

"GOD CALLS BY NAME"

Exodus 3:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

The Bible says that as Moses approached the burning bush, God called him from the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses. And he replied, here am I. V. 4. This was a great moment in the life of Moses. He realized that God knew him by name. And that God calls by name.

A name is that by which a person is known. In the Scripture sometimes it is descriptive of his position or his character. Larry Kennedy tells the story of his three-year-old son, named John Stephen. We call him "Steve" - but occasionally when we ask for his name he says Roy DeSoto. Now if you are not on the T. V. - Roy DeSoto is one of the characters in the program "Emergency". The boy is very partial to firemen and he asked him to give his typical name, and he replied Roy DeSoto. Being a little disturbed by the boy's unwillingness to give the boy's proper name, his father gave him a stern look and in a very serious voice, told him to give his correct name. He looked up and replied, John Stephen Kennedy. ^{Roy DeSoto} After I read that, I am glad to know that the Lord knows the boys real name. Even though he may be in the state of three years of age, refusing to acknowledge it.

A new Chinese student who understood little English had enrolled in one of the college composition classes. What is your name, asked the teacher. Yu Yu Tsin Mei said the student. Your name is so long, I will just call you "John".

What is your name asked the Chinese boy. Mrs. Elmer John Mac Donald. Name very long, remarked the student. I will just call you "Charlie".

Now the ability to remember names is a wonderful gift. Jim Farley, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and Postmaster General of the United States, under the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt was a man with a gift. A reporter once asked him if it was true that he could name and call 10,000 people by name. He said, no, you are wrong. I can call 50,000 people by their first names. No doubt, Farley's position personality and his ability to remember names were instrumental in getting Roosevelt elected to the highest office in the land.

When Mamie Eisenhower was the first lady in the White House, over 70 servants were employed to keep the President's home in top shape. Mamie could call all of the White House employees by name. And she always baked cakes for their Birthdays. About the only time she was not mingling with the servants, was at the noon hour, when she was in her bedroom watching the T. V. program - "As The World Turns". But her ability to remember names and mix freely with folks, made her a very popular first lady.

She had and Jim Farley, also, possessed qualities and excelled in remembering names with an ability beyond the limits of the average. But when we think about our Lord, who calls by name, of all of the people on this planet. And all of the hundreds of different languages that people speak, and yet God knows everyone by his name. God knows your name. And I think from the standpoint of three definite reasons, that God calls all of us.

I. PERSONAL USE OF NAMES BY GOD

When we look into the Bible and we read that God revealed himself to Moses, he did not say, (Hey you). Or (hey boy). He did not say as sometimes people will say, (hey man.) And if he sees a blond woman, he may say, (hey mama). The Lord was very precise, when he called (Moses, Moses!) Personal, a personal use of his name.

Now the Bible is filled with illustrations.

I Sam. 3 - there is a wonderful story as a young lad who is destined to be a prophet. He is sleeping near the old priest, Eli. Samuel sensed that God was calling him. When he shared the fact with Eli, the priest suggested, well, the next time you hear the voice - just say, speak Lord, for thy servant is listening. I Sam. 3:9.

Again, the voice of God came - the Bible says, and then the Lord came and called as at other times. (Samuel, Samuel). I Sam. 3:10. It was a great moment in the life of the young man. When he realized that God knew and used his personal name.

Jesus illustrates this in the call of his Disciples. They were very quick to share with their friends, their beliefs about the Messiah. Phillip was so excited that he insisted that Nathanael meet Jesus. Well, he was slow to follow Phillip - but upon seeing Jesus, Nathanael heard the Lord say, that he, Nathanael was a man empty of all guile. And then it was that Nathanael asked him, how is it that you know me? And Jesus answered and said to him, before Phillip called you - when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. John 1:48. Imagine the Lord knowing and looking at you. When you are sitting in a chair beneath a fig tree.

What a thrill for Nathanael to come to the realization that Jesus knew him personally. And used his personal name.

Think about the tax collector who wanted to get a view of Jesus one day down in Jericho. He was a very small man and he climbed up into a tree for a better view. Now the crowd moved along to the surprise of Jesus, and to the surprise of the crowd, they walked, talked, and because he was a little man - he climbed a tree for a better view. Jesus walked under the tree and looked up. And said, Zacchaeus hurry and come down - for today I must stay at your house. Luke 19:5. Can you imagine, or even dream of the shock that Zacchaeus felt. He was the most despised man in town. He had been very greedy with collecting taxes and who would have guessed that Jesus would have made a personal use of his name. And would have known his name. Jesus knows every man's name.

