revelation of the Name of God  
(John 17:6, "*I have revealed your name...*")

---

---

---

---

1. I AM the bread of life (John 6:35)
2. I AM the light of the world (John 8:12)
3. I AM the door of the sheep (John 10:7)
4. I AM the good shepherd (John 10:11)
5. I AM the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
6. I AM the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
7. I AM the true vine (John 15:1)

And so right at the start of The Lord's Prayer Jesus emphasises the importance of hallowing the Name of God as Our Father. "Father" is His revealed name now, and we can communicate with our Father because we know His Name and, like a good Father, He will be to us all that we need.

A person's name is the first point of communication, and...

A person's name represents their character

Hallow = to be made holy (Opp. Common)

God's Name is already holy but it can be made common; it can be defiled by the actions of His people...

*Ezekiel 36:20-23, "And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave his land.' **21** I had concern for my holy name, which the people of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.*

***22** "Therefore say to the Israelites, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. **23** I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, **when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.**"*

God calls us into partnership with Himself. He's as close to us as the air we breathe. His Name is holy and He asks that the people of this world see the holiness of His Name through the actions of His people: "*hallowed be your name*"

Gk. "name" = character or reputation

---

---

---

---

As soon as we hear a person's name it brings up emotions connected to their character, their reputation and their actions. It's the same with God. We His people are called into partnership with Him to hallow His Name – to make His Name Holy so that when people hear His Name they have an emotional response that is good...

---

---

---

---

### Is God a man?

Because God reveals Himself to us as "Our Father" does that mean He is male in gender?

Scripture reveals that God is NOT a man but rather a Spirit (Numbers 23:19a; John 4:24) but that doesn't mean that God is genderless. Going back to the Creation story in Genesis reveals the truth of this, *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have ... So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them'"* (Genesis 1:26-27). A simple reading of these verses infers that God is both male AND female and simply divided those two distinctions into men and women when they were created. That means the coming together of a man and a woman in marriage actually completes the nature of God in a relationship like no other bond could do. That's why the husband and wife become "One flesh."

In the Bible God uses both masculine and feminine terms and attributes when describing "His" nature. God seems quite comfortable equating Himself to a great warrior and a husband, but also as a child bearer (1 John 3:9), a seamstress, and cooking and cleaning a house. God is pictured as the female figure of Wisdom: creating, ordering, and saving the world (Proverbs 1:20-21). Jesus is even called "the Wisdom of God" in the New Testament and the Holy Spirit is often presented in female metaphors including the birthing process, consoling, comforting, and travailing in childbirth, emotional warmth, and inspiration. The Syriac church actually used the feminine pronoun for the Holy Spirit until 400 AD.

Both pictures of God are put together in two adjacent verses in Isaiah 42, *"The Lord will march forth like a mighty hero; he will come out like a warrior, full of fury. He will shout his battle cry and crush all his enemies. He will say, "I have long been silent; yes, I have restrained myself. But now, like a woman in labor, I will cry and groan and pant" (Vs. 13-14).*

Jesus emphasizes the feminine when He laments over Jerusalem, *"How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing" (Matt. 23:27).*

One of the most frequently used names for God in the Hebrew Scriptures, El-Shaddai encompasses both male and female genders. El means God and Shaddai (a name borrowed from one of the pagan gods of the Canaanites) is usually translated (I believe wrongly) as "Almighty." It is more likely that Shaddai was an attribute of a Semitic goddess linking the name to the Hebrew word for breast. Thus El-Shaddai could just as easily be translated "the one of the Breast", or "the one of the Womb." This was God's revelation to Abram who would become "Father of many nations" and Sarai who would become "Princess of a multitude." God's revelation in this name is of all sufficiency to nurture the Nation of Israel to fruitfulness like a nursing mother would do for her children.

The first thing God says by way of self-revelation to Moses is that He is "compassionate," a word based on the Hebrew root for "womb." God's love and compassion for us is like that which a mother has for her child. God has a mother's kind of love for "His" own.

Author Aaron Armstrong says, *"God is quite comfortable referring to Himself using or inspiring the use of both feminine and masculine characteristics, even if it makes some of us uncomfortable."*

It's true that God is presented in the Bible as "He," but this word does not demand precisely the same thing it does when used of human beings. Some people have suggested we ought to change the biblical references to God as Father from masculine to a designation that is non-gender specific like parent or to refer to God as He and She. While I understand where they are coming from I disagree. To play around with different pronouns can become cumbersome semantics. God has chosen to reveal Himself in the Bible with masculine pronouns, but uses both male and female metaphors to enrich our understanding of His nature.

## Discussion Questions

1. Read & discuss the article "Is God a Man?" How do these insights help you relate to God?
2. "Our Father in Heaven" is better translated, "*Our Father, who's as close to us as the air we breathe...*" How should the fact that God is in you and around you, just like the air, affect the way you pray?
3. The revelation of God to Moses as "*I am He who will be*" is a progressive revelation of Himself to His people as to what they need Him to be for them in whatever circumstances they find themselves in. What do you need God to be for you right now? Discuss the seven Yahweh names of God in the message notes.
4. Seven times in John's Gospel, Jesus reveals Himself as "I AM." Read and discuss these verses. Just like His Father, Jesus promises to be just what we need.
5. God's Name is already holy (hallowed) but it can be made common; it can be defiled by the actions of His people. Discuss situations where God's people have not hallowed His Name. What is the outcome? In what ways can we as a church community (and individually) make sure that when people here the Name of God they have a positive emotional response?