

Grace to you and peace from God our Father  
and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The portion of Scripture before us today is  
found in the Gospel according to Saint Luke the  
second chapter reading the twenty-first verse:

***And when eight days were completed for the  
circumcision of the Child, His name was  
called JESUS, the name given by the angel  
before He was conceived in the womb.***

Heavenly Father these are Your words and  
therefore they are the truth; we pray, Lord, that  
You would increase our faith through them.  
Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

There is a people, the Sami, who live in  
northern Scandinavia and Russia who have 180  
different words that relate to snow and ice.  
These same people have over 1,000 words  
pertaining to reindeer.

In the religion of Islam, their god, Allah, has 99  
names and if you memorize all 99 names you  
are guaranteed a spot in heaven... yes just for  
memorizing 99 words you too can get into  
heaven, or so says the source I found.

As William Shakespeare once said about a  
flower, "What's in a name? that which we call a  
rose by any other name would smell as sweet."  
Thus going toward the notion that even if we  
were to rename the rose, it is not the name that  
matters; rather, it is the substance of the thing  
that truly matters.

While some people may hold to what  
Shakespeare says, I like to think that there is a  
little more to a name than just the syllables that  
create it. Take for instance the name of Jesus...  
that is a name that not only tells us who He is  
but also what He came to do. The name of  
Jesus is THE NAME before which all people  
will bow down and every tongue will confess  
that He is the Lord. The name of Jesus is the  
only name, under heaven, by which you are  
saved from all of your sins. Thus, when it  
comes to our salvation, our redemption, our

justification there is only one name that matters, *the name of Jesus*.

I wonder if any of you have met “Dove Wolfshield” before. I’ve known him for a couple of years now and he is quite the fellow. At times he can be outspoken, but really he is just a sweetie at heart. Yes, I dare say that “Dove Wolfshield” is probably one of my favorite people in the world. Of course you probably know “Dove Wolfshield” more commonly as “Jonah Randolph.”

My other children are named “Gift of God the Lord is my God” or better known as Matthew Elliott. And my final child is “Favor/Grace sunrise” or better known as Hannah Dawn. Yes, each of our children have very special names that Katy and I have chosen to really mark them as “ours.” The first name always comes from the Bible to show our appreciation for and to the Word of God and how important it is in our lives. The second name, or middle name, comes from a family member and offers us a way to pay homage to, usually, our parents and other loved ones. And I am sure that those who

have had children have the same general thought pattern when it comes to choosing out a name for their child. In fact, I doubt any of us let our child choose their name when they got older; rather, we named them a name that we felt was appropriate for them.

And when it came to the name of Jesus... well that was a name chosen by Jesus’ Father from the beginning of time. As we read elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke, the name Jesus was chosen because “He will save His people.” The name Jesus, a form of Joshua, is translated to English as “God saves.” That is the name that is given to God’s Son and when given to Him shows not only who He is but what He has come to do for us.

Jesus came into this world because, honestly, we are not always perfect children. So often in our lives we disobey our God: we lie, we steal, we covet, we envy... and sometimes this is just about our name. How many of us growing up thought how cool it would be to have another person’s name? How many of us, at times, have been a little miffed because of what our parents

decided to name us? (I mean Jesse... that's become a girl's name now.) And this is just about our names. When it comes to our family or our friends, how quick we are to disown them because of what they may be associated with. When it comes to our job, how quick we are to distance ourselves from them when their name is being attacked by others we know. When it comes to, really anything, we are so quick to distance ourselves and our names from anyone who is attacking the name of another... and we attack others' names too, do we not?

It's called gossip. It's called lying. It is taking another person's name (both in a literal and figurative sense) and tearing it to pieces, and we do it all the time. When someone is not like us, it is so easy to discredit a whole race of people because they are different. When someone is not like us, it is easy to discredit an entire generation as lazy and stupid. When someone is not like us, it is easy to put them down instead of picking them up. When people are different from us, it is so easy to attack them and, especially, their name.

And yet, thanks be to God, that He has not done this to us. Though we sin and sin and sin and sin... God still looks down on us and sees His Son... He sees Jesus. He sees His Son who lived the perfect life for each and every one of us. He sees His Son who did not demean or disparage another person's name. He sees His Son who was beaten and mocked for us... all because of His name, Son of God. He sees His Son who was hung on the cross because Jesus would dare claim that He was "God" who saves. He sees His Son who lived, died, and rose again from the dead for all of His faithful. When God looks at us, He sees Jesus... and thank God that He does.

And though Jesus was officially given His name at His circumcision eight days after His birth, we know that this is the name that God wanted for His Son. We hear so many of what we can call Jesus in the Old and New Testaments: Immanuel (God with us), Son of Man, Son of God, Wonderful, Counselor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Savior... but all of these point to one person with one name: Jesus. It is Jesus who is

able to bear all of these names and He is the only one about whom they apply.

And we do get that one little extra piece of information in our text for today, not only was Jesus named but He was also circumcised. Jesus was circumcised to keep the Old Testament law perfectly for us. He was circumcised, and that was the first ‘shedding of blood’ that He did for us. Even at eight days old, at something that we might deem trivial, Jesus was already fulfilling the law for us and was shedding His blood for us. This is what the infant Jesus was doing for us.

Dear friends in Christ, what is in a name? For some of us it is our entire life... for some of us it is just one of many that we go by throughout the day (Jesse, honey, dad, pastor, etc.)... for some of us our name is the only thing that really shows us who we belong to. And yet when it comes to the name of Jesus, that is a name that only one person in all of history could truly have. The name of Jesus brings with it the notion that “God saves,” and thanks be to our heavenly Father that our Savior is indeed

named “God saves,” because that is what He has done for each and every one of us.

Thank God that He sent His Son, Jesus, for each and every one of us. Thank God that Jesus is our Savior from all of our sin. And thank God that Jesus is the name before which all knees shall bow and every tongue confess that “Jesus is Lord.”

Thanks be to God. Amen.