

Evening Service 17th May 2020

Hallowed be thy name - can easily become just 4 words that we whizz through on our way between turning to God as Father and telling him what we want and need.

I don't know about you but the term Hallowed isn't one I use much except when saying the Lord's prayer, even if you modernise it a bit and opt for Holy it's still not something we talk about every day. But it's pretty special when you encounter it, for Moses in our reading from Exodus (ch3: 1-6, and 11-15) he encountered not only a bush that was burning without being consumed, but the voice of God himself, a God who was prepared to give Moses his name - we'll come to the name in a minute!

I haven't heard any reports of burning bushes that talk to people, but I have known people and places that are special as I am sure most of you will have – people and places that we might go as far as describing as Holy.

Those people who always seem a bit closer to God than the rest of us, who have a calm compassion for everything and everyone.

Those places where you sense years of love and prayer - being set aside for something that really matters, they don't have to be churches, they could be a room or a garden or even a shed but there's something about them.

When we say we want God's name to be Hallowed that's what we are saying we want, His name to be special, Frederick Buechner says 'Only God is holy, just as only people are human. God's holiness is his Goodness. To speak of anything else as holy is to say that it has something of God's mark upon it.'

So, hallowed be thy name. Let's turn our attention to God's name.

Names are important to us, which of us doesn't turn if they hear someone call their name and which of us doesn't have many names that they answer to, and which of us who has had to name a baby or even a pet didn't spend time thinking long and hard about what that name should be?

We all have our given name but most of us prefer to respond to names that express a relationship, Mum, boyfriend, Grandad names that describe a relationship or nicknames – my children call me Bean – these are the names that warm us and express love in way that simply using our given names doesn't come close to. So use different names for God, don't get hung up on whether it should be Lord or Jehovah use names that express where your relationship with him is and don't be afraid to use different names as your relationship changes – Father might work some of the time, but Mother, friend, Lord, lover, shepherd, Prince of Peace are all options and the bible is littered with more of them. God's name can be any of the terms that we use for Him, they become hallowed when we recognise the special, holy, unique nature of who we are talking to.