

2 HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME



talk about

1. Do you think your name suits you? Why, or why not?

investigate

 Read Matthew 1:18-25

2. What names will be given to the promised baby?

3. What do these names tell us about the baby?

 Read Matthew 2:1-12

4. Why have the Magi come to find Jesus? What do they do when they find him?

5. Why does Herod say he wants to find Jesus?

• What light does verse 12 shed on that?

▶ Read Matthew 6:9

"Hallowed be your name" is a prayer that God's name might be regarded as holy or worshipped. The names of Jesus reveal who Jesus is and why he is worth worshipping.

Yet the Jewish king, the chief priests and the teachers of the law do not worship Jesus at his birth. Instead it falls to strangers—non-Jews who are not part of God's people—to bring him the worship he deserves.

⇒ apply

6. If we started with worship more often, how do you think the rest of our prayers would change?

🎲 getting personal

Are your prayers centred on your needs or God's glory? Do the priorities of your life mirror the priorities of your prayers?

↓ investigate

Having looked at the first chapters of Matthew's Gospel, next we fast-forward to the very end.

▶ Read Matthew 28:16-20

7. What do the disciples do when they see the risen Jesus?

8. What reasons are there to worship Jesus in these verses?

9. What will those who worship him do?

10. What does that have to do with God's name?

🎲 explore more

▶ Read Matthew 15:1-9

Verses 8-9 describe people whose *lips* "hallow" God's name, but whose *lives* do not.

Where did the Pharisees go wrong?

How might we fall into the trap of honouring God's name with our lips, but not with our lives?

OPPORTUNITY

The version of the Lord's Prayer used in most churches ends with the words, "For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever". This line is not part of the original prayer recorded in Matthew 6 or Luke 11. But these words are consistent with the climax of Matthew's Gospel where Jesus is given all authority, and, because he has received all authority, he sends us to call the nations to submit to his kingship and worship his glory.

Matthew's Gospel begins with the nations (in the form of the Magi) worshipping Jesus and ends with the disciples being sent to call the nations to worship Jesus. This is related to the prayer "Hallowed be your name": we are not only expressing our own worship, but also praying that others might do the same.

getting personal

How can you pray for God's name to be hallowed in your life:

- in what you say?
- in what you do?

apply

11. Think about your church: what would it mean to pray for God's name to be hallowed there?

12. Think about your neighbourhood and your country: how can you pray for God's name to be hallowed there?

pray

Pick some of the Bible's names for Jesus and turn them into prayers of praise.

Here are some options to start you off: Jesus is Saviour, Immanuel, the Messiah, the Good Shepherd, the Altogether Lovely, the Word of God, our Great High Priest, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the Bread of Life, and the Hope of the Nations.

3 Matthew 13:1-23 and 13:31-32

YOUR KINGDOM COME



talkabout


1. "On Sunday morning I sing about Jesus being King, but on Monday morning I only get grief from my colleagues if I speak about Jesus to them."

Do you ever experience a gap like this between Sunday and Monday morning? Why is this?

When God first created the world, humanity lived under God's kingdom or rule. It was a kingdom of peace, plenty and protection. But humanity has rejected God's kingdom. We think we will be freer without God. Instead we have become enslaved to sin and subject to God's judgment. But God has promised to restore his kingdom through his King: Jesus.

The problem is that the final restoration of God's kingdom will mean judgment for those who have rebelled against him—and that includes us all. So before that final restoration, Jesus first came to bring forgiveness and peace with God.

investigate

 Read Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

2. How does the kingdom of heaven grow within history?

3. In what negative ways do people respond to the message of Jesus?

4. In what positive ways do people respond to the message of Jesus?

5. How does Jesus apply this parable? What command does he give (v 9)?

6. How would you summarise "the message about the kingdom" (v 19) in your own words?



explore more

optional

▶ Read Matthew 27:41-42

How did the religious leaders challenge Jesus to prove he is God's promised King?

What did Jesus do instead?

The coming of the kingdom of God means judgment for rebels. But in stage one of the kingdom's coming, judgment does not fall on rebels. Instead judgment falls on the King himself, in our place at the cross.

→ apply

7. Jesus applies this parable by commanding us to hear (v 9). Who do you know who has not yet heard about Jesus? How could you make sure they get the chance to hear and respond?

