

Introduction: We are examining what Jesus taught His disciples about how people should pray. To whom do we direct our prayers? What should we ask to be done for us? What about priorities? What is the first thing we need to request? In what areas of our lives do we most need His help to have a closer relationship with Him, and with other people? *** Last week we discovered that our prayers need to be directed to God as THE Perfect Father. We do this because He IS perfect LOVE. He shows us His LOVE through His Mercy to sinners such as we are. *** This week we look at what Jesus said is to be our first petition or request. In Elizabethan English it is: Hallowed be Thy Name. What does this mean? We have a sense it has something to do with holiness. But, what should we do about this? Why pray about this? Of course God IS holy, so what does Jesus mean by making this the first and most important request? The literal translation, 'It must be made holy, The Name of Thee' is of some help to us. It tells us that someone who is not God must be making His Name holy. That would be each of us who is a disciple of Jesus. When we pray this prayer we are saying it is of the highest importance that our Perfect Father help us so that we are always living in awe of Him, and always aware of His power and presence in our lives. We must also be grateful to Him for His holiness. *** Our passage from the beginning of Luke's Gospel of Jesus teaches us this truth in Mary's song of praise and great gratitude to her Lord and Savior as she visits her cousin Elizabeth who is carrying John the Baptist. Mary starts with her own circumstance that God has conceived His Son in her by The Holy Spirit. Then she considers what God does in the whole world. Taken as a whole, Mary's song shows the effects of God's holiness in both our personal lives and our public lives.

God's holiness brings down rulers and lifts the humble

We will also consider how Mary's song was patterned after the song Hannah was inspired to pray after Yahweh allowed her to miraculously give birth to Samuel, the last man to be a prophet, priest and ruler before Jesus was born of Mary.

I. Mary rejoices that her Savior saw her in her low estate and The Holy One did great things to her and has mercy on all fearing Him. (Luke 1:46-50)

A. Mary said: My soul is making great The Lord, my spirit has rejoiced in God, my Savior. (Verses 46-48a)

1. And Mary said ... (Verse 46a)

Name: In Hebrew, Mary is Miriam, the same name as Moses' sister (Exodus 15:20) who died just as the people of Israel were east of Jordan (Numbers 20:1). It means 'rebellion'.

2. 'My soul is making great The Lord ... (Verse 46b)

Magnify: The word could also be translated extol or magnify. In Latin the word is *magnificare*, meaning to highly esteem, worship. Mary's song has traditionally been called the Magnificat.

3. ... and my spirit has rejoiced in God, The Savior of me ... (Verse 47)

Joy in salvation: Even before she was called to be the human mother of God's Son, Mary knew the joy of God being her savior.

4. ... that He has looked upon the low estate of His woman servant. (Verse 48a)

Low estate: The word Mary uses to describe herself can also mean humble or humiliated. By human standards there was no reason Mary would be chosen to give birth to God's Messiah. But God gives grace to the humble (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

Mary would have known this Proverb, 'If the scorers He doth scorn, Yet to the humble He doth give grace' (3:34, YLT).

B. All generations will call me blessed because The Strong One has done great things and to me: His Name IS Holy. (Verses 48b-50)

1. Behold! Because, from now, all generations will call me blessed. (Verse 48b)

Blessed: The verb Mary uses is from the noun Jesus used in the Beatitudes, 'Blessed are ...'.

2. That The Strong (One) has done great (things) to me. (Verse 49a)

Mighty: Strong also means mighty and powerful, able to bear calamities with courage.

Personal: Mary is very personal here. She is aware that the son she will bear will impact all people of all times; but at this time, she is processing what The Almighty God has done in her.

3. And holy (is) His Name. (Verse 49b)

Holy: Mary is already proclaiming what Jesus would later teach all His followers to pray. Holiness expresses the perfection of God and how He is set apart from His creation in His purity of character. His holiness causes awe, even in prophets who sense uncleanness in His holy presence and need His cleansing (Isaiah 6:1-7). The Holy One of Israel saves idolaters so they will be found righteous in Him (Isaiah 45:11-25). John was able to hear that the holiness of Almighty God entitles Him to receive eternal blessing, honor, glory and might (Revelation 4:8; 5:13).

The Mighty One IS Holy

4. And His mercy (is) to generations and generations to those fearing Him. (Verse 50)

Mercy: Mercy is compassion that moves to action. And, when God sent His Son to earth as a human in order that humanity might be reconciled to Him, it was the greatest act of mercy ever!

