

Hello, My Name is...

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 January 2021

Preacher: Pastor Cathy Hall Stengel

- [0 : 0 0] It's next to the home of the country. It's next to the home of the country.
It's next to the home of the country.
It's next to the home of the country.
It's next to the home of the country.
It's next to the home of the country.
- [2 : 5 9] It's next to the home of the country.
It's next to the home of the country.
If I go down to the grave, you are there.
Where can I go? If I ride the wings of the morning, you are there. Where can I go? If I dwell by the farthest oceans. You are there.
You are there. Even there. Even there, your hand will guide me and your strength will support me. I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night.
- [5 : 2 4] Darkness is not dark to you. Even the darkness is not dark to you. Even the darkness is not dark to you. The night is as bright as the day. For darkness is as light to you.
Darkness is not dark to you. For it was you who formed my inward parts. You knit me together in my mother's womb. You formed me.
You know my name. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works that I know very well. Nothing about me is hidden from you.
You formed me. You know my name. I was secretly woven together deep in the earth below. You formed me. You know my name. But with your own eyes, you saw my body being formed.
You know me. You see me. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. You know me.
- [6 : 2 5] You see me. Your thoughts are far beyond my understanding, much more than I could ever imagine. Darkness is not dark to you.
I try to count your thoughts, but they outnumber the grains of sand on the beach. I come to the end. I am still with you. I am still.
I am. I am.
I am. So we might ask the question, what is in a name? What's the importance of a name? I want to share with you just a brief little story about my being relatively brand new to a church, just like I am here.
and a couple came to me and they said, we want to put a cross and flame on the front of the church. And if you ever drive down Main Street past the Harris Hill United Methodist Church, you'll see that cross and flame.

[7 : 46] And they wanted to put the cross and flame on the front of the church because there was no indication on the front that it was even a church. And so, when we began to talk about it, they said, I said, well, why?

And they said, it's in memory of our daughter. And I said, what is your daughter's name? And they said, Nancy.

And then the tears came and I asked, tell me. And they said, well, she's been dead for a number of years, but nobody ever says her name.

We meet people, they don't even know we had a daughter named Nancy. So when we say her name, she's here.

She's remembered. Her name is so incredibly valuable, a gift to us. And so I looked at them and I said, thank you for Nancy.

[8 : 57] Let us pray. God, you know our name. You will never forget. Not our names or the names of those who have gone before us.

Remind us, in this time today, who we are and how it is that we are called. In Jesus' name.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Who am I that the highest king would welcome me?

I was lost but he brought me in Oh, his love for me Oh, his love for me To the sunset spring Oh, is free indeed I'm a child of God Yes, I am Free at last he has ransomed me His grace comes to me While I was a slave to sin Jesus died for me Yes, he died for me Who the sun sets free Oh, is free indeed I'm a child of God Yes, I am

In my Father's house There's no place for me I'm a child of God Yes, I am I am chosen, not forsaken I am who you say I am You are for me, not against me I am who you say I am I am chosen, not forsaken I am who you say I am You are for me, not against me I am who you say I am I am who you say I am Who the sun sets free Oh, is free indeed I'm a child of God

[11 : 59] Yes, I am In my Father's house There's no place for me I'm a child of God Yes, I am In my Father's house There's no place for me I'm a child of God Yes, I am Even before we were born God knew us God loved us We are chosen We are welcomed We are accepted Holy, beloved children of God I am chosen, not forsaken

I am who you say I am I am who you say I am I am who you say I am I am chosen, not forsaken I am who you say I am I am who you say I am You are for me, not against me I am who you say I am I am who you say I am I am who you say I am Amen Thank you, Jesus Please be seated So what are we celebrating this morning?

