

# Homily

## Monday, December 24, 2018

Charleston, SC  
Christmas Pageant  
*What is in a Name?*  
The Rev. Al Zadig, Jr.

Welcome to a St. Michael's Christmas, featuring our annual child-friendly seven-minute sermon!

We just heard the most radical words in all of the English Language, Gabriel appearing to Mary saying, "You will give birth to a son and name Him Jesus!" Here is my question to you. How on earth did God, did Gabriel, come up with such a name? Have you ever wondered why God named his son what he did?

Now I know how hard it is to name children. In fact, we were so convinced our son Hudson was going to be a girl, we had all the girl names picked out. Which meant that when we were told He's a Boy, we had no idea what to do! Yes, for his first hours of life, tonight's innkeeper had no name!

Right now on the St. Michael's staff, we have two staff members who are pregnant. Our mission director Betsy Henderson is expecting a girl, and The Rev. David Booman's wife Caity is expecting a boy, both in the month of May. So, the Boomans and the Hendersons have two major decisions. Will they make an arranged marriage between the two children? Just kidding, that's another sermon. More pressing, what will they name these precious children?

What's in a name? If it's just letters in an alphabet, does it really matter? The answer is Yes! Yes, it does! The names we are given have the power to shape our identities, and at the same time,

help us understand our heritage - who we are, and who we are connected to. It also tells others who we are.

For instance, I'm named for my Jewish Grandfather Alfred, and my father Alfred. But I have two middle names, Thomas and Kurt. Thomas, which is the name my father took when he became a Christian, and Kurt, named for my Jewish great uncle who died in World War 1. Then Zadig, a name that takes its identity from the Old Testament: Zadok the Priest, descendant of Aaron. There is great power in the name!

But the most powerful name on earth is Jesus. God is very clear that He names His Son Jesus for a purpose. You see, Jesus is not just His name, but His mission statement. The name Jesus means one thing: Rescuer-Savior. Savior from sin. And Christ simply means anointed one. Jesus Christ, the anointed rescuer of our sin.

Now, there was another man named Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus Barabbas. This guy was a terrorist, a thief, and a murderer. A man who symbolized the lowest levels of humanity. Yet he was also on a cross next to Jesus on that Good Friday day, and it was this Jesus Barabbas who was set free from the cross instead of Jesus Christ. This is the true meaning of Jesus, and the true meaning of Christmas. Jesus, birthed in that manger, rescues us, like Jesus Barabbas, out of our sin, mistakes, regrets, anxiety, loneliness, and

disappointment, and brings eternal life! All of us have that Jesus Barabbas in us. We've all failed in one form or another. Yet Jesus Barabbas is living proof that we can be forgiven and set free from our sin through Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ, the name, the savior, is enough! His name is enough for us to be forgiven and free!

I don't have to live life in a state of unforgiveness, regret, bitterness, or anger because Jesus, His name, my relationship with Him, is enough.

Acts 4:12: There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved.

Philippians 2: God gave His Son, the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The name of Jesus guarantees we can be forgiven and given a new start.

My friends, if you're here tonight and outside you look great, your name is great, your reputation is great, but on the inside you are broken, worried, anxious, or crushed with financial anxiety, where it seems everyone has turned away from you and you are feeling like that other Jesus on the cross, please, please, please call on the name of Jesus. It's easy enough for a small child to say, yet powerful enough to deliver us from the pangs of any storm including death. You see,

“Jesus is not only the greatest and most powerful name humanity has ever known, it is the final name that will be spoken when you and I breath our last.”

Which means, if we are living our lives NOT in a daily relationship with Jesus, NOT teaching our children to be, we are in a dangerous place. The name of Jesus, on our final day, will also be our judge and determine our eternity. So, let all of us use this bright morning as our day of recommitment, not only to walk in relationship with the name and person of Jesus, but to teach our children to do the same! Calling on the Name of Jesus is the best present you could give Jesus on His Birthday. Let us pray to receive His Name. “Jesus, we love and need your name. Come and live in me, as you were birthed in that Bethlehem stable, come and be birthed, in my heart and help me live every day for you, your Name and your Power.”