



Sunday, December 6, 2020

The Second Sunday in Advent

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“The Name Above All Names”

Assorted Scriptures-King James Version

Good morning! As I look out on the congregation and in the midst of all our challenges, Clifford Baptist Church is a healthy church! I'm thankful you're here and want to take care of one another. I'm also thankful for those of you who are streaming this service. We're observing the second Sunday of Advent—four Sundays prior to Christmas Day serving as a preparation of our hearts and minds. We all prepare in a “worldly” way for Christmas—shopping, decorating, getting food ready, and thinking of gatherings we might attend. All these preparations are expected and exciting; I look forward to them as well. My wife, Gwen, and I took a couple of days this week to finish our shopping—we have become really good grandparents of little boys. We bought them the loudest, most obnoxious presents you could ever imagine just to drive their parents crazy! They drove us crazy when they were little so now it's their turn, and I'm glad we could contribute to that. But there's another side of the preparation the world largely leaves out, and yet it's the most important: To prepare our hearts, minds, and souls for the coming of the Christ Child. We ponder why Jesus was born in a manger, why He lived some 33 years with His life culminating on the old rugged cross and the empty tomb, rising back to heaven, and who is still the Lord of glory. I think we need to remember that is the centerpiece of what Christmas is all about. Jesus has been kicked out of His own birthday! The world rarely thinks of the Christ Child, but as believers we are called as the church to keep Jesus at the center of all we do in all our celebrations—whether here in the church, our homes, or out in the world. We're to remind the world Jesus is the centerpiece of Christmas and every celebration that takes place.

Today, I want to briefly study the name God chose to give His son. The Bible is full of titles for Jesus: Son of Man; Son of God; The Way, the Truth, and the Life; the Door. People called Him Master, Rabbi, Teacher. John the Baptist called Him the Lamb; we see that referenced in the Book of Revelation. The greatest title, I think, is Christ, the Messiah. We often attach Christ to the name Savior who is Jesus—Jesus the Christ. Jesus is His personal name. Christ, along with many other terms, is descriptive of who He is and what He does. God's son has one personal name – Jesus. We know that was the name chosen by God Himself. In **Luke 1:30-31**, the angel of the Lord speaks to the future mother of Jesus. <sup>30</sup>“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.” In Matthew's gospel, we see the same thing happen when an angel of the Lord speaks to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. **Matthew 1:20-21** <sup>20</sup>“...the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. <sup>21</sup>And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS...” For mother and earthly father, we see an angel of God directs both of them to call His name Jesus; there is to be no dissension, no discussion, no disagreement about the name of their child. To me, today, that name is the sweetest name of all humanity. It is the one name that brings us hope; it's the one name that assures us we can have eternal life and forgiveness of sin.

What does the name “Jesus” mean? It's the Greek Aramaic version, and there's a Hebrew version—Joshua which means salvation is of God. It means Deliverer and Rescuer. If you go back to God speaking to Joseph in Matthew 1:21—“thou shalt call his name JESUS”—then he adds this statement “for he shall save his people from their sins.” God says this is His name, and the definition of His name. There's only one man in all of human creation who fulfills the name Jesus. There have been many who had that name; it was a common name in Jesus' day. Joshua was a common name in the Hebrew culture. But there's only one Jesus who is truly the Savior of the world. He alone is worthy of our honor, praise, and today, is being honored by our worship. We're grateful we can worship Him, that we come before Him in the name of Christ knowing that He is the Savior of the world who gives us life.

Today, I want to take you on a “quick” journey through the Bible and point out **twelve** ways the name of Jesus is used. This could be a two hour sermon—it won’t, but I’m giving you a mere sample.

(1) Jesus, the Son of God, is the one name in the Bible to be worshipped. In Matthew 2, the magi came. **Matthew 2:11** “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him...” I believe this sets the stage for our lives—we, too, on a regular basis are to worship Him. He deserves and is worthy of our worship; that we fall down before Him in utter surrender and are willing to follow Him. Worship is not defined by who we are. A lot of people say I’ll worship when it’s convenient, when I can work it into my calendar. Worship is not on our schedule; it’s on the schedule of God Almighty. Therefore, we should be worshipping Him on that regular basis day by day. It’s important we gather here in church; I believe worship together corporately (Sundays and/or Wednesdays) is extremely important. The rule of thumb this day is the world defines regular worship as two Sundays a month. It’s not to me—I believe regular church worship is there when you can. I know sickness comes, vacations come—but be there in church when you can because Jesus is worthy of our worship. Jesus has the authority for us to fall before Him in worship. Worship goes far beyond church services, too. We should worship Him on a daily basis in our own lives; give Him time in conversation and prayer; give Him time to speak to us. Worship is extremely important in the life of the child of God.