↓ investigate

▶ Read Matthew 13:31-32


8. What does this image tell us about the kingdom of heaven in the present?

9. What does it tell us about the kingdom of heaven in the future?


10. In what ways do you think this future has already begun to happen?

Jesus is promising that although the kingdom looks small and insignificant now, one day it will come fully. When Jesus returns, those who reject God will be judged, and God's rule of peace and plenty will be restored.

explore more

 Read 2 Peter 3:3-9

How does Peter counter the accusation that the kingdom of God is never going to come in judgment? What reason does he give for the delay?

 Read 2 Peter 3:10-13

What will the fulfilment of God's kingdom look like?

apply

 Read Matthew 6:10

When we pray "Your kingdom come", we are praying for two things at once: first, the gradual spread of God's kingdom in the present as people hear Jesus' words, repent and come under God's rule; and second, the ultimate return of Jesus in glory.

11. What specific things could you pray about when you ask for God's kingdom to come...

• in the present?

• in the future?

getting personal

 Read Matthew 6:19-20

Think about what you are storing up for yourself. What do your priorities in life reveal about your attitude towards the kingdom of heaven?

12. How should the coming of the kingdom in the future shape our attitude to the kingdom in the present?

pray

- Pray for opportunities to share the message of the kingdom with unbelieving friends.
- Pray for the evangelistic initiatives in your church.
- Pray for the missionaries supported by your church.

4 Matthew 26:36-46

YOUR WILL BE DONE



talkabout

1. How do children react when they don't get their own way? How do adults react?

investigate

 Read Matthew 26:36-46

2. How does Matthew describe the emotions of Jesus in these verses?

3. Why is Jesus feeling these emotions?

4. What does Jesus request in his prayer of verse 39?

- What difference do you think it made to add “Yet not as I will, but as you will”?

5. What is the difference between the prayers in verse 39 and verse 42?

➔ **apply**

“Your will be done” in verse 42 is word-for-word the same as “Your will be done” in the Lord’s Prayer.

6. How does the story of Gethsemane help us to see what it means for us to pray this?

The Lord’s Prayer is an act of submission to God’s will—both obeying him (submitting to his moral will, the way he wants us to live) and accepting our circumstances (submitting to his sovereign will, his control over all things).

It is OK to ask God to change the circumstances of our lives (as Jesus does in verse 39). But if God does not change our circumstances then we must submit to his will.

7. When things don’t go our way, how might we behave if we are not submitting to God’s sovereign will?

🗨️ **getting personal**

Are you bitter because you struggle to accept the sovereign will of God?

Are you over-busy because you’re trying to be in control instead of entrusting your concerns to God’s control?

Do you feel justified in not doing what God wants, because he’s not doing what you want?

Remind yourself who God is. Remind yourself of Jesus in Gethsemane. Ask God to help you say, “Yet not as I will, but as you will”.

📖 **investigate**

▶ **Read Matthew 6:9-13**

The Lord’s Prayer contains three requests for our needs (v 11-13). But it begins with three requests for God’s glory (v 9-10).

8. What attitude do you need in order to start a prayer with these requests?

9. How does the phrase “as it is in heaven” alter the way you think about these requests?

10. How is praying “your will be done” similar to praying “hallowed be your name” and “your kingdom come”? How is it different?


 **getting personal**

Think about your prayers. Do they reflect the balance of the Lord's Prayer? Do you begin with God or with yourself?

 **explore more**

optional

Submitting to God's will can be hard, especially when it involves suffering.


 **Read 1 Peter 2:21-25**

How does the submission of Jesus help us?

 **apply**

11. In what areas of life do you find it hard to put God first? Why?

12. How could we remind ourselves to put God first?

 **pray**

Use the following passages to help you pray for one another.

"Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Hebrews 13:20-21)

May the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.
(Adapted from 1 Peter 5:10-11)

5 Matthew 6:25-34

GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD

talkabout

1. What do you worry about?

investigate

▶ Read Matthew 6:25-30

2. Jesus repeatedly tells us not to worry in these verses. What reason does he give for not worrying...
 - in verse 25?

- in verse 27?

3. Look at verse 30. What is the root cause of worry?

DICTIONARY

Reap (v 26):
harvest crops.
Spin (v 28): make
loose wool into
yarn.

