

You Shall Call His Name Jesus

“In the beginning” Adam was given the responsibility of naming every living creature. In so doing, he was like God – who had named His creation, brought into being, by the power of His Word alone.

Acting in the stead, and by the command of God – Adam was to give names to all the living creatures. “The Lord brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.”

That was “in the beginning” – not so today. We cannot trust Adam – or any of his descendants – to do the naming. Adam was deceived, and is deceiving.

When confronted with his disobedience, what did Adam do? He tries to pass the blame – to point the finger. Just as he failed to speak up – to speak the Word of the Lord to his wife, and to the serpent – so he also failed to name his disobedience as “sin.”

Rather than confessing his sin – he deceives – trying to pin the blame on none other than the Lord. “The woman whom YOU gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”

We are just like our father Adam. When confronted with our sin – we deny it – or try to justify it (excuse it away). “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

As it was in the beginning – so it is now – and will be forever --- that it is God who must do the naming. His Word is truth. He alone can be trusted.

As you are brought before the Lord today, He names you. And what is your name? The Lord declares that you are “Sinner.” “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”

“Sinner”? Can we handle such a name? We readily confess that we are sinners. I guess it’s okay, as long as it applies to everyone – as long as it remains a general term, and doesn’t get too specific. But the Lord gets very specific!

Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to the judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.” You who have been angry with your brother, He gives the name “murderer.”

Again, Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Have you looked at a woman, or a man, in such a way? Then the Lord names you “adulterer.”

“Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” The list of our sins – the list of our names – goes on. Each one specific. Each one applying to us personally. Each one deserving of death.

Thanks be to God that He does not destroy His Creation – that He does not turn His back on His rebellious children. Thanks be to God that He comes to, speaking His life-giving Word into us.

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” What is the source of this salvation? What is the name given to us, by which we must be saved?

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, saying – “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people – for all sinners – for you named murderer, adulterer, coveter, thief, liar – “for unto you is born ... a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Jesus has been born – He has been given – “for you,” for your salvation! The Lord Himself – who has come in human flesh – who alone can be trusted to properly name you – names you “holy” and “righteous” – a child of God.

This is He who was prophesied long ago in the days of Isaiah – when Israel had forsaken the Lord with her idolatry – whose stubborn rebellion would not repent. A sign is given – “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us).”

Mary’s Son is Immanuel – God with us – here on earth, here in the flesh – here in the midst of sinners, in order to save sinners. God with us – baptizing you, and putting His name on you, “Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” God with us – adopting you as His own child. God with us – naming you “Christian” (which means, one who belongs to Christ).

Immanuel, God with YOU – to recreate you – to bring you from death to life – with His death to life, never to death again, Body and Blood.

What joy this new birth brings – this new creation – this new man saved from eternal damnation and resurrected to eternal life. All because the Virgin conceives and bears a Son – a Son named Jesus – to save His people, to save you from your sin. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.