

Aldersgate UMC of Butte, Montana

www.aldersgatebutte.org 406.782.2425

Pastor Matthias (Matt) Krier

Sunday, January 24, 2021

Scripture Lesson: Luke 11:1-4 NRSV

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, 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.

And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Message

Hallowed Be Thy Name

I love how children have learned this prayer from little on and have unintentionally made alterations of this prayer like the little boy who came home from Sunday school and said he had finally learned God's first name. The parents were puzzled and so asked the question, "And so Joey, what is God's first name? And the boy replied, "Harold". The Mom and Dad said, "Where in the world did you get that?" And little Joey replied, "It is right there in the Lord's Prayer. Haven't you paid attention. Our Father who art in heaven, Harold be thy name."

Speaking of names, God has many names, but Harold is not one of them.

I was curious about how many names for God there are in the Bible, so I put into my search engine: names for God in the Bible and this is what appeared:



This list is just a partial list of the names for God. As you can see from the many names for God, God has many attributes such as being Master and Lord of all, *Adonai* ... The Lord is my Shepherd, *Jehovah Raah* ... The Lord who heals, *Jehovah Rapha* ... And probably my favorite is: The Lord is Peace, *Jehovah Shalom* ...

We know that God's Name is holy and one of the commandments is devoted to keeping God's name holy and sacred.

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."

Exodus 20:7

Jews, Muslims as well as Christians know without a doubt that we are not to take God's name in vain. **So what does that mean exactly?** According to Matthew Henry, a nonconformist minister and Bible Commentator born in

the 1600's described five categories of actions that constitute taking God's name in vain:

- 1) Hypocrisy - making a profession of God's name, but not living up to that profession
- 2) Covenant breaking - if one makes promises to God yet does not carry out the promised actions
- 3) Rash swearing
- 4) False swearing
- 5) Using the name of God lightly and carelessly for charms or spells, jest or sport

The Hebrew people would not pronounce the name for God because it was sacred and holy.

In written form, ancient Hebrew was a consonant-only language without any vowels, thus leading to the name of God being spelled "YHWH."



Because of this, the word itself gives no indication of actual pronunciation.

Instead of pronouncing the sacred name of God which was only done once a year by the high priests, they would use a name referring to God. One of the names is "Adonai", which means Lord or Master.

Though it is uncertain whether this name of God was used previously, most scholars point to YHWH first appearing in the Bible when God manifests Himself to Moses in the burning bush (Exodus 3).

In Exodus 3:14, “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.”””

This I AM is understood to be YHWH, or Yahweh as we pronounce it today.

All this is to say that Yahweh’s name should not be taken lightly. For those who use the name of God in any form for their own personal gain or political gain is in a sense taking God’s name in vain. We may have all been guilty of this at one time or another, but if we are to pray:

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,” then maybe we should pause before using God’s name or the name of Jesus before uttering the name of God or the name of Yeshua.

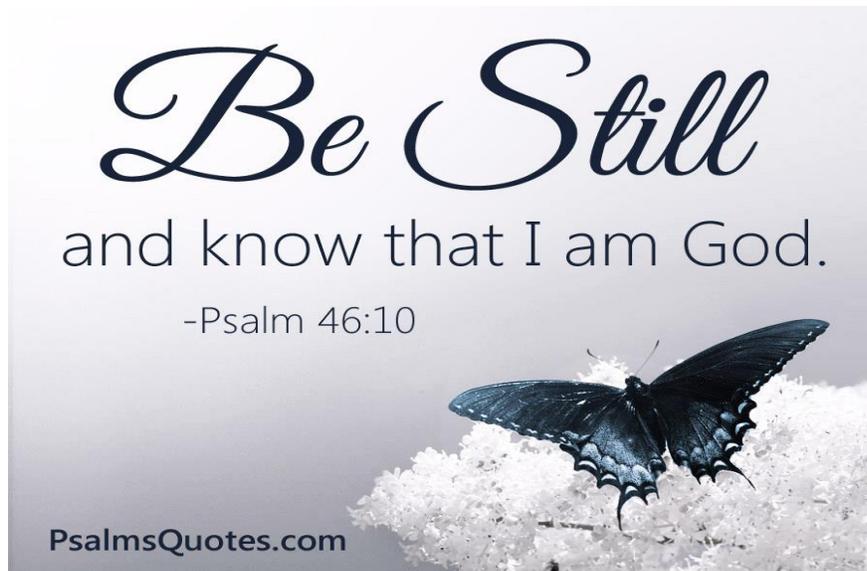
I believe that many Christians and followers of Yeshua take God and Jesus for granted and may use the names lightly or for personal gain. These names need to be held reverently and used discreetly to maintain just how sacred we hold these names.

Going back to the Message Bible on the first part of the Lord’s Prayer

“Our Father in heaven, reveal who you are.”

Here is where we stop and pause in asking God to reveal who God is.

Here is where we stop and pause in asking God to dwell within ... to be still



Let's pause for a few moments in silence to be still and hear the voice of the Divine ... to experience the holy name for God. I would invite you to use the name most sacred to you or maybe try breathing in and out another name for God that you may find helpful. I have asked Mary to play softly for about a minute or two, "Be Still and Know That I Am God."

By this brief silence we are beginning to clear the space for the Name of God to live:

Clearing the Space for the **Name** to Live
Nethqadash shmakh

Aramaic translated into English
Focus your Light within us--make it useful:
As the rays of a beacon show the way.

Neil Douglas Klotz speaks of this in his book, *Prayers of the Cosmos*: "Clearing the Space for the Name to Live." In the Aramaic, hallowed be thy name is: *Nethqadash shmakh*. As I shared last week, the Aramaic shares

the depth and breadth of these words much deeper than what the English has to offer. Hear these words again and absorb them:



shutterstock.com • 152032997

Nethqadash shmakh is translated to mean:

Focus your Light within us -- make it useful:
As the rays of a beacon show the way.

Let me close with these words from Prayers from the Cosmos:

The inner shrine by which God's name is hallowed can be developed only through letting go, releasing some of the clutter inside that keeps us too busy to be silent and receptive to the "still, small voice."

This still small voice whispers into our very soul ... Let us sing the hymn to know God more deeply ... "Be Still and Know That I Am God" in preparation of Holy Communion.