4. What does Jesus tell us to do in verses 26 and 28? How does this help counter worry?

5. Have you had experiences of looking at the world around you and being filled with wonder or reassured of God's care?

6. How does Jesus describe God in these verses?

- Reflect on each word of this phrase. How does it help us even more?

explore more


Matthew 14 tells us about a time when the disciples were full of worry and fear.

-  Read Matthew 14 v 13-21

What lesson should the disciples have learned from this story?

-  Read Matthew 14 v 22-26

How did they react the next time they were in trouble?

-  Read Matthew 14 v 27-33

How did Peter show faith? What caused him to stop having faith?

apply

-  Read Matthew 6:11

7. In what ways does the prayer "give us today our daily bread" express the attitude that Jesus is telling us to have in Matthew 6:25?

Praying for "daily" bread made sense in Jesus' day because life felt precarious and food could not easily be stored. But it is just as important for us to pray for our daily needs because we need to be reminded that we are dependent on God. We may get our food from a supermarket and store it in a fridge, but this prayer reminds us that God is the ultimate provider.

getting personal

Think about the last time you got anxious. How might your perspective have been changed by...

- thinking of God as "your heavenly Father"?
- praying "Give us today our daily bread"?

investigate

-  Read Matthew 6:31-34

8. According to Jesus, what is to be our priority?

9. What distracts us from this priority?

10. What do we need to remind ourselves of in order not to be distracted?

 **apply**


11. What might it look like in practice for us to make the kingdom of God our priority?

12. When we pray "Give us today our daily bread", what are we asking for?

• How does that help us to have the right priorities?

 **getting personal**

What steps could you take this week to make God's kingdom your priority?

 **pray**

"Cast all your anxiety on [God] because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7)

Make a list of the things that cause you anxiety. Then hand them over one by one in prayer to God because he cares for you.

Or invite everyone in the group to share one thing that makes them anxious. Then pray both for God's provision for your needs and God's peace for your hearts.

6

Matthew 9:1-8 and 18:21-35

FORGIVE US OUR SINS

talkabout

1. When was the last time someone forgave you? What did it feel like?

investigate

 Read Matthew 9:1-8

DICTIONARY

2. What is the immediate need of the man who is brought to Jesus? What is the ultimate need of the man?

Blaspheming
(v 3): speaking
disrespectfully or
falsely about God.

3. What does his response to the man make us think of Jesus?

4. How does Jesus respond to the religious leaders?

5. Do you think the crowd are right in the way they respond to Jesus?

➔ **apply**

6. If you're a Christian, then all your sins—past, present and future—are forgiven through the cross. So why does Jesus encourage us to continue to pray "forgive us our sins"?

☒ **getting personal**

"Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24)

Take time to review your life. Ask God to reveal your "hidden faults" (Psalm 19:12). Do you need to repent of sinful behaviours, attitudes or habits? Come to Jesus for mercy. Ask him to forgive you. And hear him say, "Take heart ... your sins are forgiven" (Matthew 9:2).

The Lord's Prayer links *receiving* forgiveness with *showing* forgiveness: "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

Does this mean that showing forgiveness is the reason for our forgiveness by God—we earn forgiveness by being forgiving? Or is showing forgiveness the evidence of our forgiveness by God? Which comes first—our mercy or God's mercy?

Jesus provides his own commentary on this in the following passage.

⬇ **investigate**

▶ Read Matthew 18:21-35

7. Think about what the different elements of the story represent. What is Jesus telling us about...
- what sin is like?

- what is happening when God has mercy?

8. How should the king's forgiveness make the servant feel about himself?

- Does it actually have that effect (v 28-30)?

9. How do the other people in the story react to the servant's refusal to forgive?

10. According to the story, which comes first—our mercy or God’s mercy? What is the evidence that we have received forgiveness from God?

We do not earn God’s forgiveness by being forgiving—God’s forgiveness comes first. But showing forgiveness is a good sign that we have truly accepted God’s forgiveness and repented of sin.

This is why Jesus says, “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15).

If we don’t forgive others, we are thinking of ourselves as more righteous than them, when in fact we are just as sinful. We are effectively turning our back on God and his mercy—just like the servant in Jesus’ parable.