I can't hear you Gold bills How about them bills? It is a great day And it's great to see I see a whole line of some bills clothes out there Last night at the 5 o'clock service It was pretty much the standard wardrobe I used to have bills clothes I guess I have to Now that I'm back in Buffalo Maybe I need to get some But we are gathered here And it is wonderful to not only be together with you But to be with those who are gathered with us online We are a community that's not limited to the people that are here And some of you know that because you've watched us online And we are always trying to remain faithful To what it is that God has called us to be This church On this corner In this space

In this community And our community is broad And we are so grateful Week after week after week We are so grateful And more than anything We're grateful I know Scott and I are grateful For continuing to be able to meet you The name thing is going to take some time Right Scott?

But we're working on it And the more people are together The more we have a chance to get acquainted with people As people of gratitude We come with our hearts We come with our service We come with our time We come with our gifts and our offerings And there are many ways to give And they have been made known to our community And we hope you know That if you haven't seen them They're right there And we welcome you always Not only your gifts But your prayer requests Your celebrations Your blessings But more than anything else Your hearts Your hearts That's the greatest gift So let us give thanks and praise For the gift true

[16 : 53] That's the best gift To me True True True True Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[19 : 37] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. who fell this morning and is now at the hospital. So please pray for all of them. Let's enter into prayer with our creator.

Holy God, we come before you today with such praise on our lips, praise in our hearts, Lord, and we pray that as we praise you, you will give us the grace to give you the concerns in our heart that we will release them to you with full trust.

[20 : 51] Lord, we pray for those who are struggling, Lord. We pray for those who are struggling in their health that need physical healing, Lord. We pray for physical healing within believers, within nonbelievers.

We pray for physical healing, Lord, that your touch will bring healing. For you are master physician. We pray for those who are struggling with disease, that you will bind that up and cast that out in the name of Jesus.

We pray for those who are struggling with any sort of ailment, Lord. And we pray for protection from COVID and from all of the other things in this world that seek to destroy.

You are our protector. You are our health. You are our salvation. Lord, we pray for healing in every area of our life. We pray for healing in our minds, that you will strike away any anxiety, any depression, any fear, and you will bring your love and your light, your unity and your grace.

Help us and heal us, Lord. We pray for health within our families, that you will bring your forgiveness and your grace, that you will open up our eyes and our hearts to one another, within our families, within our communities, within our nation, Lord.

[22 : 12] Lord, your love, your grace, your forgiveness, your welcoming spirit. Lord, give us the grace to offer ourselves to one another in peace and reconciliation.

Lord, we pray for healing in every area of our lives, things that are broken, things that need mending, the things that we say aloud and the things that we carry and never speak of.

We pray for healing in finances. We pray for healing in jobs. We pray for opportunities to manifest, that you will give us a spirit of trust and not fear.

We thank you, Lord, for the healing that you're doing. We thank you for being with those who are struggling and bringing your presence, your hope, your peace, your comfort.

Lord, as people mourn the different areas of their lives in so many ways, loss of relationship, loss from people within their lives, loss of opportunities, loss in so many ways, we pray for your healing, your continued support, your continued comfort, your continued healing.

[23 : 37] We lift all of these up to you, Lord, knowing that you are good and you are God. You are our God, who loves us and cares for us and will carry us through as we trust in you for all things.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Hello, Church.

The scripture readings for this weekend are from Isaiah 49, verse 1, and John 1, verses 35 to 42. Listen to me, you islands. Hear this, you distant nations.

Before I was born, the Lord called me. From my mother's womb, he has spoken my name. And from John. The next day, John was there again with two of his disciples.

[25 : 02] When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, Look, the Lamb of God! When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, What do you want?

They said, Rabbi, which means teacher, where are you staying? Come, he replied, and you will see. So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him.

It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, We have found the Messiah, that is the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Cephas, which when translated is Peter. This is the word of our Lord.

[26 : 07] Thanks be to God. There's going to be no math on this.

That I can tell you. So in this morning's scripture reading, we got some name calling going on.

