

The Power of a Name

Names are extremely important in the story of the Bible. When people are named, it is more than arbitrarily choosing what sounds good, or what pleases the parents; names communicate something about the person, something about God, or something about the situation. Consider some of the names that intertwine with the story of the Bible:

Isaac--God laughs

Ruth--Friend

David--Beloved

Isaiah--The salvation of the Lord

Peter--Rock

These names are more than just identifying the person, but they are reminders of a story in which they belong. When we hear the name Peter, we think more than just a person; we think about the faithfulness of God, the foundation of the church, and the steady presence of the Holy Spirit. When we read the pages of Isaiah, we remember more than just the written word of a prophet; we remember the identifying of the coming Savior and the naming of the salvation he would bring.

In the past few weeks, one name has risen to the top of every newsfeed--coronavirus or COVID-19. This name is now a universal word in all languages; it breaks across cultures and tongues; it connects people from across the globe. This name has taken center stage in lives around the world. It seems that at this moment, all that we say and do revolves around this name--COVID-19. There is significant power in this name. This name brings the power to close schools and places of worship, the power to furlough workers and close businesses, the power to empty grocery stores, and separate people. Yes, there is power in the name coronavirus.

However, there is another name--the name of Jesus. We are told that at the name of Jesus "every knee will bow" (Phil 2:9-11), and we are told that salvation can be found in no other name than the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). In this time, we have a challenge, to continue to lift the name of Jesus. Though at this moment, it may be hard to see--the name of coronavirus will pass, but the name of Jesus will last forever. The name of Jesus has provided healing and wholeness for generations. Long before anyone thought of the name coronavirus, the name of Jesus had defeated it! Yes, there is power in the name of Jesus!

Like the names of Ruth, Peter, or David, the name of Jesus reminds us about more than just a man. It reminds us of the faithfulness of God, the salvation of all mankind, the peace that passes all understanding; the name of Jesus is completeness. We know the name of Jesus, and in this name, we have life--this is the power of the Gospel.

However, there is more to this story than us merely knowing the name of God. What can be more assuring than knowing the name of God at this moment? The answer: knowing that God knows OUR NAMES as well. In Isaiah 43, God declares that he knows our names (43:1), and in John 10:14-15, Jesus declares that he, the good shepherd, knows his sheep. God knows the names of his people, and he knows exactly what we need.

God knows our name. The one who made the heavens and the earth; the one who holds the universe together; the one who unfolds the heavens like a scroll; that God knows exactly who you are and knows exactly what you need. In these moments, let's join as the Shenandoah District and lift up the name of Jesus Christ--the most powerful name in heaven and earth, and let's remember that we are always known by God.

The God who clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the sparrows will surely feed his sheep today.

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