▶ **Read Matthew 6:12**

 **explore more**

optional

The word “debt” is, as we have seen, a powerful picture for sin. Sin is failing to meet our obligations towards God and we lack the resources to repay what we owe. But the word “debt” also alludes to the jubilee laws of Deuteronomy 15.

▶ **Read Deuteronomy 15:1-15**

What does God tell his people to do in verses 1, 10, 11 and 12?

What reason does God give for these commands in verse 15?

How does this help us to understand what it means to pray this line of the Lord’s Prayer?

 **apply**

11. How can we reflect God’s mercy in the way we treat other people?

12. What kind of person are we asking God to make us into when we pray, “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us”?

 **getting personal**

If someone were to review your reactions when other people wrong you or assess your generosity to those in need, what would they conclude?

Would they notice a distinctive attitude in you? Would they conclude that you have received mercy from God?

Is there anyone with whom you need to be reconciled?

↑ pray

"Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have wandered and strayed from your ways
like lost sheep.
We have followed too much the devices and desires
of our own hearts.
We have offended against your holy laws.
We have left undone those things
that we ought to have done;
and we have done those things
that we ought not to have done;
and there is no health in us.
But you, O Lord, have mercy upon us sinners.
Spare those who confess their faults.
Restore those who are penitent,
according to your promises declared to mankind
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may live a disciplined, righteous and godly life,
to the glory of your holy name.
Amen."

From the *Book of Common Prayer*. This version is from *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (Church House, 2000), p 129.

Matthew 4:1-11 and 26:40-41
7 LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

↻ talkabout

1. What has been your worst exam experience? What does it feel like to fail a test?

The word "temptation" literally means "testing" and describes a broad range of trials, not just being enticed to sin (though it can include being enticed to sin, as Matthew 4:1 indicates).

Elsewhere the Bible tells us to rejoice when we face trials (James 1:2-3). So we are praying here to be delivered not in the sense of being spared trials, but in the sense of spared from sinning or giving up when we are tested (delivered "out from" or "through" temptation).

↓ investigate

▶ Read Matthew 4:1-11 and 6:13

2. What similarities are there between these verses?

3. What temptations does Jesus face?

4. How does Jesus overcome these temptations?



explore more

optional

▶ **Read 1 Corinthians 10:13**

What does this verse say about temptation?

How does it help us understand what it means to pray "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"?

▶ **Read Matthew 26:33-35, 69-75**

In Matthew 4 Jesus was tested three times and remained faithful. Here Peter is tested three times and fails each time.

▶ **Read Matthew 26:40-41**

5. What would have helped Peter not to fail when tested and fall when tempted?

6. Why do you think he didn't do as he was told (but slept instead, v 43)?



apply

7. What key ways of resisting temptation have we seen?

- Are these the things we usually do when we face testing times, or do we try other things instead?



getting personal

In what specific ways are you being tempted or tested at the moment?

What Bible passages or gospel truths could you use to help you remain faithful?

How does the faithfulness of Jesus comfort you in these situations?



investigate

8. Look again at Matthew 4:1 and 6:13. How does what happened to Jesus differ from what we are told to pray for ourselves?

9. Why do you think that is? What is special about Jesus?

10. Jesus' testing echoes the story of the fall in Genesis 3 and the story of the Israelites' time in the wilderness in Exodus (for example, Exodus 17:1-7).

- What are the similarities?

- What is the big difference?

Jesus replays the story of humanity and the story of Israel. Uniquely, he passes Satan's test—and he does so on behalf of all his people. Through the faithfulness of Jesus, every Christian has passed the "entrance exam" required to enter God's kingdom.

Here are some other passages in which Matthew uses the word "evil" or "wicked": Matthew 9:2-4; 12:35; 12:39; 13:19; 13:38; 15:19; 18:32.

11. How do these passages illuminate what it means to pray to be delivered from evil?

➔ **apply**

12. When we do fail and fall, how should we feel and respond?

☞ **getting personal**

Think back across all our studies on the Lord's Prayer. Using it as a framework for our prayers will change the way we pray and the way we live, in lots of different ways.

Which part of the Lord's Prayer is the biggest challenge for you when it comes to the way you pray?

⬆ **pray**

Say the first line of the Lord's Prayer and then have two or three people expand on it with their own specific prayers of praise, confession or request. Then move on to the next line and repeat the process until you have "prayed through" the whole of the Lord's Prayer together.