

## WHAT IS IN A NAME? – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you Healing Word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Matthew 1:18

***18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. **19** Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. **20** But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **21** And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."*

What is in a name?

Shall we pray.

PRAYER

*May You, dear Lord, speak to our hearts the Words of Life. As we reason together with You, Holy Spirit, we ask that You cause Your Words to come alive and minister Your grace to the ones you love...in Jesus Name we pray. Amen!*

What is in a NAME?

There is an observation attributed to Juliet, in William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. And that observation, Juliet said, (and that was Shakespeare really speaking): *A rose by any other name will smell as sweet.* The way the sentence is constructed, it looks like it's difficult. But it's a simple statement. A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. What she was implying, or she implies, is that a name or the name of a thing means nothing: only what it is. And some people agree with Juliet. And to them, a name is just an arbitrary tag or badge for

identification. A name is something that differentiates one thing from the other or one person from the other. By the name they are called then you can know this person is not this person. But a name is much more than that.

What is God's view of names? I want us to do two things:

1. To look at God's view of what we call proper names or personal names.
2. And then I will conclude with God's view of what I will call corporate name.

#### A. God's view of personal names.

From God's perspective, people's names are not just arbitrary tags or badges. But from the God's standpoint, things become what they are called. We can then say that names, from God perspective, are supposed to be prophetic – prophetic pronouncement, because things will become what you pronounce: what you call them.

In Genesis 1, we find that in creation, the names God pronounced brought into existence the same thing He pronounced. When He pronounced light we have light; firmament, we have firmament. But by the way, you will think that I am making it up. No! We read in the English Bible, God said, Let there be light. That's not the way the original says it: Light be! That's what God says. The people whose names God changed in the scriptures assumed identities that reflected those names: from Abram to Abraham, the Father of Multitudes; from Sarai to Sarah, from Jacob to Israel. And you know apart from those people God changed their names (because to Him names mean a lot)...apart from those whose names He changed there are some He gave names Himself before they were born. And one example is the one we just read.

Matthew 1:21, *you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.* Did He? Yes, of course. He fulfilled that name. He was called Jesus – Saviour. The preciousness of a good name cannot be underestimated. I want us to remember that at the end of life a good name is the most precious thing you will leave behind. Let me say it again: At the end of life a good name is the most precious thing you will leave behind. And a good name is the most precious thing you will go with. Nothing else! You may possess 48 pairs of shoes. You will not even go with one.

Proverbs 10:7 says,

*7 The memory of the righteous is blessed,  
But the name of the wicked will rot.*

R.O.T.

Proverbs 22:1

*A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,  
Loving favor rather than silver and gold.*

A GOOD NAME!

Ecclesiastes 7:1

*Good name is better than precious ointment,  
And the day of death than the day of one's birth;*

You may be wearing the most expensive cologne; but a good name smells better than that.

Consider the following names: Nero (for those of you who know church history a little. If you don't know church but you will identify with these ones :)

Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Paul, Peter, James, John. You'd say, but all these are bible names. What of Mary Slessor? What of Isaac Newton? By the way somebody wrote an epitaph for Isaac Newton, one Alexander Pope, in this 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Epitaph is what you inscribe describing who is buried in that tomb, the kind things you say, many at times; except for a man who said an unkind thing concerning the wife: Here lies, he named her, she's at peace so am I. that is not kind.

Alexander Pope wrote, concerning Sir Isaac Newton, and I quote: "Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night. God said, let Newton be, and all was light." God is interested in names. Nero was the man who handed the Apostle Paul (even Peter) where he persecuted the church; he was the one who would pour tar on

Christians, and line them up in his garden, and set them on fire at night. That was the way he lit his garden. Talk of wickedness. He was the one who arrested the Apostle Paul, imprisoned him, and eventually executed him.

And somebody made this observation, he said, today, many parents call their sons Paul, but they call their dogs *Nero*.

A name. What is in a name?

How do we give names to our children? Do we give names to our children based on emotion: how you feel? Do you give names to your children based on culture? Or do you give names to your children based on idiosyncrasy? Idiosyncrasy, that is, I want to be different for its sake: that is my own way. So you coin whatever comes to your mind? Silly names – because you are idiosyncratic. You might as well name him, Muzanga Azaripapa.

Or do we give names that are prophetic? The last one is what I recommend. So, when you name your child, before we name your child,

- i. Think of the kind of person you would want your child to become in life.  
Names are not what you give thoughtlessly.
- ii. Go to God in prayer. God is interested in the name of your child.

Let's turn to Isaiah 40. Isaiah 40:25 and 26.

It says,

Isaiah 40:25-26

**25** *"To whom then will you liken Me [God is speaking],*

*Or to whom shall I be equal?" says the Holy One.*

**26** *Lift up your eyes on high,*

*And see who has created these things,*

*Who brings out their host by number;*

*He calls them all by name,*

*By the greatness of His might*

*And the strength of His power;*

*Not one is missing.*

God calls the billions and billions of stars by name. He gives each of them a name. Is it possible, then, that the God who names each of these billions and billions of stars, is it possible that He would be uninterested in naming each life that is brought into the world?

What is the name you bear? Are you living up to it? That leads me to the last point.

- iii. The corporate name. We have corporate names for businesses; but that's not what I have in mind. There is a name that God wants every one of us to bear. There is a name. in Acts of the Apostles Chapter 11:25-26,

Acts 11:25-26

*25 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. 26 And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.*

That's the name that God wants every one to bear. It is important because without this name, you will not be admitted into heaven.

Sorry, my time is up. We will conclude the message same time, next week.

Let us pray.

PRAYER

*Father, may all who hear me now end up bearing the name that will usher them into heaven – the name of Christ: Christian; not in word, but indeed...in Jesus Name.*