

Pergamum and Your Name

Revelation 2:12-17

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#6 in our series The Gospel According to Jesus: The Revelation

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Song

"Man Gave Names to All the Animals" –by Bob Dylan

Sung by Vince Colbert and The Sanctuary worship team

Prayer

Lord God, I pray that you would help us to preach. Help us all to connect now with the book of Revelation, with our series in Revelation, and most of all with *you*. Be glorified in us. We pray in your name, calling on the power of your Spirit, Amen.

Message

Robert Fulghum writes about a time when he was placed in charge of eighty-some children in the church fellowship hall. The adults were off doing something, and there were *all* these children—craziness! He had to find a way to keep order. So, he had them play a game called "Giant, Wizard, Dwarf." It's like the game "Rock Paper Scissors" except it's an enacted game.

Each child had to take the name of giant, wizard, or dwarf and then act out that name with a surprise partner and see who won and would survive.

Kids were running everywhere.

He yelled out, "*You have to decide now which you are a giant, wizard or dwarf!*"

As the children took their places, he saw a little girl standing in front of him. She looked up and asked in a small, very concerned voice, "Where do the mermaids stand?" Pastor Fulgham didn't know what to say.

"Where do the mermaids stand?" he repeated.

"Yes," she said. "You see, I am a mermaid."

"There are no such things as mermaids," Fulgham said.

"Oh yes! I am one," the little girl responded.

She knew she wasn't a giant, wizard, or dwarf; she was a mermaid.

And she was not about to go stand where a loser, giant, wizard, dwarf would stand.

She knew her name, and she assumed Pastor Fulgham would know just where a mermaid would stand.

I wonder how she knew her name?

Wouldn't you like to know your name like she knew hers?

It used to be that if you asked my daughter Becky her name, she would say, "My name is Pretty Pretty Princess." She knew that was her name because her father called her by

that name. It fit. And she was quite comfortable with the name . . . “Becky Pretty, Pretty, Princes Hiatt.”

She no longer goes by that name. She’s twenty-six.

People have called her by other names, and sadly, she’s believed many of those names.

Names are really big in the Bible.

We usually pick names because they sound pretty like Gregg, Jill, Susan or Peter. But in the Bible they mean something, and they often create something.

Actually, all things are created with words that are names.

God says, “Let there be plants” and there are plants.

“Let there be fish” and there are fish.

“Let us make man in our own image” and there is man. . .

In God’s image... kind of...

Like God, Man names things. God has man name all the animals, which, in the words of Madeleine L’Engle, was “asking Adam to help in the creation of their wholeness.”

Adam names the animals, but struggles to name his Helper. (Scripture says that God is our Helper.) And then, a snake tempts the woman, and the man, to name themselves good, which makes them not good.

And after that, Adam isn’t much good at naming things. And maybe he never was. And that makes us wonder about God, for Adam doesn’t appear to be very “in the image of God.” So did God mess up? Isn’t that the question? Just look at us . . . or is God still dishing out names?

*But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O **Jacob**, he who formed you, O **Israel**: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.” — Isaiah 43:1*

I love that verse. Wouldn’t it be incredible to hear God call your name? Well, at first God calls the name “Jacob.” That’s interesting because Jacob is a human name. Jacob literally means “heal grabber” or “supplanter” or even “cheat.” He cheats his brother, the firstborn, out of his birthright and (as you know) was born grabbing his brother’s heal.

His parents named him **Jacob**, and then, God named him **Israel**. God named him with His Word, who appears as a man. And so, of course, that’s Jesus—the firstborn of all creation. He wrestles with Jacob all night long, prevails, and then gives Jacob his blessing, which is a birth right, and then names him Israel. “You don’t just wrestle with your firstborn brother, Esau, you wrestle with your firstborn—Jesus—Son of God and Word of God, which means wrestles with God.

At the cross, we tried to take Jesus’ birthright,
And at the cross, Jesus gave us His birthright—along with a new name.

Well, my point is that God called **Jacob** and named him **Israel**.

