



March 24, 2017
The Lord's Prayer, The First Petition
"Hallowed by your name..."

[Read Galatians 3:26-28](#)

"It is true that God's name is holy in itself, but we ask in this prayer that it may also become holy in and among us." (Martin Luther, *Small Catechism*)

As "March Madness" rolls along, we see the fans of dozens of college teams proudly wearing the names and colors of their favorite schools. We have no trouble identifying their allegiance and their preference for who will win out at the "Big Dance."

Once in a while a few of those fans may act badly as they follow their teams to victory or defeat. Then the news media are filled with images and stories connecting those fans with the schools they represent. When they behave badly, they bring embarrassment and dishonor on the schools that they love so well.

We who follow Jesus bear God's name on our bodies and in our behaviors. Keep that in mind as we think about this petition in the Lord's Prayer. How do we let God's name be "holy in and among us"? Luther writes a second paragraph for each of the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer. In those second paragraphs he asks, "How does this come about?"

We make God's name holy in and among us, Luther writes, "whenever the word of God is taught clearly and purely and we, as God's children, also live holy lives according to it." We are like those fans wearing the jerseys of our favorite teams. God's name stands for something—for doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with our God, as the Old Testament prophet says. When we are formed by God's Word and live as examples of that Word, then God's name is made holy among us.

"However," Luther continues in the *Small Catechism*, "whoever teaches and lives otherwise than the word of God teaches, dishonors the name of God among us." We live in a time when even small actions can "go viral" on social media and become big news in a hurry. We also live in a time when some of our Christian sisters and brothers are acting in ways that do not give evidence of God's love and mercy in and for the world.

Acts of hatred, exclusion, bigotry, violence, arrogance and good old-fashioned bullying—these are things now attributed to some who bear the name of "Christian." These acts do not make God's name holy in and among us. If we will not allow the Holy Spirit to use us to bear the name of "Christian" with grace and mercy, the Spirit will find someone else who can do it.

So we pray for the good and wise judgment to wear God's name well.

Let's pray. Dear God, send your Holy Spirit into my heart today to create the gift of faith. Help us to live holy lives according to your word. Preserve us from actions that would dishonor your name among us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Do something: Share this devotion with someone today either in print or online.

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