(2) Jesus is the one name that has absolute authority over the attacks and temptations of Satan. In Matthew 4, Jesus and Satan meet head to head, toe to toe, in moments of temptation. Jesus had been in 40 days of preparation, and Satan wants to tempt Him to break His relationship with God the Father. God the Father and Jesus are one; Satan’s temptations are structured so he can break that commitment of God the Father to His son, and son to His Father. He tempts Jesus to change stones to bread, to throw Himself off the temple and see if God will catch Him, and if Jesus will bow down and worship him all the kingdoms and beauty of the world would be His. **Matthew 4:10** “Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.**” The devil is forced to leave the presence of Jesus in sheer defeat. Three years later, He ultimately defeated Satan when He walked away from that tomb. Satan took a moment and bruised Jesus’ heel on the cross but according to Genesis 3:15, Jesus crushed his head when He walked away from the tomb. We see today Satan is on the warpath, but his death certificate is already signed—the moment Jesus walked away from His tomb. We know his future; he’s going to inhabit the lowest part of hell because Jesus won the battle over him!

(3) Jesus is the name of healing. He heals the leper, blind, and crippled; the woman caught in adultery; and Zacchaeus of selfish sin. He healed fear in His disciples when they were caught in a storm. He healed the sorrow of Jairus for his daughter dying; He healed grief by raising that 12 year old girl from the dead. There is no healing that Jesus cannot accomplish. Whatever healing you or I need, Jesus can do because He is the God of healing.

(4) The name of Jesus is godly wisdom. There’s wisdom of Christ throughout the New Testament; I refer to the **Sermon on the Mount** found in **Matthew 5-7**. Jesus teaches godly wisdom in that we’re to be meek; He was the meekest man who ever lived. He wasn’t weak, but He was willing to surrender to the will of God the Father. We need to be willing to surrender to the will of Jesus Christ in our life—that’s meekness. He teaches us, too, that we’re to be merciful and pure in heart. In this day and age, we strive always for pureness of heart in the midst of a society that wants to drag us away from purity. Jesus teaches us to be the salt of the earth—my dad used this phrase a lot—“make sure your word is your word and is going to stand.” Make sure when you speak it, it will be a word of truth. In the way salt changes the taste of food, we’re to be the presence of Christ in the world so that we as Christ’s representatives change the world by His presence. We’re to be the light of the world—take His light, love, and grace. We’re to forgive our neighbor and go the extra mile in ministry. In godly wisdom, He teaches us to live on this earth in such a way to show Him to the world and store up our treasures in heaven. So many people

try to store their treasures here but at the end of the road, they'll find their treasures are gone—eaten by moths and consumed by rust. Jesus says live on this earth, live as My disciple, live to communicate My love but store up what's important in heaven. In every area of life, Jesus teaches us to live productively, righteously, and wisely in the way we represent Him.

(5) Jesus is the name of true prayer. We see images of masses of people bowing to their gods several times a day but the Lord Jesus tells us in **John 14:13-14**: **“<sup>13</sup>And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup>If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”** What an amazing promise of the Bible! When we think about the utter authority Jesus has in our prayers, He is the name inside of every true prayer. Prayer is not prayer without the presence of Jesus in it. Years ago, I was asked to pray at an international race in Richmond; it was amazing to see 90,000 people and being televised to the world. When I was contacted and asked to lead this prayer, I said I would do so on one condition—I would pray in Jesus' name.

(6) Jesus is the name of everything we have provided in life. If you have precious family, wonderful friends, a home, material things, and food on your table, it all comes from the provision of Jesus Christ. We know He took two fishes and five loaves of bread and fed 5,000 people. Jesus can take our little bits of energy, talent, and effort and through His provision can create in us and through us a very blessed life to be able to serve Him. Jesus fulfills the Hebrew name of God “Jehovah Jireh”—God, the great provider.

(7) Jesus is the only name on the cross for our forgiveness. **Matthew 27:35-37**: **<sup>35</sup>And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. <sup>36</sup>And sitting down they watched him there; <sup>37</sup>And set up over his head his accusation written THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”**

(8) Jesus is the only name on the resurrection from the grave. **Matthew 28:5-6**: **“<sup>5</sup>And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here: for he is risen...”**

(9) Jesus is the central name of the church. All the church does revolves around Jesus the Christ. **Matthew 16: 16, 18**: **<sup>16</sup>And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. <sup>18</sup>And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** The reference to the “gates of hell shall not prevail...” means they cannot resist when the church comes toward them. The power of Jesus and the power of God's people are greater than the power of Satan and any demon that ever existed.