In the book of Acts 9:4 - we find Saul on his way, with one purpose - to destroy the followers of Christ. In the middle of his quest, he heard Jesus say, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me. Yes, the Lord even knew Saul's name - he was a big sinner.

When the Bible reminds us that God understands and knows our names - the Spirit of God is telling us that God knows us as persons. In a personal way.

To the Hebrews a man's name and his personality were inseparable. God's ability to call our names stretches the truth that God is deeply interested in us, as persons.

Matt. 10:29 - Jesus said, are now two sparrows sold for a cent. And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore, do not fear. You are of more value than many sparrows.

When God called Moses, Samuel, Nathanael, Zacchaeus, and Saul - he was calling them into his love. They discovered that the God who knew them by name is the Lord of Glory. He wanted to share his presence with them. And with their encounters with God, they learned that they were important. Very important to God.

Do you remember as a child, playing outside, and in the evening - your Mother would come to the back door and call. She would call you by name and remind you that dinner was ready. That it was time to come into the house. Today you can remember that moment with great joy. Because your Mother called you by your name. As God calls us by name, he is calling us into his protection to his presence.

English names such as James and Robert are known only by the study of the meanings by people. But in Bible times, as a rule, everybody knew the meaning when they heard Sarah or Jacob. And names were given with that insight. Sometimes the name of a natural object as Terah - wild goat. Leah, wild cow. Jonah, dove. Tamar, palm tree. And then again, it might have been a name with reference to physical condition. As Noah - meaning rest. But personal names were often linked with a city. Jesus of Nazareth. Joseph of Arimathea. It is interesting to note

that God personally uses names. He knows what they are.

II. THE PURPOSE OF HIS DEATH IS FOR OUR NAMES SAKE

The Scripture reminds us that Jesus died for us. In Rom. 5:8 - God demonstrated his own love toward us. In that while we were yet still sinners, Christ died for us. I Cor. 15:3. I delivered to you as of first importance - that I also received that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

When we remember, the Hebrews name, and his personality were inseparable. We can know that the Scripture here says - the purpose of the death of Jesus was for us. And when we read the Scriptures - which I have just quoted to you, you may remove the pronouns, and inset your own name. And this will bring home the course of the truth that Jesus did not simply die for mankind, but he died for you. He had your name in his heart, when he went to the cross.

Now, how thankful we are that God is never so pre-occupied that he forgets us. His mind is centered on you. He knows your name and he calls us as individuals. And he died for us - that we might know his name. Jesus, Lord, and Saviour.

A new name is sometimes given. Even today, the naming of a newborn child is an event that is full of interest. And children are given names that have come down to them in various ways. But we find that some names were given because of tragic situations. As Hosea, the prophet, broken-hearted because his home was

broken. His children's names as Jezreel, judgement threatened. He called the second, Loruhannah, mercy not obtained. He called the third, Loammi, not my people.

How different when Mary's child was born - Joseph named him Jesus, the angel and messenger from Heaven brought God's will to register his name in Heaven. In the Hebrew the name meant Joshua. There were many boys called Joshua. Doubtless, there were many boys in Jesus' time who bore his name. Thou shall call his name Jesus. And that name had meaning. The central truth has been wrapped up for years, that he was to be the servant of God, and he was to save his people, and die for their sins. So the purpose of his death, was that he might save his people from their sins.

There is a story about a blind man who had been taken to take his place on a bridge in a certain city. He was reading aloud from the braille Bible. A man was on his way home, led by curiosity, he stopped at the edge of the crowd. Just when the blind man was reading Acts 4:12. And had lost his place. While trying to find it with his finger, he constantly repeated the last clause that he had read. None other name, none other name. Some people smiled at his embarrassment but the man back on the edge of the crowd, walked away deeply moved. He had lately been under conviction for sin. And been seeking in many ways to find peace. Religious exercises, good resolutions - he had altered his habit - but ringing in his ears, were the words . . . none other name. When he retired at night - these words kept chiming in his mind. None other name. At last, the music entered his soul. I see it he said, I have been trying to find peace through my own works. My own reformation - but it is Jesus alone who can save. Lord, I receive you as my Saviour. That moment of joy, salvation flooded his heart. Yes, there is none other name. And the purpose of his death was that he might reach you by name.

