

## “Following the Call” by Charles E. Moore

## II. Kingdom Devotion – God’s Name Ch. 31

Last week we discussed **Matthew 6:9** – “Our Father in heaven...” The use of the word “Father” in reference to God was extremely controversial in the day of Jesus. Why do you think this is so? How is the word father used in context to the world? By calling God our Father, what is Jesus telling us how we are to perceive God? And how are we to perceive our relationship with each other?

**Matthew 6:9** – “Hallowed be your name...”

**William H. Willimon** (1946 - ) is a United Methodist bishop and professor and **Stanley Hauerwas** (1940 - ) is an American theologian,



ethicist, and public intellectual. An ethicist is a specialist who studies, analyzes, and advises on moral principles, helping individuals and organizations navigate complex dilemmas, establish codes of conduct, and ensure fairness and integrity. They work across sectors like healthcare, technology, and business, focusing on issues such as AI, public health, and corporate responsibility. Why is there a need for this profession in our world?

“Christians, like Jews, know no strong distinction between our worship and our ethics. We are a people whose moral lives are shaped liturgically. Our ethics is a byproduct of our worship.” What are they saying here?

“We have been chosen, ordained, adopted as “God’s own people” in order that we might proclaim God’s mighty acts in words and deed.”

Have you ever thought of yourself as being ordained? What responsibility comes with this ordination?

**1 Peter 2:11-12** – Peter said: “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” What does this mean to you?

As aliens and strangers on earth, whose citizenship is in heaven, they are to be separated from the corruption of the world, not yielding to its destructive sinful desires. As an alien of this world and a citizen of heaven, how does that effect how we live?

“Our culture has a way of driving out of the discussion those who do not bow at the culture’s altars.”

Have you ever been alienated from something due to your lack of enthusiasm for a worldly endeavor or situation? What was it like?

“The German soldiers who went into battle in World War II bearing Gott Nit Uns (“God with Us”) on their helmets are a greater blasphemy to the holy name of God.” Why is this considered taking the name of God in vain? How does this apply to our lives?

“Those who are being formed by praying, “Our Father who art in heaven, holy be your name” are not permitted to abuse the holiness of God by attempting to put a leash on God, then dragging God into our crusades and cruelties.”

What is **Willimon** and **Hauerwas** saying here?

If they believe we should not bring God into our pursuits and challenges, then when are we to bring Him in?

They continue: “The holy God will not be jerked around in this way. So when a president prays a public prayer, calling upon God to bless our troops going into war, that is blasphemy. God’s name is not to be used as a rubber stamp for our causes.”

Are **Willimon** and **Hauerwas** saying we should not pray to God for our needs?

By not praying to God, we put Him on a leash as we consider His power and concern lacking in our daily lives whether in war or not.

Have you ever not prayed to our Father in heaven because you felt that your needs or desires were meaningless to God?

They continue: “Christians don’t steal, don’t cheat in their marriages, don’t bless war, but not in order to get on the good side of God, since in Christ, we have been made right with God. We are to live in the light of our knowledge of God’s name, God’s holy name.....We live as we pray.” What are they saying our motive for living a righteous life is? Do you live for that?



**Alfred Delp** (1907 - 1945) was a German Jesuit priest executed under Hitler. A member of the inner Kreisau Circle resistance group, he is considered a significant figure in Catholic resistance to Nazism.

**Delp** wrote from a Nazi prison: “This phrase, hallowed be thy name, teaches us to pray for the worthy ideal for the unassailable, holy, venerated standard. Unless they have something of supreme value, something at the center of their being which they can venerate (to respect and treat as holy), human beings gradually deteriorate.” What is **Delp** saying here about human nature?

“We not only ought to believe in the truth at the center of our being, in the purpose of our existence, but we

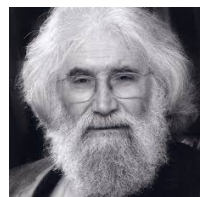
should also bear testimony to this belief by the proper fulfillment of our life’s purpose.”

How are we to express our belief in our lives? How does having a Holy God in our life help this?

**Acts 4:12** – Luke wrote: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

“Let us resume the practice of giving names to life and to things. I have been a mere number long enough to know what it means to be nameless and what effect it has on life.”

What is **Delp** saying here about his life as a number under Nazis rule and how we are to live?



**Leonardo Boff** (1938 - ) is a Brazilian Catholic priest and liberation theologian, philosopher writer, and former Catholic priest known for his active support for Latin American liberation theology. He is professor emeritus of ethics, philosophy of religion, and ecology at the Rio de Janeiro State University.

“We do not sanctify the name of God when we regard him as a “stopgap” for human weaknesses;...only when we need help.” “We do not sanctify God when our religious language speaks of him as though he were an entity of this sublunary (beneath the moon) world...his will completely understood.” “We are not sanctifying the name of God when we erect church buildings, when we elaborate mystical treatises, or when we guarantee his

official presence in society by means of religious symbols. His holy name is sanctified only to the extent that these expressions are related to a pure heart, a thirst for justice, and a reaching out for perfection.”

What is Boff saying here about sanctifying God’s name? Can you go and sanctify (set as holy) God’s name through your life?