He knew Jacob's human name, and He even used it to reveal his Divine Name. And He did it through His Word—Jesus.

Jesus is the Word through whom God names everything. When Jesus first met Simon Peter, He said, *"You are Simon son of Jonas. You shall be called Rock"* (that's Cephas in Aramaic and Peter in Greek). And, of course, Peter appeared to be anything but a rock. On the night that Jesus seemed to be most in need of a friend like a rock, Peter proved to be soft as Jello and denied Jesus three times.

So, did the Word of God fail? Did the name fail?

You may remember, Scripture says Jesus glanced at Peter in the house of the high priest, as they led Him off to be crucified. Then, Peter went out wept bitterly, then the risen Christ appeared to Peter reminded him of who he was. And Peter became who he was—the rock on which Jesus built His church. So, Peter did not make a name for himself. But God made Peter with a name.

Sometimes Jesus gives a new name and sometimes He gives new meaning to old names. I suspect that He always does both. When Jesus meets James and John He named them *"boanerges,"* which means *"sons of thunder."* People think it's because the two brothers have a terrible temper, and they did.

At one point they want to call down fire and thunder on a whole Samaritan village. But Jesus rebukes them and reveals to them the nature of His Fire and His Thunder. James is martyred for preaching the Gospel of Love. John now writes the Revelation, revealing that God's Fire and Thunder is *Love*.

In Revelation 2:12 Jesus dictates these words to John: *"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword, (that's Jesus and remember the sword comes from His mouth in chapter 1) 'I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. (Pergamum was the capital of the Roman province of Asia) Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith ('my faith'... as if their faith is Christ's faith manifest in them) I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.'"*

Jesus calls Antipas "my faithful witness." We don't know exactly how Antipas died, but he most certainly died because he would not renounce the name of Jesus. More than likely he died in a coliseum, like in Smyrna, with a crowd of people chanting names at him.

It reminds me of the movie *Gladiator*, or *Spartacus*, or the TV show *Spartacus*. I wouldn't recommend watching it, it's incredibly explicit like Rome was explicit. But it has a fascinating plot device. A slave owner gives Spartacus his name and the crowd chants his name. We never know his true name except those names are not his name. Spartacus, champion, traitor, gladiator are not his name. He keeps reminding himself, *"That is not my name."* Whether the names the crowd chants are good or bad he

reminds himself, *"That is not my name."* And that provides the drama, "Will he—whoever he is—let them name him?"

In Rome, they learned to control the crowds by issuing white stones that served as tickets to the Colosseum where they would receive free bread like manna they judged people—named people—and watched them die.

In Rome, white stones also indicated the judgment of a jury—each juror would vote with a white or black stone. A white stone indicated "innocent." A black stone indicated "guilty." To name something is the judge something.

Jesus commends the church in Pergamum for holding fast *His name* in the days of Antipas, His faithful witness. You know? to receive Jesus name is to deny some other names. And to accept some other names is to deny Jesus/ name. The name Jesus literally means "*Yahweh* is Salvation."

So, if *Yahweh* is Salvation, it means that we are not salvation. It means that Caesar, Donald Trump or Barak Obama are not salvation. It means that Farmer's Insurance, a safe car, and a vacation in Mexico are not salvation. Even the *Church* is not salvation.

To profess Jesus' name is to renounce some other names.
And it tells me something about our own name.

Jesus means "*Yahweh* is Salvation." And *Yahweh* means something like "I am that I am." *Yahweh* is "beingness," "the ground of all being," "the creator."

So, if He's the Creator, I am *not* the creator, but someone that is created.

And if He's the savior, I am *not* the savior, but someone that is saved.

In other words, God names me, and I don't name myself.

The snake said,

"Take from the tree of knowledge and make yourself in the image of God"

"Take knowledge of the good and make yourself good."

"Make a name for yourself."

To "make a name for yourself," must be to renounce the name that God gives you.

That first Adam (and you know and means "humanity") and Eve (which means "mother of the living") are kicked out of the garden. And they no longer hear Him calling their name in the cool of the day.