III. PROMISED RECORD OF YOUR NAME

Now there is something else here in this story that we need not and dare not overlook. When God called Moses by name, he had also written Moses name in his book. Now figuratively speaking, there is a book in Heaven who contains the names of those who belong to God.

Phil. 4:3 - Paul wrote this. Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.

Rev. 20:12 - John wrote, and I saw the dead and the great, the small, standing before the throne. And books were open, and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged from the things that were written in the books. According to their deeds.

Moses name, Samuel, Nathanael, Zacchaeus, Paul - all have their names inscribed in the book of life. That is a promise - that he will record your name in this book. And God calls by name. God makes in his use, the personal use of names. And God has a purpose, in the death of his son, Jesus. Who has a name that is above every name. To die for you. And then finally, God calls by name and promises to record your name in the book of life.

When we respond in faith to God's call and his cross, the Lord writes our names in his book. He reserves for us a place in his eternal kingdom.

Now there are some books that I do not care to have my name written in. I wouldn't be too excited about seeing my name on the F. B. I. list. of the Ten Most Wanted Men.

At this moment, I am not too excited about seeing my name in the local obituary column. Sometimes the Telephone Company wants to sell you this, that, or the other. To put your name in black bold letters in the Telephone Book. So that every hobo that comes through town at midnight, might call you up. And ask for a hand-out.

Now there is one book that I do want my name in - and that is in God's book. Because it means that my person will also be one day in Heaven.

In the summer of 1927, a sculptor, Gutzon Borglum was ready to undertake the masterpiece of his career. Here was the largest outdoor work in the world. To be carved in the Black Hills, S. D. The faces of Washington, Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Lincoln. And Mt. Rushmore was to be one of the famous tourist attractions in the country.

The same man had proved that he could carve on a large scale in granite by his work at Stone Mountain, Ga. There he had begun a scene with Robert E. Lee, and other Confederate Leaders. High on the side of the mountain. Some man in S. D. had a vision. That there ought to be a national monument in his state, and they visited the national forests and they looked for suitable sites.

And Mt. Rushmore was finally chosen. For 14 years, the sculptor and his assistants labored. They carved the figures - the rough shapes. Shaping was done by dynamite. And special drills, were used for the detailed work. Now a few months before the beginning of the second World War, this massive monument was finished. Each of the faces measure 60 feet from hairline to chin. The mouths are 18 feet wide. The eyes 11 feet. And if bodies were added to the faces, each man would be almost as tall as a 50 story building.

Borglum's work was so large, that he would drive away several miles to look at the giant faces. Only a few months after his work was completed in 1941, he died very suddenly. He was nearly 74 years old. And men have guessed that the granite will erode less than an inch in 100,000 years. So Mt. Rushmore and the monument will long out-live those who developed it. And those who see it.

Isaiah 56:5 - the great prophet of the Lord promises a blessing and he says, those who choose the things that please me, and hold fast to my covenant, to those who are faithful unto the Lord, the Lord will give a monument and a name better than sons and daughters. This work, this verse is amazing and surprising. That God is offering unto his people, a crown of life. A monument that will last, outlast, all of the great works. And it is going to be an everlasting name. That is, immortality. Now this gives real significance to the person. What do we desire as the greatest gift and reward. I think we would want this promise, to have our name recorded in the book of Heaven, as an ever-lasting name.

I have often been to visit in some of these large apartment houses - rising many many floors. And most of the time, there is a door man. The only way a stranger can get into that place, is to have his name pre-registered at the front desk, by a permanent occupant of the apartment building.

If the stranger's name is not in the ledger - he does not get in. Only those who have their names in God's book will be allowed in God's Heaven. You can have your name inscribed in that book, when by faith you receive Jesus Christ into you heart. God is calling you by name. Respond to God's call and allow him to write yourname in the book of life. I can assure you that you will not regret this decision.

Yes, God is one who designates and majors in personal use of names, And remember the purpose of his death on the cross for you and for your name. And that he has promised to record your name in the book of life with an everlasting name forever. I know that you have a desire that he write your name in the book of life. Even now while we extend to you our invitation.

Is your name written down in glory?