

## Communion Service Transcript

### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Service Leaders: Mark and Rhiannon Reid

Speaker: Andrew Marfleet

*O God, our God, how glorious is your name in all the earth!*

**Your glory is sung by all of your creation!**

*When we look to the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, we wonder — Who are we that you care for us and for this world?*

**You are the God of life, crowning us with glory and honour to serve you all our days. O God, our God, how glorious is your name in all the earth!**

Father, we praise you for Your greatness, Your power and Your glory as we worship You today. We thank You for your abundant love grace and mercy, that when we were afar off, Your Son came to this world to die for us on the cross in order that we may have the opportunity of forgiveness, life and hope. Thank You for the gift of Your Spirit when we received Christ through faith. As we come to Communion this morning, may we know the presence of Jesus amongst us as we eat bread and drink wine and glorify the One who is risen and glorified. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

#### **Reading** Isaiah 43:1-9

43 But now, this is what the LORD says—

he who created you, Jacob,

he who formed you, Israel:

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

2 When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers,

they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire,

you will not be burned;

the flames will not set you ablaze.

3 For I am the LORD your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour;

I give Egypt for your ransom,

Cush and Seba in your stead.

4 Since you are precious and honored in my sight,

and because I love you,

I will give people in exchange for you,

nations in exchange for your life.  
5 Do not be afraid, for I am with you;  
I will bring your children from the east  
and gather you from the west.  
6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'  
and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'  
Bring my sons from afar  
and my daughters from the ends of the earth—  
7 everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made."  
8 Lead out those who have eyes but are blind,  
who have ears but are deaf.  
9 All the nations gather together  
and the peoples assemble.  
Which of their gods foretold this  
and proclaimed to us the former things?  
Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right,  
so that others may hear and say, "It is true."

## Confession

In Isaiah 43 we see Israel being addressed as a redeemed people, a loved people, a precious people. The same words are used to describe us: God's redeemed people, bought at great price in the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross for us. He is the One who promises to be with us through all the problems, difficulties and pains of life. He understands the pressures we are under, and he weeps when we weep and rejoices when we rejoice. He lifts us up out of our failure and forgives our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness.

Knowing this, we affirm what the writer to the Hebrews has said:

*since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.* Hebrews 10:19-23 (NIV)

Let's draw near to God in the silence now, confessing our sins, knowing that if we do so, God will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence

## Communion

Lead me to the cross  
Where Your love poured out.  
Bring me to my knees,  
Lord, I lay me down.  
Rid me of myself  
I belong to You.  
Lead me, lead me to the cross.

This table reminds us of that cross as we look upon the bread which we soon will break that reminds us of His suffering, and then we look into the cup and we are reminded of the blood of Jesus shed for us. Let's hear again the words of institution.

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,

***“This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”***

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying,

***“This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”***

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

As we break the bread, we remember the body of Christ broken for us.  
As we drink from the cup, we remember the blood of Christ shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

Silence

Father we thank you that we have been able to focus our minds on the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. Encourage and empower us to live faithfully as Your people in these difficult days, that by your Spirit we may spread your hope into our community.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.  
Amen.

## Prayers (including Notices)

Our notices are in the Weekly Sheet, please use it to inform yourself of what's on and pray through the material in your daily devotions. If you haven't attended any Lent Course sessions yet, then you are still welcome to come on the three remaining sessions. Connection details on ours or the CTF website. Don't forget the CTF Community Prayers on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

We usually pray for our fellowship on a Sunday morning, so please take a few moments to pray for anyone or anything that is on your heart this morning in the next few moments.

Silence

Father, we lift ourselves and our work and witness in this community, that Jesus may have the glory. We ask this in His name. Amen.