And we have some of these names, Lamb of God, Messiah, the Christ, Rabbi, which means teacher. These are some of the names that Jesus was called in this morning's passage.

Now, let's be clear. This is John the Baptist, not John the disciple, the beloved disciple. This is John the Baptist.

So he knows who Jesus is. So he points him out and says, There, the Lamb of God. And then the disciples take it from there.

[27 : 16] But let's go back to this name calling. What might we have been taught when we were young about name calling?

Anything? Nothing? It's not nice. Do you remember? There's a thing that a lot of us were taught about.

Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me. I'm telling you, that's not true.

It's not true. Name calling throughout the history of humanity has a way of identifying people in some kind of way that isn't always true to their names.

You know, I get so used to wearing a mask. How many of you know where your name comes from?

[28 : 30] So, you know, some days you just have trouble. One of the things that I always do when kids come to my confirmation class is I ask them to find out from their parents where their name came from.

And after I've been at a church a while, the parents are like, So what are you going to ask them? I'm going to ask them to find out what their baptism story is.

And I'm going to ask them to ask you where their names came from. Because a lot of people don't know where their names came from. They don't know why they were named what they were named.

And that's okay. But it's also really a wonderful part of our story. I've heard kids in confirmation class say things like, Well, my mother's boyfriend before she met my father.

That's who I'm named after. Okay. All right. And then there's people, names out of novels. And there's soap opera stars.

[29 : 45] And there's famous historic people. And there's names that come out of the Bible. So many places where names come from.

Historically, historically like since the beginning of creation, names were important. I mean, think about it. When we read in Genesis, in the beginning, God created the earth.

And he created all the parts of the earth. And the parts were named. Man, woman, Adam, Eve.

And it went on and on. Names have always had an identity. Why do you think when you buy a piece of property, you have to sign your name 8,700 times?

I used to think, Well, why don't they just give you the pen? And then I realized, Well, I think we used it all up. And it wasn't a great pen to start with.

[30 : 47] Our names on contracts, whether it's online or in writing, mean a lot. If you're wandering around, let's say that in the good old days you're at some kind of art show or festival or something like that.

And you hear this, Hey, Lee! Oh. Who was that? And we look around when our name is called. Because it reaches out and says something to us.

It says something about us. It invites a familiarity between us and another person. At least that's the hope. We don't do as well with, Hey, you.

Or, Hey, you. Hey, I grew up as an identical twin. And there probably aren't many identical twins who are as identical as we were.

So much so that, as I've told you before, we look at the pictures and say, Because I'm the only one left, I can say, Oh, yeah, whoever's cuter, whoever's smiling, whoever looks happier, whoever looks prettier, whatever.

[32 : 05] Whoever looks taller or thinner. Yeah, well, that didn't happen. But we became accustomed to.

She probably would answer to Kathy in the halls in high school. I would answer to the name Karen. And it took a long time for me to stop looking if I heard the name Karen spoken out loud.

Our names are important. And yet, we have these names that Jesus is called.

Anybody think of other names that Jesus was called? You can say it out loud. I have to be able to hear it, though. Prince of Peace. Sorry.

I'm not going to do the whole thing. What else? What's that? King of Kings. Boy, you guys want a lot of names. Counselor.

[33 : 20] Emmanuel. Savior. Did I hear Son of Man?

Son of Man? So, you've probably seen cards or things that have all the names of God.

Probably not even all of them. And they're listed. And they're listed. And it's amazing how many names in the Bible we can find for God.

But I'm going to turn this around and talk a little bit about what about the names that we're called? What about the names that we're called by other people?

Now, my son and his wife have a baby who just turned 7.

[34 : 30] And his name is Charlie. And his name is Charlie. They call him, we all call him Charlie. My son and his wife feel very strongly about people being called by their name and not by like affectionate kind of things like in our house growing up.

It wasn't unusual to hear the term sweetheart or honey or other kinds of my husband's family is big with nicknames.