Imagine if you never heard anyone call your name. I think that would be hell. I think that *is* hell.

In Genesis 11 all those orphaned and widowed from the garden get together and say, "*Let's make a name for ourselves. Let's build a tower that reaches to Heaven!*" (Gen. 11:4) When God finds out about this plan He comes down and busts up their tower and tears it down. He takes away their name.

Maybe you have been building a tower called “Success,” in order to make a name for yourself.

Don’t be surprised if God comes along and tears it down. He tears them all down; it’s called death. That’s a drag. But maybe He has another name for you, not one you build that reaches to heaven, but one He builds that comes down to you.

Isaiah prophesies of the day that the towers of Jerusalem would be torn down. It actually happened in 586 B.C. and then again in 70 AD. Isaiah prophesies, *“Seven women shall take hold of one man in that day saying, ‘We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name. Take away our reproach’”* (Is. 4:1).

Understand? They were so desperate for a name, they would hop into any man’s bed, just to have a name, for it seems that any name is better than no name. And maybe that explains all our sins. We’re just desperate for a name.

In Isaiah 62 God says to Jerusalem through Isaiah, *“You shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall give you.”*

At the end of the Revelation John sees the New Jerusalem coming down from God prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband—her Helper. She is a Princess prepared for her Prince. She can’t name herself, but God *has* named her and is revealing her name¹.

Well, through John, Jesus says to the angel in Pergamum:

... you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’

—Revelation 2:12-17

I think He’s saying something like: “The crowd tries to name you with white stones like

¹ Even Jesus didn’t name Himself. Listen to Philippians 2:6,7a,9-11

... though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself (made himself nothing)... Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him (freely given him) the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

they tried to name Antipas. But I will give you a stone, with a new name written upon that stone, that no one knows except the one who receives it, and, of course, me, the one that writes it.”

Isn't that amazing? You don't know your name.

In fact, no one knows your name, but the Lord.

And there is a stone upon which your name is inscribed . . . already.

Paul writes that “the Father names every family in heaven and on earth.” And “we are already seated with him in the heavenly places.”

Well, imagine what it will be like to read your name. I bet that the moment you read it, you will find yourself entirely at home. I mean you won't try to be it, for you'll realize that you already are it... completely it.

You won't try to be your self, you will just *be* your self—your true self.

You won't *try* to be good because you *are* good and couldn't be more good than you are.

You are God's masterpiece created in Christ Jesus . . . for good works which God prepared beforehand, that you might walk in them with perfect freedom, peace, and joy.

You'll exclaim, “So this is who I am!” And you will be at home with “I am that I am,” and indeed with all creation. You will be at home with yourself, and in yourself, and yourself in God, and God in You. And so you will exclaim,

“Oh God thank you for me! I cannot imagine a better me!”

“Thank you for making me who I am: me and not another. You know me as I am.”

What a gift . . . *and yet*. . . And yet . . . Jesus does say, “To him who conquers . . .” And before that, He says, “I have a few things against you...” like what?

Well for one He says, “*You have some that hold the teachings of Balaam.*”

In Numbers 25:3 we learn that Balaam taught Israel to yoke himself to Baal of Peor.

They did that by eating sacrificial meals offered to the idol Baal and literally “whoring” (25:1) with Midianite women—probably temple prostitutes.

In Pergamum, believers were tempted to participate in sacrificial meals offered to pagan gods (including Caesar) and in so doing maintain a good name in Roman society. They were also tempted to sexual immorality, which might just mean adultery, but probably implies ritual adultery, which was blatant idolatry. In Scripture all idolatry is considered adultery—it's marrying yourself to another god (and it hurts the *living* God) and it is allowing that god to name you.

So what's your name?

Republican, Democrat, American, Doctor, Professor, Senator, Reverend? If that's not just what you do—but who you are—then the folks that gave you that name must be your idol.

