

Sermon for the Second Wednesday of Lent

'God said to Moses: "I am that I am."'

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During this season of Lent, we have devoted ourselves to all once again become catechumens, students of the central Words of our Lord. And so we have taken it upon ourselves to know the Lord's Prayer rightly, and to make it our own.

Last Wednesday we learned what it was to pray that God is Our Father; that He is not merely 'God', distant and unconcerned, but being itself, a being of love, who in love begot a Son, our Lord Christ, and through Christ's passion, in love begot countless children through baptism, that all might pray with and in Jesus, our redeemer and our brother, *'Our Father.'*

Yet *'Father'* is not a name, it is a relation. It is a word that tells you how a given person relates to some other person, that is, how a man relates to his child. To be a father is to have a child. To pray *'Our Father'* is first and foremost a confession that God, before all else, is a God who through the unending benevolence of His sacred heart begets children in *his image and likeness*.

But Moses presents us with a necessary question. God revealed Himself to Moses. In holy fire did the angel of the Lord speak, upon holy ground, ground which no created thing could touch, but the flesh of the image of God alone, for alone in all of creation is man's body holy.

The immortal God reveals Himself, from a bush never consumed, though burning, unlike the trees of life and of knowledge in Eden, which have been lost to the inferno of our disobedience, of this fallen world.

'I am the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' *'I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry.'* *'I have come down to deliver them.'*

God shows Himself as who He is in terms of His relation to His people. That He is their God, and the God of their fathers. That He is a God that hears the cry of their shackled desperation in a heathen land. That He is a God who shall come down from the heavens, come down to deliver them, *'and judge all the gods of Egypt.'*

But Moses presents us with a necessary question. We hear what God has done. We see what God will do. We know how God relates to His people. But who is God? What is His name?

'Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?'"

'God said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, "I am that I am.'" 'This is my name forever.'

Now Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us to pray *'Hallowed be thy name.'*

Indeed, let this name that is the Lord's *name forever* be *hallowed*. But what is it to hallow a name?

It is to recognize that the name of the Lord, and indeed the Lord Himself who bears the name is holy, that He is infinite and august, powerful and impenetrable. *'For who is like the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high? Who looks far down to behold the heavens and the earth? There is none like unto Him. Therefore the psalmist commands 'Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord.'* For *'your father in heaven is holy.'*

There is none like unto Him. He is utterly holy. He is utterly single. But realize now, that to hallow God's name, to recognize its separation from all things, is not merely to confess how mighty and unconquerable our Lord is, but to recognize how alone our Lord is. How homeless, how abandoned is His name. How forsaken and deserted His house.

Yet it must be so. It must be that Our Lord be holy, alone, homeless, forsaken, for He would not have that anyone share in the work He must accomplish, the kingdom He must build; for that kingdom shall be erected on a foundation of suffering, and in sacred blood shall its fields be watered, and with thrashed flesh

its houses and edifices be built. This kingdom He must build alone.

So the Christ teaches us to pray *'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.'* For no man shall forge this kingdom, and no mortal shall accomplish His will. His name is hallowed, holy, alone, and alone shall it raise from defiled dust *'a kingdom not of this world.'*

Do you not see how the Father's will is done in Christ? How His kingdom is consecrated in our crucified Lord? And alone shall Jesus do this, with the aid of no companion, for *'birds have their nests, and foxes their lairs, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.'* For He is holy, homeless, and abandoned; abandoned to all but the will of the Father.

Constantly the Church prays these petitions which we have just meditated upon. Soon, in just a few weeks, you shall see this prayer answered. For the Christ will be betrayed by His brethren, spat on by His people, judged by His earthly rulers; lashed, and thrown into the tribunals of heathen tyrants.

There, Pontius Pilate will ask Him, *'Are you the king of the Jews?'* And Jesus Answered *'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over.'* Then Pilate said to him, *"So you are a king?"* And Jesus answered, *"You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born, and for this purpose I have come into the world."*

'That he might give his life as a ransom for many.'

He, the God of all creation shall hang on a cross. Holy blood shall drip from the ten thousand wounds with which He was injured. And, save for a late born thief, He shall perish alone, there to descend into hell, overthrow the prince of this world, and redeem His people from bondage, from slavery in this strange land.

And why? *'Because he has seen the affliction of his people, and has heard their cry. He has known their sufferings; for the cry of his people has come to him.'*

The cry of His people for thousands of years, *'thy kingdom come, thy will be done.'*

'Who is like unto the Lord?'

'Hallowed by thy name.'

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Preached by Pastor Fields

*Sermon texts: Exodus
3:1-14; John 18:33-37*