And so, taking our son, Martin, my husband would call him Martoon. Well, you know, you can't figure it out. But they call Charlie all the affectionate names that you can ever think of.

My question is, is that what's stronger in our own experience, being called those kinds of names or being called or described by other names?

When we think of some of our experiences as kids and, oh my gosh, middle school, high school, maybe some of the names that we think of or that come to mind aren't quite so kind.

[35 : 55] Am I right? How about the names we sometimes call other people? Maybe not their face, but the names that we might use, especially in difficult times.

Are they all things that we would stand up here and say proudly? Hmm. Maybe not. So why?

What is up with that? I made a list. Last night I wrote them while we did worship and then I decided I would just write some of them down.

So, not only are these some of the names that people are called, even by us, but they are names that we sometimes use in talking about ourselves.

And you look at them. Now, this could go on for pages and pages and pages.

[37 : 04] Because the things that we hold on to, the things that burn their way into our being, are not the sweetheart and wonderful and the proud.

Not that those don't happen, because they do. But the ones we remember. You know, I remember to this day moving to a new school and having, of all times, in the middle of sixth grade, we moved to a new school.

And in the school that we were in, it was quite the style, not style, how much style is there in sixth grade. But we wore, if we wore a dress, we wore socks.

Didn't wear pantyhose or anything like that. And the socks were usually white. Well, you put white socks and black shoes, and the next thing you know, we arrive at this new school, and someone decides to call us a penguin.

Now, that person didn't know me, didn't know my twin sister. They looked and they said. And clearly, I still remember.

[38 : 28] And middle school was a long, long time ago. So long ago that they called it junior high, not middle school. So we have names, and I'm sure that you can come up with them.

And if we look at the world's standards, perfect is hard to find. We're too tall. We're too short.

We're too fat. We're too skinny. We're too smart. I don't know about you, but there came times when I was in school when I didn't want to tell somebody what grade I got on a test or a paper because it might make them feel bad.

Now, how does that work? Can you be too smart? You can be arrogant about being smart, but can you be too smart? Isn't it okay for somebody to do really well as long as they are supportive and encouraging of those who maybe didn't do as well?

Too smart. How can you be too smart and a penguin at the same time? So let me ask you, any of you hold on to some of these names and memories?

[39 : 50] Any of you ever use any of these kinds of names on yourself? Maybe not.

But if not, you've got something to teach the world because marketing, publishing, magazines, TV, all of it will help you to look at these if you didn't do it yourself.

What about faith? And I want to share with you, there's a song by Matthew West and it's called, Hello, My Name Is.

Anybody familiar with it? Hello, my name is regret. I'm pretty sure we have met. Every single day of your life, I'm the whisper inside that won't let you forget.

Hello, my name is defeat. I know you recognize me. Just when you think you can win, I'll drag you right back down again until you've lost all belief.

[41 : 07] I failed trigonometry regents when I was a junior in high school. Wow, did I not talk about that.

And I've always made light of the fact that no numbers and letters interchangeable. Don't tell me to come up with a number answer with letters.

But I felt defeated. I felt not smart enough. I felt embarrassed. And there are other experiences in my life.

People lose jobs. Back in 2008, I was a pastor over out in the suburbs of Rochester. And our congregation was not full of, but a large percentage of the people that were in our congregation were Kodak throwaways.

And the men who were in that group, there was a man who helped them, and I've talked about him before. But he introduced me to the fact that often when a man meets somebody, you shake hands and you say your name, and then the next thing is, what do you do?

[42 : 40] We all do that and experience that. Or maybe not as proud or not as and other people sometimes to this.

So, now we're going to talk about the next part. Hello? Hello? I'm just glad it's not mine.

In the scriptures. In the name calling. In the beginning, we heard from Psalm 139, I knew you, I created you, I loved you, I formed you, I knew you, you are mine.

that in the dark, it will not be dark. In the dark, blame and shame and anger, it will not be dark because God lights it up like the brightest sky.