We even take names like Gucci, or Levi's, or Chevrolet, Ford, or Denver Broncos . . .
We even print the names on our clothes to tell people who we are.

We love names, and we love to give each other names.
Names like Successful, Magna Cum Laude, Employee of the month, Sweetheart, Great Guy, Good Preacher.

If you let people name you good, they can also name you bad. The world has given me lots of names... many that I can't repeat in a place like this. But many that you might call good, that fill me with pride, and then trap me in terror, for if they name me "good," they can also name me bad, and then I'm imprisoned to gods that are not gods . . . one of them being myself.

We use names to control each other—to judge, divide, quantify, and qualify. Once you've named someone a liberal or conservative; or Muslim, Christian or Jew; or maybe schizophrenic, alcoholic, giant, wizard or dwarf, they're a little easier to control, at least in your own mind, and then later in reality.

See? I think Jesus is saying, "I have this against you. You're letting the world name you." And then He says, "You also have some who hold the teachings of the Nicolaitans."

No one is sure as to what that means, but one enticing idea is that
"nico" refers to "*Nikao*" which means to conquer or be superior and
"laitans" refers to the *laos*—laity, which means the people.
So, some have speculated that the Nicolaitans were the first to teach a split between the clergy and the laity—the idea that you need a professional clergy to name you.

Now, that sounds like something that no one would ever want. But I can tell you from experience that it is exactly what everyone wants, including me. We want someone to tell us who's in and who's out—who's a giant, wizard or dwarf and exactly where each one should stand.

Everyone loves those spiritual gifts tests. Fill out a form and it'll tell you your spiritual gifts, give you a name like prophet, encourager or teacher and then tell you what to do. Well, they can be helpful, but they can't tell you who you are. They don't know your name, and I don't know your name—your full name. No one does . . . except for the Lord.

When I was in college, I went on a Campus Crusade Retreat. Because it was my first retreat, they gave me a red folder. Red folders were for "beginner" Christians. Blue folders were for "intermediate" Christians. And green folders were for "advanced" Christians.) I was so insulted, that I stole a green folder, just to prove how spiritually advanced I was.

It was wrong of them to judge me and reduce me to a red, green or blue Christian. But what is so truly disturbing is the fact that I was so very desperate for a name, and so I

let them name me. I turned them into an idol.

After I graduated from seminary and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church, I let them name me “Reverend.” It means someone deserving of reverence. But because I gave them the power to name me Reverend, I also gave them the power to name me Irreverend. So, when they took away my ordination, it felt like they took away . . . *me*.

But they didn’t kill *me*, they only killed the *false me*, which liberates the *true me*. They actually can’t hurt the *true me*... In fact, they don’t even know who I am. Actually, I don’t even know *exactly* who I am.

See? I think Jesus is saying,

- Don’t let the world name you.
- Don’t let the church name you.
- Don’t even let you name you.

So, don’t try to be yourself because not even *you* know who your “self” actually is, and the moment you try to be yourself, it reveals that you’re not yourself. Don’t try to be yourself, ’cause then you’re not yourself. And don’t try to be yourself... ’cause, not even you, know who your “self” actually is.

Jesus is saying, “You have to lose your ‘self,’ for my Self, in order to find yourself.” So don’t try to be yourself... set your eyes on Jesus’ Self.

Paul put it this way, “It’s a very small thing that I should be judged by any of you. I don’t even judge myself, but I am not thereby acquitted...it is the Lord who judges me.” (1 Cor. 4:3).

Both Paul and John taught that Jesus is our Judgment, and that makes some sense. For He’s the only one that knows our name—He’s the One that hands us the stone, upon which is the name that no one knows except the One who wrote it and the one who receives it. I mean how could you or anyone else judge your self good, when you don’t even know who or what your good self is?

Even Peter didn’t know his whole name, just that part of it was Rock. And John didn’t know his whole name, just that part of it was thunder and that he was just learning what “thunder” actually is.

Actually John referred to himself by no other name than “the beloved disciple.”

As if to say, I don’t know who I am, except that Jesus loves me.

