

Lord's Prayer # 3  
May your holy name be honored.

What's in a name? Not much, it seems, for most of us.

It's just a pleasant-sounding, useful, identifying tag.

However just the mention of certain names can create a variety of emotions and feelings.

How do you respond to names like?

Winston Churchill, Adolph Hitler,  
Abraham Lincoln, Richard Nixon  
Michael Jordan, O.J. Simpson,  
Superman, Homer Simpson.

Some of these names brings a smile to our face, others fear, or hatred or admiration.

One, if not the most hated names in America today, is the name of Kenneth Lay.

Kenneth Lay died just 2 weeks ago, but even in death, his name is probably one of the most hated names in America.

Kenneth Lay was the founder of Enron Corporation, at one time, one of the world's leading energy companies.

In the fall of 2001 company imploded due to revelations of company executives mismanaging company funds.

- Thousands of individuals who worked there lost pensions
- As well as mutual funds who invested pension plans with this company
- Along with private investors who bought company stock.

While many families were devastated by their financial losses, individuals like Lay, the founder, and other top corporate leaders walked away with millions!

Just days before his death, Lay was found guilty of numerous charges.

He faced the possibility of spending the rest of his life in prison.

Now that he died, charges against other top leaders might be dropped which would mean that millions of dollars stolen from the company would never be returned.

Our names are important because they represent us -- our reputation.

Your name is your reputation - your reputation is your name.

We want to safe guard our names and our reputations.

We are not alone in that.

Even God wants his name, his reputation protected.

We see that in this petition of the Lord's Prayer.  
May your holy name be honored.

I love this translation by Rev. Art Simon because it helps to clarify the meaning of this petition.

May Your holy name be honored.

What we are really saying is - may I do my fair share in keeping your name holy!

We have become relax in our attitude towards God's name.

How often do you hear the expression, Oh my God!

Usually sign of great joy!

Oh my God, I'm the 5<sup>th</sup> caller to the radio station and I just won!

Are you really thanking God for what has happened?

We Christians could learn a lesson from our Jewish brothers/sisters regarding God's name and reputation.

In Jewish thought, a name conveys the nature and essence of the thing named.

It represents the history and reputation of the being named.

Jews customarily do not pronounce any of God's many Names except in prayer or study.

Even today, modern Jews will not casually write God's name.

Pious Jews will write G-D for God. They will exclude the vowel so the name of God, Yahweh, cannot be pronounced.

That's why in our bulletin today I followed the ancient Jewish practice of removing the vowels from any mention of God's name.

Some Jews would consider throwing away bulletin with God's name in it as a sign of disrespect.

Is that going too far?

I don't know.

But it does go to the very heart of this petition.

May Your Holy Name be honored.

How do we do that?

How do we honor or keep God's Holy Name?

2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment tells us that we should not misuse *God's* name carelessly or foolishly.

Unfortunately *God's* name is so widely violated today that we Christians have become numb to its abuse.

After all, a name really doesn't mean all that much to us.

But it should.

*God's* name represents his reputation.

As Rev. Simon said in his book,

**Using *God's* name when you don't mean anything by it cheapens respect for the one who has loved us above all others - a poor way to treat any friend, much less our beloved Abba/Father.**

Carelessly misusing *God's* name is an insult to the work our Father did through his son.

It's trashing the work of Jesus on the cross.

Most of us are aware of that.

We Christians struggle trying to block our ears to what we hear and trying to use *God's* name in a proper and respectful way.

There's another way we dishonor *God's* name.

That is by our silence - silence or failure to live and act as the Father's sons and daughters.

I don't have to remind you of all the evil that has been done in the name of Christianity - while Christians stand silently.

For instance the silence of Christians in Germany during Hitler persecution of the Jews.

But how about the silence today in the church - the silence towards the murder, rape, enslavement of Christians today in Sudan at the hands of the Sudanese Moslem government.

Past 42 years of civil war in Sudan, over 3 million Sudanese Christians have been murdered.

Did you know that?

You should have!

The Church should have been making that aware.

Right now 1 million Sudanese Christians are in refugee camps in neighboring countries as well as being in concentration camps in Sudan.

Now that you know about that - what will you do?

Failing to act dishonors God's holy name.

It's reported that close to 50,000 Christians a year die as martyrs.

It should be hard to pray May Your Holy Name be honored when we are silent towards the mistreatment of brothers and sisters in Christ?

If you want to learn more - go online and look up the organization the Persecuted Church.

We have all failed to honor God's name.

While that hurts God - he still loves us.

He is still ready to stand besides us and is honored to call us his sons/daughters.

God can be generous towards us because Jesus has forgiven us for misusing his name.

He died for our failure to respect *God's* reputation by misusing *God's* name.

*God* still loves us because of the work of Jesus even when we are silent when our brothers and sisters suffer for their faith and love of *God*.

Our Father in heaven promises to help us if we are serious about working to keep his name holy.

That is why he will meet you in just a few minutes in this meal of bread and wine.

In this meal, He will open your eyes to the work he did for you on the cross.

In the bread and wine he will join you again to his death and resurrection.

Something very special happens when you pray,

**Hallowed be thy name  
May Your holy name be honored**

When you pray this, you are really taking a personal inventory.

These words ask you to answer the question of how are you honoring or dishonoring *God's* holy name and reputation?

What are you

- Saying or not saying,
- Doing or failing to do for *God's* reputation?

Above all it asks you how can you better reflect the hope you have of life with your Father in heaven.

In his book, Pastor Simon has several little prayers in each chapter.

Close with one of the prayers he wrote for this petition.

Oh, Father, may our love for you

Become so deep and true,  
That we will honor your holy name  
In all we think and say,  
In all we desire and do. Amen.