



The Lord's Prayer

2: Hallowed be your name

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Last time we thought about how the Lord's Prayer begins with intimacy. But then we are reminded of the special nature of God – otherness, purity, holiness. God's very name, his very essence is Holy (Hallowed). At the very heart of creation, always on our side, always reaching out to us is the perfect holiness of love.

An opening conversation: Sharing in twos:

- can you think of places you have been which you would describe as **Hallowed or Holy Places?**
- What was it about them that made you feel this?
- What do you think makes a place holy?
- What effect did these places have on you?

It would then be good if some of your thoughts and ideas could be briefly shared with the whole group.

Can you now discuss together:

- What you think it means to be **Holy**?
- What is **holiness**?
- If God's very name, his very essence, is **holy** (hallowed), what do you think this is saying about God?
- Have you ever known anybody, or read about anybody, who you would describe as **holy**?

Please read the following passage from the book of Isaiah. The passage recounts the moment Isaiah is called to be a prophet. After someone has read the passage please reflect on it together. The questions following the reading are to help us explore the passage.

Isaiah 6.1-10

¹In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ²Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³And one called to another and said:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’

⁴The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. ⁵And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’

⁶ Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: ‘Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.’ ⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’ ⁹And he said, ‘Go and say to this people:

“Keep listening, but do not comprehend;
keep looking, but do not understand.”

¹⁰ Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears,
and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds,
and turn and be healed.’

- What are your overall impressions of this passage? What strikes you? What excites you? Is there anything that puzzles or troubles you?
- In verse 5 what do you make of Isaiah’s reaction *to having seen the King, the LORD of hosts*?
- In verses 6 and 7 what thoughts do you have about the way Isaiah experiences forgiveness?

- As Isaiah is called to become a prophet and to be sent to his people what effect do you think this vision will have on the way he now perceives the world and his society?
- What thoughts do you have about the somewhat puzzling language and ideas in verses 9 – end?

Thinking about our worship: Isaiah's vision probably took place as part of an act of worship. How do you think our worship of God in the Abbey, or elsewhere, effects the way you think about and act in the world and in your communities? Does it have any effect? Does it make a difference?

A little breather after some pretty big stuff!: Of all the buildings or places you have visited in your life can you think of the one which has been your favourite or most impressive? *(Please don't overthink this – no one is holding you to this!)*

Our second bible study comes from the first epistle of Peter chapter 2 verses 4 – 10. Please ask someone to read the passage. This may be an unfamiliar passage and can be a little tricky to grasp on first reading and so after the passage is a short guide to help you. There are then some questions to guide your discussion.

1 Peter 2.4-10

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture:

'See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.'

To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner', and 'A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.'

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Some thoughts about this passage to help you as you explore it:

The Jewish people looked to the Temple in Jerusalem as the place where the holiness of God could specially be found on earth (the heart of the temple was known as the Holy of Holies and was possibly where Isaiah was when he had his vision). But in John 2.19 Jesus said, 'Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Jesus himself is the new Temple – the place where the fulness of God is truly to be found in the world. And this will be most evident when, after three days, he is raised from the dead. Picking up on this idea Peter, in this passage, describes Jesus as the Cornerstone of this new Temple and that his worshippers are to be like living stones in the Temple, built around him. In other words, Christians, are called to be holy people, who reflect the holiness of God in the world. If people want to understand what a holy God is like, and what he is calling the world to be like, they need to look no further than the Church! The church is called to reveal God's holiness, glory and love to the world – as a royal priesthood and a holy nation!

Some questions for discussion:

- What do you think of Peter's understanding of the role of the Church?
- What are the ways we have lived up to his vision and what are the ways we have failed?

In a few moments of quiet could we each think about: what one thing might we seek to change or do in our own lives which might help to better witness to the holiness of God?

Closing Prayers