See? Maybe right now, we don’t need to know our name . . . (our full name)
We only need to know one name—Jesus’ name.

We only need to know Jesus’ name, and not denying His name does tell us something about our name. And it does tell us what our name is *not*.

God is salvation... and so I am saved—and not my own savior.

God is Creator... and so I am created—and not my own creator.
God is Father... and so I am His child.

John writes: *“Beloved we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears we will be like him...”* (1 John 3:2).

So, anything unlike Him is not who we truly are. Paul writes that God has made Jesus “our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. 1:30) So, anything Wise, Right, Good and New in you is Jesus in you. Paul calls him the “*eschatos* Adam,” the ultimate man, the firstborn of creation, and he calls us Christ’s Temple, His Bride, and His Body.

I think that means that any name that doesn’t stick, on the resurrected Jesus, doesn’t stick on you and shouldn’t stick on me. It’s not my name.

The other day, I googled the phrase “That’s not my name,” and found this video:

“ Not My Name” Clip

“ Not My Name” Clip continued

Two men are standing across from each other. One man shouts out: “Spartacus.” He flings a whip he is holding at the man across from him. The man who is about to be whipped catches the whip in mid air. It wraps around his wrist and with a strong scene on his face he says, “That’s not my name.” (working as a slave) play on the scene as the following lyrics are sung in the background.]

*They call me 'Bell'
They call me 'Stacey'
They call me 'her'
They call me 'Jane'
That's not my name
That's not my name
That's not my name
That's not my name*

The song morphs into another band singing the same song with different lyrics:

*They call me blud
The call me rudeboi
They call me oi
They call me mate*

*That's not my name
That's not my name
That's not my name
That's not my naa-aaame*

*They call me maiyou
But I'm a fly you
They use the n word
Like it's a game*

*That's not my name!
That's not my name!
That's not my name!
That's not my naa-aaame!*

That song is catchy! Don't you think?

That's "Not my Name" by *The Ting Tings*, with a cover by Dizze Rascal. We should all learn that song and sing it to the devil. I've been singing it for the last three days.

The devil whispers, "Anxiety" . . . and I sing, "That's not my name, That's not my name. That's not my name. That's not my naa-aaame!" How do I know it's not my name? Well, 'cause it's a name that doesn't stick on Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

The devil whispers, "Despair" . . . and I sing, "That's not my name. That's not my name. That's not my name. That's not my naa-aaame!"

He whispers, "Arrogant and worthless" . . . and I sing, "That's not my name. That's not my name. That's not my name. That's not my naa-aaame!"

You see? if I try to make myself humble, I'll be arrogant about my humility. If I try to make myself worthy, I make myself worthlessly arrogant, and that's a lie about me—who I am and who I AM is. If I try not to despair, I despair that I'll never stop despairing. And if I try not to be anxious, I get deeply anxious about my anxiety.

But if I "*consider myself dead to sin,*" as Paul puts it in Romans 6:11, I'll begin to feel "*alive to God in Christ Jesus.*" And then "*It's no longer I who live, but Christ Jesus who lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me*" (Gal. 2:20).

In other words, I'm saved and created in the image of God, "*not by works lest any man should boast, but by grace through faith, and this faith is not of myself.*" (Eph. 2: 8-9)

The works of the flesh are obvious writes Paul (Gal. 6:19-21):

"fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these."

So, if an accuser points out some of these things in you don't panic, but thank the accuser for exposing this darkness to the light, and then sing loudly:

"That's not my name. That's not my name, That's not my name.

That's not my naa-aaame!"

"Yes, I may have done some of those things . . . but that's not my name."

"I must have *thought* that was my name, but it's not my name. (And 'as a man thinketh so is he').

"I repent." Do you know what repent means? It means "to change your mind."

"I change my mind: 'that's *not* my name.'"

In Revelation 2:16 Jesus says, "*Repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them* (what an interesting way to put it—war against *them*: the lies, the liars) *with the*

sword of my mouth.”