(10) When God Almighty draws history to a close, one name is going to stand above all names in all the universe—above earth, heaven, and hell. **Philippians 2:10**: **“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...”** **John 3:16** tell us that saved people can be saved: **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”** Jesus is also the name by which the lost will be judged. The saved will be saved through Christ Jesus; the lost will be judged through Jesus. **Revelation 20:11-12, 15**: **<sup>11</sup>And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those books, according to their works. <sup>15</sup>And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”** Our name can be written in the book of life when we come to Jesus as Lord and Savior. When a person comes to the altar, I imagine the book opened by the very hand of God writing their name in it. I can't wait to get to heaven and ask to

see my name in the book! I want to see what the handwriting of God looks like! Being saved is having your name in the book; being lost is not having your name in the book—as a nonbeliever in Jesus Christ.

(11) Jesus is the name that will rule over all for all eternity. **Revelation 1:18:** “**I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and I have the keys of hell and of death.**” We know Jesus is going to rule over all of heaven; He’s the Lord of glory. He’s the one who left heaven to come to us and ascended back to heaven. He’s the Lamb, Savior, Worthy Redeemer. Scripture also says He will honor and uphold the decisions of the lost who ridiculed and rejected Him as Savior. In portrayals of Satan, he has a big pitchfork and standing and reigning over hell. This is **not** the truth! Satan will never rule hell; he’ll be in hell in its lowest part. Jesus rules hell! Jesus holds the keys to hell.

(12) Jesus is the name of invitation—the name every single person should hear and know that He went to the cross to die for them. He rose from the grave to give them eternal life; He is the Lord of true forgiveness. It doesn’t matter your color, nation, past, or how deep your sin. Jesus will receive any person at any time who comes to Him in faith. **Revelation 22:16-17:** **<sup>16</sup>I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright and morning star.** <sup>17</sup>And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Jesus doesn’t specify color, gender, if you’re rich or poor, slave or free—“whosoever will.” You will become His son or daughter that very moment. Jesus is willing and eagerly awaiting every single person who will call on that most magnificent name. This is a free, open invitation but it has a time limit. The Bible teaches we need to decide for Jesus as Savior before we close our eyes in earthly death. Once that moment comes, there are no do-overs, no u-turns, no re-decisions. What we decide either for or against Jesus will stand for all eternity. It will rule whether we go to heaven or hell. This is the truth from the Word of God. If you need Him as your Savior, today is the day of your salvation. This is the moment to say, Lord Jesus, I need you as my Savior. I believe you died for me on the cross, shed your blood to forgive my sin. When you walked away from the tomb through my faith, I will have everlasting life. People say I’ll wait until I’m better, until I’ve read the Bible more, until I conquer the sin in my life, until I’m older, until I’m closer to the kingdom. Don’t wait!! Today is the moment of invitation; you can receive Him right now by saying yes. Jesus is the sweetest name in all humanity, and I want you to have Him as your Savior. My prayer is that every person will know and say the name of Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life. It’s the only eternal decision you’ll ever make. My prayer is we’ll take the Savior into the world and be witnesses for Him—take that love where it’s so desperately needed. You will cross paths with people this week who will celebrate Christmas with trees, presents, lights, etc. but miss the true meaning of what it’s all about. My prayer is we’ll be witnesses to the centerpiece of Christmas—Jesus the Christ who loves us.

**Let Us Pray:** Our Father, our God, thank you for these words. Thank you for the many ways you show us who Jesus is. I feel so insufficient even trying to talk about it because you are so much, Lord. You mean so many things to us—to pick out a few is not easy. I pray we see this little “snapshot” of a Savior who loves us. A Savior who has given us life, given us the fellowship, witness, and ministry of the church. A Savior who left the glory of heaven and came to us as a baby in a manger. A Savior who got His hands and feet dirty taking care of us and teaching us the love of God. A Savior who went to the cross and laid down His own life that we might be forgiven. A Savior who rose from the grave to give us eternity. Father, thank you for who you are and how you teach us who you are. For we who are believers, I pray we’ll rededicate our lives to you and will fall down and worship you, just as the magi did—not on our schedules but we’ll worship and serve you and lay our lives before you. I pray as the church we’ll take the good news into the world. I pray for the one who needs you today and asks you to come into their hearts as your son or daughter. I pray for that salvation today; I pray for your healing touch today. Thank you that you love us, Lord, and that you take care of us every moment. Thank you for speaking to our hearts. We pray this in the strong and mighty name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.