

New Year's Day 2023. St Luke's Tutshill

Luke 2:15-21

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Jesus Is Named

²¹ After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Sermon. The Name of Jesus. Revd David Treharne

Some people really do have names that tally with who they are and what they do...

- A Science Channel documentary about the "biggest explosions in the universe" was narrated by John Shrapnel.
- A pivoting board that turns you upside down to decompress the spine - invented by Roger Teeter.
- Cardinal Sin is apparently head of the Catholic Church in the Philippines

Mark Avery former RSPB director of conservation.

Rebecca Morelle reported on the fate of Britain's mushrooms.

Bruno Fromage - MD of dairy company Danone UK

Dominique Dropsy – goalkeeper

Belgian footballer Mark De Man

Mrs Mould – my Biology Teacher!!

I think there is a lot in a name, not always, but there can be. A name can become really powerful when it becomes famous. Through stories, myth, legend, news a name can become as, if not more powerful than the individual... e.g. Maximus in the film Gladiator.

"You have a great name. He must kill your name before he kills you." Juba in Gladiator.

In the Bible we see that names are really important. They label a person. They identify them. They say something about their character.

God Saves - Discipleship

To say, "Jesus," is to say, "God saves." When we say, "Help me, Jesus," we can be thinking, "Help me, God-who-saves." The name speaks a truth about God's character... and naming that truth can be powerful. Having the name of Jesus on our lips is a good thing as we begin a New Year... a Year of Discipleship... disciples of Jesus... disciples of the God who saves! We are followers of God who saves... God who is with us... Emmanuel!

Our discipleship, our interaction with the Lord Jesus day to day should be marked by our relating to him as our Saviour, God-with-us-to-save-us not just once in the past on Calvary, but still now helping us live in accordance with that reality in every moment every day.

Early Days

Since the earliest days of Christianity Christians have attached theological significance to the name of Jesus. Feasts for the Holy Name of Jesus exist throughout Christianity.

The significance of the name of Jesus in the New Testament is underscored by the Gospel accounts of his birth. Matthew's gospel in particular pays more attention to the name of the child and its theological implications than the actual birth event itself.

Reverence for the name of Jesus is emphasised by Saint Paul in Philippians 2:10 where he states: "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth". The use of the name of Jesus in petitions is stressed in John 16:23 when Jesus states: "If you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it you."

Many Christian prayers conclude with the words: "Through Our Lord Jesus Christ". And people pray "In your name." Hymns and songs about his name are in abundance...

How sweet the name. There is power in the name. At the name of Jesus. Jesus name above all names

In the Old Testament times it was only the high priest, once a year, in the holy of holies, who would even mention God's name; for that reason, we should never treat the name of Jesus like just another name, or use it in vain, or frustration, or anger.

Today there is widespread belief among Christians that the name Jesus has intrinsic divine power, and that where the name of Jesus is spoken or displayed the power of the person of Jesus can be called upon. I buy into that!

At the same time, however, God gave us his name because he wanted us to use it and enter into closeness with him. He wants us to use His name in warm familiarity, in some sense the way Mary may have used the name with tenderness as Jesus was growing up in the home in Nazareth, the way Joseph with fatherly affection would have used it when he trained him in the art of carpentry. The Holy Name of Jesus is given to us not fundamentally to make us intimidated but to make us intimate in relationship/union with God.

In the coming of Jesus God has a face and God has a name... which is personal.

Pope Benedict XVI wrote, ***"To rejoice in the splendour of His Face means penetrating the mystery of His Name made known to us in Jesus,*** understanding something of His Interior life and of His will, so that we can live according to His plan for humanity.

What the Saints say about the Name of Jesus

St. Bernard of Clairvaux said, *"The Name of Jesus is Light, and Food, and Medicine. It is Light, when it is preached to us; it is Food, when we think upon it; it is the Medicine that soothes our pains when we invoke it."*

St. Anthony of Padua compared the use of Jesus' name to oil – really powerful. Just as *"oil has five properties — it floats on the surface of any liquid, it softens hard things, it sweetens bitter things, it is a source of light and provides nourishment for the body — [so] the name Jesus has similar properties: it excels every other name, it softens the hardest of hearts, it sweetens the most bitter experiences, it enlightens our hearts and nourishes our souls."*

St. Bernardine of Siena (1380-1444), perhaps the greatest preacher of the Holy Name in history, whose work led to the establishment of the Feast of the Holy Name, who helped to compose a Litany of the Holy Name, said in prayer: *"O glorious name, gracious name, name of love and of power! Through you sins are forgiven, through you enemies are vanquished, through you the sick are freed from their illness, through*

you those suffering in trials are made strong and cheerful. You bring honour to those who believe, you teach those who preach, you give strength to the toiler, you sustain the weary.”

So, brothers and sisters in Christ let us:

1. **Believe in Jesus’ name.** 1 John 3:23 “His commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ.” The salvation he brings and what he came to do.
2. **Treat the name with the intimacy and reverence it deserves.** “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. One pious tradition, found in Catholic circles, is to bow our head when Jesus’ name is said.
3. **Invoke Jesus’ name in our prayer.** Calling on him when you pray... “in Jesus’ name.” “If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it” (Jn 14:13-14; Jn 15:16; Jn 16:26), but also said, “Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive (Jn 16:23-24).
“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Romans 10:13
4. **Live in communion with the Holy Name of Jesus.** Couple yourself with the name. Bind ourselves to the name. St. Paul tells us, “Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col 3:17). Be people of HIS names. People should be able to recognise us as acting in the name of the Lord. Be associated with the name... Emmanuel God with us. Jesus, God’s saves. Christ... anointed one.
5. **Proclaim the name of Jesus.** Tell others of the name! The apostles spoke “boldly in the name of Jesus” (Acts 9:15, 27)

For the artist he is “altogether lovely” (Song of Solomon 5:16)

Architect – chief cornerstone – 1 Peter 2:6

Astronomer – he is the son of righteousness – (Malachi 4:2)

Baker – He is the living bread – John 6:51

Banker – he is the unsearchable riches – Eph 3:8

Builder – He is the sure foundation (1 Cor 3:11)

Carpenter – he is the door (John 10:9)

Journalist – He is good news (Luke 2:10)

Electrician – He is the light of the world (John 8:12)

Farmer – He is the sower and lord of the harvest – Matt 13:37

Florist – he is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley – Song of Solomon 2:1

Jeweller – he is the precious stone (1 Peter 2:4)

Lawyer – lawgiver and the fulfilment of the law

Labourer – giver of rest (Matt 11:28)

Politician – he is the wonderful counsellor!

Royalty and all in authority – he is the Lord and Lords and King of Kings

He is the healer of the broken. The forgiver of sins. The mender of souls. The doctor of life

The challenge is for us to live up to His name and our name... Christians... anointed ones and followers of Jesus.