

One of the most difficult bits about my role is remembering people's names. Sometimes I'm on a roll and I can keep it going and other times – my mind hits a complete and utter fog. People forgive you if you've only met once or twice but after a while it looks like you just don't care. It's the worst. The WORST when you actually know someone quite well. I've been praying for people and then boom. Forget someone's name in the worst moment. When I do a wedding or a funeral I always write the name of the people at the top of each page....

My customary question today – is have you ever been wrong named and just gone with it? What happened? Off you go.

When my nan died, they tried to register her death. Only to be told. She never existed. Oooooo! Nope it was just that she'd lied and picked another name – Jean – which even her husband and 12 – yes 12 children didn't know about. What's in a name? Why this one or that.

We're in our series on prayer and focusing on the Lord's Prayer. Last week, we explored how the term 'Father' fundamentally depicts a relationship; here we have this interesting phrase 'hallowed be your name' or holy is your name. We're going to focus mostly on the hallowed bit.

Hallowed is not a normal word. We use it when we're talking about hallowed ground – so sports fans say this 'hallowed turf' or indeed it's the root of Halloween and it's basically is another way of saying 'holy'. For both examples this makes sense. I went to a gig at Southampton's ground and a guy in a football shirt, drew out a small trowel, peeled back the sheeting and dug a section of grass out and popped it into his shirt. Firstly, let's just acknowledge this is quite weird, but second, for a fan, you're not normally allowed on the turf. It's only for your heroes, the footballers to step onto that special space. It's just grass but by the presence of Matt Le Tissier

(who is the only Southampton player I can remember) this ordinary grass becomes special grass. Hear that – the presence of one who is set apart makes ordinary things become special things. Holy Presence makes things Holy.

God is holy. This is one of the great bible truths. That when we say God, we are not saying MAN in a big voice. Nope. God is not just another thing like everything else is a thing. God is God. In church we need to be careful that the intimate language we use about God – knowing God as Father, as friend as a lover of our souls – doesn't tip over into a casual bloke at the pub mateyness – oi oi, how's it going guvnor! Get on! This is a temptation we fall into because we want to make God more approachable, less scary...there's a kids songs God's love is big, *God's love is great*. God's love is fab and He's my mate. Hmmm. St Georges – it's not our job to make God more approachable or to sell God. If you remember Narnia, Susan asks when approaching Aslan – the great image of Jesus in the stories, is he safe? Who said anything about safe? Course he isn't safe but he's good. He's the King'.

The Fatherly one, who loved you before all time and knows every hair upon your head is also the Holy one. Our Father hallowed be your name we pray – and it's only in affirming both of these aspects we reflect God as he is – we kind of full name him.

At different points in church and in different places we emphasise different aspects. Some churches you don't barely breathe out of time and in some people turn up to church in pyjamas like they're watching Netflix. In Jesus we see immanence and transcendence, intimacy and fear perfectly held together. This is what leads us to worship – who God is – not anything he's done but who he is – that's what the whole 'is your name' line means – In two lines, Jesus says, Father in heaven, hallowed be your name' Telling us who God is – and also our response to worship. Last week, I said the basic part of prayer is a relationship with God – knowing God as Father. To know God, is to worship him. To know God is to worship him.

Hallowed be your name is an expression of worship, I worship you. When we see that great image of worship in heavenly realities, the strange creatures of heaven are depicted saying this very thing – holy is the Lord – hallowed be your name.

We've got to remember that we're looking at how Jesus told us to pray. How do we pray? Father – relationship – hallowed be your name – is a recognition of who God is – which is a form of worship. Prayer and worship belong together - when all through the church they're split up. If I put a night of prayer on, it's not going to attract as many people as a night of worship. Why? Because people can find prayer difficult or dull whilst worship is seen as exciting. But this is bonkers. Splitting up prayer and worship is like trying to take the sole from your shoe and wondering why your feet hurt when you go for a walk. A lot of us find prayer difficult, but I wonder whether we're doing it wrong....Dear Lord, thanks for today, em, about Aunt Doris she's still poorly, oh and Ukraine is bad and erm so is my ankle and I could really do with a new sofa and er, yeah, amen. I

'm teasing and God wants us to bring our needs and desires but it's easy to get it out of balance with our relationship with him. If you have a relationship with someone where the primary thing you do is give them things to do, they are your servant, not your master, not your Father and the connection is functional rather than relational. The prayer of Jesus, the one where he tells us how to pray – is primarily God-focused prayer.

So when people say, does prayer work? It's like asking does friendship work? Does marriage work? Ask a bad question, you'll get a poor answer. How do we pray, asks Jesus.

Father, Hallowed be your name....

Imagine a relationship with God. Knowing him and being known. This is the invitation into that holy place, made holy by the Father, to know and be known.