


## Meaning and Miracle

Part 2: His Name is Jesus

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11

Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?

- Read Matthew 1:21-23. By what **two** names is Mary's son to be known?

How do those two names relate to each other? For example, "Jesus" (Joshua) was a common name for Jewish boys. How would things be different if he were not also Immanuel, "God with us"?

How might things be different if he were only Immanuel, "God come down to earth", but he did not come to be our "Yeshua", "Yahweh is Salvation"? How would your life be different?

- Every moment of his life—from boyhood (Luke 2:49) to the cross (John 4:34 and Matthew 26:39)—Jesus was committed to fulfilling God's purpose for him. What is God's purpose for you?

Tell about a time when you struggled against doing what you knew to be the will of God for you? How did it resolve?

What helps you be more willing to submit to God's will for you?

What tends to make you more unwilling to yield to God?

What can you do to enhance the former and avoid the latter?

Where's your heart now, on this "responsiveness" scale? **Do you yield to God...**

●  
Never

Rarely

Often

●  
Always

## Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, "What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

## Sermon Summary Key Text: Matthew 1:18-25

Last week in Luke's gospel we learned that an angel announced to Mary that she will give birth to the Christ Child—no husband needed! Today, in Matthew's gospel, we learn that an angel also came to Joseph, announcing Jesus' birth. There is a lot in Matthew 1:18-25 we could talk about, but I want to focus on the name part, because that's where the drama is. Essentially, the angel says "Joseph, I'm not going to let you name this child. This is the name God wants you to give him." In that culture it was the parent's right, and in particular, the father's right, to name his child, but Joseph submitted and named his son as the Lord commanded. The whole purpose of the passage surrounds the giving of this name. No one is allowed to name Jesus. Only God gives Jesus his name. That is not the prerogative of his earthly parents. In order to grasp the significance of this, we have to spend a little time trying to understand what the Bible has to say about the naming event. First I want to answer the question: "What does this naming event of Jesus tell us?" And second, "How does all of this apply to us?" What is our take away? The name-giver is important because he is your superior, the one to whom you ultimately defer in making life decisions. Then, the meaning of the name reveals who you are, what your purpose is, what you're here to do. So there's the source of the name, and then there is the meaning of the name. If you know these two things, you know who you are.

The reason God will not let Joseph or Mary name this child is because He doesn't want them to think that they have ultimate authority over him! In the Bible, to name someone was the work of a superior—that's why God told Adam to name the animals; God was saying, "I'm giving you authority over them. I want you to take care of them. You're not an exploiter, but a caretaker." But no human has the right to name Jesus because no human has authority over him. But in biblical thought, your name reveals your character, your purpose, your life's work. Jesus' life work was to save his people from their sins (v. 21). The name "Jesus" (Hebrew: Yeshua) is the combination of "Ye", which means "the Lord," and "shua," which means "saves." So "Jesus" means "The Lord Saves"! Jesus has many other descriptive titles (Messiah, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, to name a few), but the personal name God gave him is Jesus, because he came to save us from our sins! And Jesus clearly understood his purpose (Mark 1:37–38; Luke 18:31–33 and 19:10; John 13:3). Jesus never wrestled with his identity or his purpose. He knew who he was, and what he came to do. Jesus' identity and purpose were linked together in his name which means again, "The Lord saves." What is the implication for us? As Christians, we should stop asking, "Who am I?" and start asking, "Whose am I?" The answer to that question really answers the question, "Who am I?" We all want to know who we are. We want to know what our purpose is. To make that determination, you should ask yourself, "Who names me?" and secondly, "What is my purpose in life?"

**Whose are you?** Today our culture tells us to pick our own identity. So, how do you do that? Some people let their work define them (but what happens when you lose your job? What then? Who are you then? What do you have to live for then?). Others opt for letting what makes them happy define them. But if you decide to find your identity through work or pleasure, what actually happens is that it names and controls you. Whatever names you is your authority. That's what you serve! You could try to find your identity through family life: "I'm going to be a great father." "I'm going to be a great mother." But then what happens when your children rebel, when they turn on you? All of your meaning goes out the window. Fact is, you don't belong to yourself. You either belong to God or you belong to whatever it is that you have sought to find your identity in.

**What then are you living for?** Jesus knew who he was and what he was living for. Do you? Too often we find our identity through the eyes of others; we feel like we are somebody when other people affirm us as being somebody. We desperately want others' approval—which means that we let others define us. But when you live for the approval of others, you're a chameleon. You act one way for one group, and a different way with another group. But you'll never find yourself by living for yourself; God designed us to find ourselves by dying to self and living for God! The only way you will ever find your true identity is by allowing God to name you, by yielding to His authority over your life, by allowing His purposes to become your purposes. When we are adopted into God's family, he gives us his family name (John 1:12), a new identity, and a new purpose: serving God and others. God has gifted you to serve (Ephesians 2:8-10 & 1 Peter 4:10-11). When you are serving in the area of your spiritual giftedness, you will find that God blesses your efforts, that you are fulfilled, and that others affirm your gifting.

Remember, the one who names you is in authority! God requires your total submission; we dare not do what the angel forbade Jesus' parents doing: acting as his authority, deciding who he is and what he is allowed to require of us. We dare not "edit" Jesus, remaking him after our own liking. Instead, let him save you, bring you into his family, "name" you, and reveal to you who you really are. Come to Him today in faith and submission.

## **Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time**

*Do you know who you are, whose you are?*

*What do each of the following verses reveal about your identity as a believer?*

- Romans 4:16 (compare to Genesis 15:6)
- 1 Peter 2:9 (compare to Isaiah 45:4)
- John 10:16 (compare to Jeremiah 31:10)
- Ephesians 5:3 (compare to Deuteronomy 28:9)
- Ephesians 2:10 (compare to Isaiah 60:21)
- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 & 6:19
- 1 Peter 2:5
- Revelation 1:5-6 & 20:6
- 2 Corinthians 3:6
- 2 Corinthians 2:15
- James 1:18
- Revelation 14:1-4
- Romans 6:13 & 12:1-2
- Revelation 3:12; 21:2, 10; 22:19 (compare to Psalm 46:4 & Psalm 48:1 & 8)
- Colossians 3:12 & 1 Peter 2:9
- Mark 13:20 & Titus 1:1
- 1 Peter 2:9-10
- Luke 1:2 & 24:48; Acts 1:8
- John 13:35 & Acts 6:1-2
- Ephesians 2:19-20 & 3:14-15
- Romans 8: 17 & 23
- 2 Corinthians 11:2 & Revelation 19:7-8
- Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 2:11-12
- John 15:13-15
- Acts 9:1-2
- 2 Corinthians 6:4 & Ephesians 6:6
- 1 Thessalonians 5:5; Ephesians 5:8; Matthew 5:14-16; John 12:35-36
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:13-16 & 3:12; Acts 26:10
- 1 Peter 1:1 & 2:11

