



There Is Power in the Name of Jesus



A Sermon By

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Grace Episcopal Church
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An audio version of this sermon can be found on the Grace Church website at
<http://graceepiscopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/2017-01-01-RDM.mp3>.

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The Feast of the Holy Name
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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.

Luke 2:21

An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

Matthew 1:21

My Name was given to me at birth, and it is Richard Dean Meadows, Jr. My father was named after me. His name was Richard Meadows until I was born and then he takes on the name Richard Dean Meadows, Sr. My name is mine and it is unique, unique in that it has many variations. If you are in a High-Anglo Catholic church it is Father Meadows and somewhere like Grace, Rev. Richard. If you've know me from my maternal side the name morphs into Rickey. If you've known me from my paternal side my name is Dickey. If you grew up with Rickey and played street football, it adapts to the environment and I become the nick-name Bear. I've outgrown some of that, and now my grandchildren call me Poppa. And here is what I like most, if you hear my wife Linda call my name it is more like one sweetly singing into the air like the smell of Jasmine, Rickeeeey ;-)

My name, although mine, also at times matches my character traits. If I'm good my mother would say Rickey and if I'd done something wrong, it was "Richard D. Meadows, Jr., you better come here right now."

My name at times carries some clout, I can say, "Tell them I sent you." And sometimes people say "Richard Who?" I am a father, a brother, a grandfather, a lover, a friend and I have a name. You too have a name, and it is unique to you depending on the social location and purpose for which it is used.

There are other adjectives we are called but that is another sermon for another day.

This is the Sunday we celebrate The Holy Name. The naming of the son of Mary and Joseph. He is 8 days old and every good Jew has their boy circumcised and names their child on the 8th day after birth. It is the completion of the birth cycle and the beginning of the covenant God makes with the child. Customarily the name is secret until the 8th day. Heaven had already dispatched an angel to Joseph and told him that the child that is to be born to Mary would be called Yeshua in the Hebrew. English translation Jesus. This is not only his name but his

purpose, his character is of one who would save his people from their sin. So much so that Paul comes out in Philippians 2:5-11 and says this: And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death-- even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Heaven directs Joseph to name the boy Jesus. His name is key. His name symbolizes the connection between heaven and earth. The shepherds, the wisest of men, the angels all attest to the greatness of the moment in a small wooden box in a dingy stable.

Eight days later it is the simple act of naming a Jewish baby, but is also the beginning of something greater. Your name although it morphs from Donald to Don, Margaret to Maggie, Theodore to Ted and from Peter to Pookie somebody saw the greatness in you, but they also saw something that would allow you to change the world. II Corinthians 5:17, Therefore if anyone is in Christ Jesus, they are a new creation, old things have passed away and behold all things have become new. Meaning your name can never carry the fullness of your character. Your character is that of one who will live forever. Since you are an eternal creature, created to be a kingdom of priests forever, you must learn to live in his name. In our daily office, morning prayer, A Collect for Guidance; Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

At birth Jesus' name carries the fullness of Heaven and the salvation and love that comes down at Christmas time. His purpose is given at birth yet he must grow into the part about being the savior. He is able to do this because he is found in human form, hard to explain but imagine you birthing a child... the child is fully you until the water breaks. He or she has breathed what you breathe, eaten what you eat, mothers! Your voice is what the baby hears, your songs, your caress, your kiss... Jeremiah says that God knows you in the womb and that your sacred purpose is established before the foundations of the world. Jesus the Christ is begotten not made. This Jesus Son of Man, Son of God is from everlasting to everlasting, he is the word incarnate, he is the word and the word was with God and the word is God. The Psalmist says¹:
4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, * the moon and the stars you have set in their courses, 5 What are we that you should be mindful of us? *the son of man that you should seek him out? 6 You have made him but little lower than the angels; * you adorn him with glory and honor; 7 You give him mastery over the works of your hands; * you put all things under his feet: and then he says the same power which raised Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies and this fact alone places Satan and all things under your feet. You are able to function, overcome and proclaim victory in your life in the name of Jesus. You walk in his name, you were baptized in his name, you were confirmed and have confirmed

¹ http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearABC_RCL/Christmas/HolyName_RCL.html

in his name. You were ordained in his name and now you must learn to ask/pray in his name. What so ever we ask in his name, he will do it because there is power in his name.

From Henri Nouwen's book *In the Name of Jesus*, he writes; praying in the name of Jesus is as much an act of holiness as it is an act of ministry; it serves us even as it serves others as well. Through the discipline of prayer, we remember "that our own limited actions are rooted in the unlimited power of his name." Prayer involves a humble acknowledgment of God's creator status as opposed to our creaturely status. Therefore, for Henri Nouwen, "[t]o pray is to walk in the full light of God, and to say simply, without holding back, 'I am human and you are God.'" Ultimately, it is not our agenda that matters. When you pray to the Father in Jesus name, you're talking about the father and you are talking about him, when you talk about the son you talk about him, when you talk about the Holy Spirit you talk about him. When you talk about love you talking about him. It's in his name beloved. We have to learn to pray in his name.²

Do you know the incarnate God? In our world of loneliness and despair, there is an enormous need for men and women who know the heart of God, a heart that forgives, that cares, and that reaches out and wants to heal.

His name means something. When I was in college and needed a job my God-father Arthur O. Eve, Sr., Deputy Speaker of the House, NY State Legislature, told me, go to Roswell Park Memorial Institute and tell them I sent you. I immediately was hired for a position in the lab. His name represents the power in the halls of the legislature in Albany. However Jesus name represents the power from the portals of Heaven.

Here is the kicker, Because of His name Jesus, you are the children of God through adoption, whereby you now call Him, "Abba, Abba!" translated Daddy, Daddy. You are now heirs and joint heirs with Christ. Yes he was a poor child, born in a barn, yes he was taken into Egypt to avoid the slaughter of the innocents, and yes he is the son of a carpenter and a small Jewish girl. Yes there is nothing special about this boy until his 30th birthday. So the name is like you name, it has meaning. He is the alpha and omega, he is the resurrection and the life, he is the well of water, he is the dayspring, he is my bridge over troubled water, he is water when I'm thirsty, and he is bread from heaven. He is the Lamb of God who saves from me from my sin. And finally he is Immanuel-God with us.

Let us Pray

² <http://leadwithyourlife.com/in-the-name-of-jesus/>