In Revelation 19 Heaven opens and John sees Jesus on a white horse with that sword coming from his mouth... with it, he smites the peoples. Then an angel standing in the sun calls to all the birds saying, *“Come eat the flesh of kings... the flesh of mighty men... and the flesh of all men.”* Did you get that? All men! The birds are going to eat your flesh . . . after Jesus cuts it off.

You see? Your flesh is that thing you construct, believing the lie that you are your own creator, savior, and redeemer. It is the name that you think you have made for yourself. Your flesh is your ego, which traps you in anxiety and despair and causes you to sin.

It must be cut away by the Word of God, who is the Judgment of God if you are to even enjoy God. But you don't need to fear *that* day if that day is *already* this day [Peter points to the cross and the communion table].

So, if the Word has cut you, separating flesh from Spirit, just confess your sins and sing, *“That’s not my name. That’s not my name. That’s not my naa-aaame!”*

So what is your name?

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

[Jesus is talking to His Spirit, who then speaks the Word to us . . .]

To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.’

—Revelation 2:17

“To him who conquers... ”

So, how do we conquer?

Well, do you remember how Peter conquered?

Jesus told him his name or at least part of his name—Peter the rock.

For three years Peter tried to live up to the name and for three years failed miserably,

Until on the night that Jesus needed him most, he fell asleep and then, as soft as Jello under pressure, He denied Jesus three times.

Then according to Scripture, Jesus just looked at Peter, and Peter must've seen himself reflected in Jesus' eyes as if they were a mirror. And he must've remembered Jesus' words “Peter you are the rock.” And he must've realized that coward was not his name. But Peter was still His name in the eyes of Jesus and so Peter was cut to the division of soul and spirit. Peter ran out and wept bitterly—He surrendered his soul, his flesh, his pride, his ego, his name. He surrendered his name and then received his name, risen from the dead.

He didn't make a name for himself, but with a name spoken in Grace Jesus made Peter, and in the same fashion he would keep making Peter until the day he would hand him

the white stone. I'm saying that Peter conquered, by being conquered by Grace that created faith in Peter.

Actually, I believe that all will conquer, for ultimately Jesus conquers all. That's what the Revelation tells us. But please understand, we still must conquer, we still must have faith through the revelation of Grace. You cannot be saved until you trust that "God is Salvation."

1 John 5:4 *"Everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that has conquered the world—our faith."*

Your faith is the life of Christ rising in you and telling you who you are. Any name that does not stick to the resurrected Jesus is not your name. And your new name is the life of Jesus rising in you. Some scholars debate whether the name on the stone is our new name or Christ's new name, and of course, it's both. In chapter 3, verse 12 he writes His own new name on us.

Antipas is named "faithful witness." And only one other person in all of Scripture is named "faithful witness." That person is Jesus (Revelation 1:5). Any name, that doesn't stick on the resurrected Jesus, is not your name. And your New Name is the life of Jesus, rising in you and filling all the empty places that you thought were you.

So, I believe that you will recognize your name on that great day because Jesus is telling you your name all the time . . . that's why He made time. And He's telling you your name in every place . . . that's why He made space.

So, even in the place of sin God will reveal the wonder of His Grace. Like God says through Hosea and Saint Paul: *"In the very place where it was said to them 'you are not my people,' there they will be called sons of the Living God."*

The empty places are being prepared for the Revelation of God. And the full places *are* the presence of God already. C.S. Lewis wrote,

Your soul has a curious shape because it is a hollow made to fit a particular swelling in the infinite contours of the divine substance. 'To him that overcometh I will give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.' What can be more a man's own than this new name which even in eternity remains a secret between God and him? And what shall we take this secrecy to mean? Surely, that each of the redeemed shall forever know and praise some one aspect of the divine beauty better than any other creature can. Why else were individuals created, but that God, loving all infinitely, should love each differently? And this difference, so far from impairing, floods with meaning the love of all blessed creatures for one another, the communion of the saints. If all experienced God in the same way and returned Him an identical worship, the song of the Church triumphant would have no symphony, it would be like an orchestra in which all the instruments played the same note.