Always: This is what is meant by the poetic phrase to generations and generations of those fearing Him. This refers to the fear Isaiah experienced when he saw the three times holy God exalted in the Temple. It is a fear that leads to faith in the awesomely holy God.

II. Mary says her Savior God has done mightily in scattering rulers with arrogant hearts and exalting the humble.

(Luke 1:51-53; 1 Samuel 2:1-8)

A. Mary describes The Lord's strength to take rulers off thrones and exalt the humble. (Luke 1:51-52)

1. He has done mighty deeds with His arm; and, He has scattered those arrogant in the imagination of their hearts. (Verse 51)

Might: God does mighty deeds in His might, on which Mary will elaborate in the rest of her song.

Justice: It is justice to scatter proud and arrogant people who do harm to humble and lowly people.

2. He has taken down rulers from their thrones and He has exalted those of low rank. (*Verse 52*)

Civic reversal: In civil government, the holy Mighty God who saves His people, has already taken down bad rulers and exalted humble and lowly people. The first time this happened in Israel was when Yahweh told Samuel that Saul would no longer be king over His people due to his disobedience and pride, and that a humble shepherd named David, the eighth son of Jesse, would be king in his place.

God's holiness brings down rulers and lifts the humble.

- B. Finally, in His Holy Strength, God fills the hungry and sends the rich away empty. (*Luke 1:53*)

1. He has filled to satisfaction with good things those who are being hungry (*Verse 53a*)
2. ... and those who are being rich He has sent off empty'. (*Verse 53b*)

Personal reversal: Within nations, The Holy God deals with individuals according to both His justice and mercy. He has compassion on those who are humble and needy; but, He executes justice against those who are continually proud and oppressive in their lust for worldly wealth.

God's holiness brings down rulers and lifts the humble

- C. Hannah's praise prayer when she gave her miracle son Samuel to Yahweh. (*1 Samuel 2:1-8a, LXX*)

1. And Hannah said ... (*Verse 1a*)

Grace: Hannah means grace.

2. 'My heart has been strengthened in The Lord, my horn has been lifted up in my God, my tongue has been enlarged over my enemies. (*Verses 1b-d*)

Heart: Horn is a symbol for strength. All three verbs are passive meaning God has strengthened Hannah's heart and lifted her up to speak words of praise to Him for overcoming her enemies, including her rival wife (1 Samuel 1:7).

3. I have rejoiced in Thy Salvation ... (*Verse 1e*)

Joy of salvation: Here Hannah addresses her God and expresses joy in His salvation of her by allowing her to bear a son. Mary expressed the same joy (Luke 1:47).

4. ... because there is none holy as our God and there is none righteous as our God, there is none holy except Thee. (*Verse 2*)

Holy-holy: First Hannah declares that only God is holy. Then she addresses Him as the only holy one. Mary declared God's holiness once, but did not directly address Him as holy (Luke 1:49).

5. Y'all must not be boasting and y'all must not be speaking high (things) because God of knowledge is Lord (Yahweh); and God is making ready His pursuits: the bow of the strong one was weak and those being weak have been made ready (in) strength. (*Verses 3-4*)

No pride: No one should ever be boasting in pride before The God of Israel because He knows everything about everyone.

Civic reversal: Mary picked up on the civic reversal described by Hannah when God makes the strong men with weapons to be weak, while making those who are weak to be strong when they need strength (Luke 1:51).

6. The ones full of bread have been brought low and those hungering have ceased (to hunger) in the land. (*Verses 5a-b*)

Personal reversal: Mary also sang of this (Luke 1:52).

7. Lord (Yahweh) is making poor and making rich, He is making humble and exalting; He is lifting up the poor from the earth and raising up the beggar from the ash heap'. (*Verses 7-8a*)

Yahweh is in control: It is God who decides who to humble and who to exalt. In His holiness He will overrule human systems run by the powerful elite at the expense of ordinary people.

God's holiness brings down rulers and lifts the humble

Poor beggars: Hannah concludes with the wonderfully gracious truth that The Holy God is lifting up the poor and raising the beggar from ashes!

Conclusion: Jesus taught that the first request children of Father God must ask of Him is that they will always be aware of His holy power and presence in their lives. They must recognize that He will scatter proud and arrogant rulers but lift up and provide for all who are aware of their low position before Him and His holiness.

God's holiness brings down rulers and lifts the humble