Let's pray for our fellowship

## Sermon

### ***What's in a name?***

One of my favourite plays is Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Much of the comedy in it is because no one in the play is earnest at all - everything is trivialised. It turns out that the real importance is to be called Ernest. The hero, Jack Worthing, pretends to be called Ernest to win the heart of the lovely Gwendolen, who will only marry him if he is called Ernest. The discovery that he is called Jack almost wrecks his chances, until it emerges that he has a secret identity - he was adopted as a baby after being left in a handbag at Victoria Station, but in the end it is discovered that he is the lost child of General Moncrieff, and was actually christened Ernest. At one point in the play, he even arranges to be christened Ernest by the local vicar, as there is no record of him ever being christened. This allows Wilde to explore (in a non-serious way) the concept of re-baptism. Surprisingly, this was not a new idea in the history of English Literature. Another play I used to teach was Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. In the famous balcony scene, Romeo offers to be re-baptised if that is what Juliet wants. He overhears her complaining that he is called Romeo:

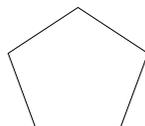
#### **Juliet.**

O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet...  
Tis but thy name that is my enemy...  
O, be some other name.  
What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name would smell as sweet;  
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,  
Retain that dear perfection which he owes  
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,  
And for that name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

#### **Romeo.**

I take thee at thy word.  
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptis'd;  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Names are important to us. We like to name things. Children name their teddy bears and dolls. Everything must have a name. A child in an exam was asked to 'name this shape', so she named it *Louise*.



It's part of being human. We're told in Genesis 2 of how God gave Adam the opportunity to name other animals:

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. *Genesis 2:19-20*

It was what God had done himself, and we were made in his image. Genesis 1 describes how God named things as he made them - day, night, sky, land, seas and so on. God has a name for everything. He has a name for every star:

He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. *Psalms 147:4*

Animals don't name anything. They recognise things and each other, but (without language) they don't have the concept of a name. You may think your dog or cat knows its name - all it knows is a familiar sound that usually means something interesting is about to happen.

As humans, we reflect God when we name things. As we learn, we label. Biology depends on this, but so does all knowledge. Confucius is supposed to have said that "the beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names". The worst thing you can do as a schoolteacher is to get someone's name wrong!

Names are very important in the Bible. The word 'name' is used nearly eleven hundred times. I don't have time to go through all of them today, you'll be glad to know! But I just want to consider three aspects of names in what I have to say.

### **1. God's name should be special to us**

Jacob wrestled with God, not knowing who it was - he asks the name of his opponent, but God will not tell him. But to Moses, at the burning bush, God is ready to disclose his name:

Moses said to God, 'Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask me, "What is his name?" Then what shall I tell them?'

God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: "I AM has sent me to you."'

God also said to Moses, 'Say to the Israelites, "The LORD, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you."

'This is my name for ever,

the name you shall call me

from generation to generation.'

*Exodus 3:13-15*

In our Bibles, when it says LORD in capital letters, it means God's name. It consisted of four Hebrew letters - YHWH - sometimes called the Tetragrammaton. It seems to be linked to the verb to be, "I am", but this is never explained. It seems God just **is**. We're not even sure how it was pronounced. In Hebrew, they often used the shorter form, Jah (as in hallelujah), but the Jews eventually avoided using the name Yahweh altogether. I can remember visiting a Jewish school in North London, and in lessons God was always referred to as *Hashem*, the Name. In prayers, Jews are allowed to use the title 'Lord' - Hebrew *Adonai* - as in *Baruch Adonai*, but when talking to other people they can only call him The Name, *Hashem*. My Jewish friends would be very offended if they heard me saying *Yahweh*, so I try to avoid saying the name in case any Jews are around. Some of our worship songs could be a real stumbling block to any Jew who tried visiting us. The first thing to say about God's name is that it is **holy**. The Commandments tell us not to take God's name in vain. To a Jew,

this means more than just blasphemy. His very name has to be revered. And Jesus told us when we pray to say "Hallowed be your name".