God invites us to take those kinds of names along with a whole raft of other ones. Put them over there.

[44 : 10] Set them aside. Exercise them. And instead, fill our minds and our hearts.

Jesus, in calling new names, Simon, Peter, the rock. Jesus, name, the disciples, often called them by name and in calling them by name, it was full of all of these.

We talked last week about baptism. We baptize someone, we use their name. They are not baptized as just anyone, anywhere.

They're baptized with their name. The Bible teaches us that we've been named.

That we've been claimed. And these are some of the names. Jesus says, I no longer call you slave. I call you friend.

[45 : 32] I no longer call you guilty. I call you forgiven. You are redeemed. You are loved and accepted. You are a blessing. You are good enough.

You are son. You are daughter. You are loved no matter what. You are fully known and loved no matter what. You're seen.

You're called. You're found. You're believed, beloved, wanted, named, chosen, important, and remembered. So many more. So when we think about anybody ever visited a church where they give you one of these and tell you to smack it on your chest or somewhere, only it's supposed to say your name on it.

Hello, my name is. And I want to remind you, go back to Matthew West's song. Oh, these are the voices, oh, these are the lies, and I have believed them for the very last time.

Hello, my name is, child of the one true king. I've been saved, I've been changed, I've been set free. Amazing grace is the song I sing.

[46 : 46] I am no longer defined by the wreckage that is behind. Maybe there's no wreckage in your life, but most of us, if we look back or look around, something has wrecked us.

The one who makes all things new has proven it's true. What love the father has lavished upon us that we should be called his children.

I am a child of the one true king. What love the father has lavished upon us that we should be called his children.

What's in a name? It's what the world might call you, it's what you might call yourself, and oh my goodness, more than anything, it is what God calls you.

Because God calls you his. Jesus claims you as his, and the Holy Spirit wraps around you. Not one person, not one person, is not loved by God, not one person.

[48 : 12] And God is not disappointed in us, God knows we can move, we can do, we can become more fully ourselves. But it will never change the love that God has us if it takes us our whole life to get there.

Hear it, know it, you are beloved. Amen. Thank you.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. As beloved children of God, it is indeed one of God's great gifts to us that we can come to God's table where we are known, fully known, and welcomed by name.

Let us prepare our hearts as we come to the Lord's table to receive the sacrament. The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

[49 : 43] It is right and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God.

You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets.

And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn. Holy, holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

[51 : 26] Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in mighty highest. Hosanna in the highest.

Then he gave it to his disciples and he said, drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood, which is poured out, sign of the new covenant, for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this every time that you drink it in remembrance of me. And so in remembrance of these, your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

[53 : 02] Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Then, pour out your Holy Spirit on us, gathered here and on these gifts of bread and cup.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry to all the world. Until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

Amen. And let's pray together the prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

[54 : 08] Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Amen. So I invite you to take your cup, gently remove your mask, and start with the side with a wafer.

Uncover it and take it, and we will take it together. And understand that this is the body of Christ, which is given for you. And as you open up the other side, remember, this is the blood of Christ, which was shed for you.

As we take these to ourselves, let us remember what God has done, and the great gift that God has given us in this holy sacrament.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

[55 : 35] follow that prayer. Amen. You may stand if you like. I come to the garden, O Lord, while the dew is still on the roses, And the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses.

And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own.

And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.

I'd stay in the garden with Him, though the night around me is falling. But He beats me go through the voice of hope, His voice to me is calling.

And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own.

[57 : 05] And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.

And now as we go through this door and out into the world, I invite you to hear this. If you are beloved, if you are a child of God, if you are loved no matter what, and named and called that, then as you meet the world, as you meet the world, remember that the others you meet are also beloved, loved, and God calls them to redemption as well.

So let us go in that peace and grace. quite, I say.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[59 : 32] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.