From *The Problem of Pain* by C.S. Lewis

Heaven is a city, and a body, and a symphony of praise.

The New Jerusalem is made of living stones. Each one is unique. And each one has a

name, and one of them is yours.

Well, right now, you don't need to know your entire name.

You only need to know Jesus' name . . . and trust Him to reveal your name in time.

If you know Jesus' name . . . You already know where you stand.

Jesus means *Yahweh* is Salvation . . . and that means you are saved.

Yahweh means Creator . . . and that means that you are created.

John tells us that "God is Love" . . . and that means that you are "the beloved." Who else could you be if God is love? How else could you relate to him other than as the beloved . . . just like John?

So, don't play the game. Don't let this world name you. If you know Jesus' name, you already know where you stand.

So, Robert Fulghum stood there in the church fellowship hall not knowing what to say to the mermaid who was asking, "Where do the mermaids stand? Then he writes,

"Every once in a while I say the right thing. 'The mermaid stands right here by the King of the Sea,' says I. So we stood there hand in hand reviewing the troops of wizards, giants, and dwarfs. It is not true (by the way) that mermaids do not exist. I know at least one personally. I have held her hand."

Well, I don't know if that little girl was actually a mermaid.

But I do know that she belongs right next to the King of the Sea.

And I'm convinced that Becky actually is a pretty, pretty princess. For I know she belongs to the Prince of Peace... and Princess fits with Prince.

I suspect that all our dreams will somehow be wrapped up in that name on the stone. And we'll discover that Faith, Hope, and Love have not disappointed us. And at last will be home in Heaven, and at home in the garden that is our own soul.

But for now, there's only one name that you need to know: Jesus.

Communion

Jesus took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body which is for you." What is this? It's hidden manna and He's giving it to you. And He took the cup, saying, "This is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins." And He said, "Drink of it *all* of you."

As I was preaching maybe you heard some names that you've received that don't fit upon the resurrected Jesus. Think of those names. (These could be some of them):

Adulteror, Addict, Failure, Cheat, Loser, Loner, Liar, Whore . . . think of the name.

Now say, "In the name of Jesus... That's not my name. That's not my name. That's not my naa-aaame!"

Now, this is mind-boggling, but Scripture says: *“He who knew no sin became sin that we might become the righteousness of God.”* On the cross, Jesus bears those old names to destruction. And gives you His name in their place.

As I was preaching maybe you heard some names that *do* belong to Jesus... Names like Good, Beautiful, Clean, Free, Happy, Right and Beloved. *“This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”* For those names say, “In the name of Jesus, thank you for making me who I am.”

Scripture says this is the Judgment of God. And Paul warns us about the Judgment. But that’s not because we’re going to hurt the Judgment. It’s because the Judgment might hurt us. So, if you think you are a lie about yourself this could hurt. But come to the table because the Judgment is good, and God knows who you are.

Now let’s worship!

[Several worship songs are sung.]

Prayer

Lord God, we sing Hallelujah. Praise *Yahweh* our Creator.

We thank you that you create us and that you are creating us with a name, and now we see that the name is good and the name makes *us* good. We are so grateful that you have called us your own and you make us who we are. And we couldn’t be better than the us that you have made. So, Lord God, Thank you! We receive your name. In the name of Jesus, we receive the name. You are our Father, and we are your children—in the name of Jesus.

Benediction

Scripture says God is Love, and God makes us with His Love—the Word of Love. So, we are the Beloved. When I used that song throughout the sermon I didn’t mean it as a silly sermon illustration; I meant it as the very focus of our warfare against the evil one. When the evil one gives you a name other than the Beloved, stand against the evil one and sing, “That’s not my name, That’s not my name. That’s not my name.” And then stand right next to the One who is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Revelation goes on to say that the one who conquers is the one who is with Him—chosen and faithful.

In the name of Jesus, believe the Gospel. Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don’t be shy about informing us of errors.