Incidentally, what did Jesus call God? His favourite word is *Father*. In the language Jesus spoke, Aramaic, he would call him *Abba*. When Jesus talks about God he uses the Greek word *Theos*, although he probably preached in Aramaic, and would have called God *Elah*. Interestingly, early Aramaic and Syriac speaking Christians used this name in their writings, and nearby Arab Christians called God *Allah* (as they still do). *Allah* is not the Muslim God: they use the same name, but attribute things to him that we cannot accept. And in any case, the Hebrew word for God, *El* or *Elohim*, is really a description. Other people had their own *elohim*, just as we talk about various alternative gods. Actually our word God comes from the Germanic *Wodan* (or Woden, Odin, Wotan etc.), the pagan God we get Wednesday from (Thursday from Thor); the first translation of the Bible into North European languages was in the 4th century AD, into Gothic, and they used the word *Guda* for God. The Catholic Church used the Latin word for God, *Deus*, and this caught on in France and other southern lands, but the Germanic nations continued to say *God* or *Gott*. Bible translators today often call God by the name of the chief local deity, to avoid confusion. In Kenya, I found that God was called *Mungu*.

God's name was not just holy; it was **powerful**. Having his name over you meant having protection:

The name of the LORD is a fortified tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. *Proverbs 18:10*

For the people of Israel, the name that Moses had told them was God's name was a guarantee of their protection, just as it was at the time of the Exodus. It meant salvation; it meant safety.

## 2. The name of Jesus is special to us

And this is why the name Jesus is significant - the Hebrew *Jeshua* (or *Joshua*) actually means 'Yahweh saves'. It's what the angel told Joseph in a dream:

You are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins.

*Matthew 1:21*

*Jesus* is just the Greek form of Joshua, quite a common name for Jews. But his followers (like Matthew) later saw how appropriate it was. They soon discovered that there was **power** in Jesus' name.

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.' He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. *Luke 10:17-19*

Jesus taught this fact quite clearly. We could ask things in his name. Prayers where two or three were gathered in his name were effective. His name carried **authority** - God would recognise it. It's a bit like a signature on a cheque. The correct name means that the amount can be paid. We are used to the idea of passwords, pin numbers and so on if we want access to our computer files, our emails, our money. The name of Jesus gives us access to his Father. Everything we are commanded to do as his followers is based on the fact that he is authorised to empower us:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... *Matthew 28:19-20*

And this is what the first Christians did. They preached and healed people in the name of Jesus.

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. *Acts 2:38*

Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." *Acts 3:6*

By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see. *Acts 3:16*

They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" *Acts 4:7*

It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. *Acts 4:10*

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." *Acts 4:12*

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. *Acts 4:18*

Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." *Acts 4:30*

This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name. *Acts 9:15-16*

And we read of Paul and the others preaching, healing, and casting out demons in Jesus' name. We still have that same authority. No other name will do - "there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

It doesn't end there. Not everyone knows Jesus as Saviour. But one day everyone will have to acknowledge him as Lord:

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. *Phil.2:9-11*

### **3. Our names are special to God**

There's one more twist to this. We need to return to a passage we looked at earlier, and see what follows Jesus' pronouncement of his authority.

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.' He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.' *Luke 10:17-20*

The Good Shepherd calls his own sheep by name (John 10:3). If he has a name for every star, surely he knows each of us by name. Our names are engraved on the palms of his hands.

'Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.  
*Isaiah 43:1*

Paul speaks of his "fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life" (*Phil.4:3*). Paul loved listing the names of people he worked with, and regrets that he can't mention them all. But their names

would be on God's list. The risen Jesus, speaking to the Seven Churches in Revelation, says as much:

I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. *Revelation 3:5*

It's always nice when someone calls our name, to say we have won a prize, or been picked for a team. Often in the Bible, God calls people by name: Moses, Samuel, Saul of Tarsus. Sometimes he gives people new names: Abram and Sarai, Jacob, Simon Peter.

In the early days of Christianity, new converts often chose a new name when they were baptised. Especially if their old name had pagan associations. Hence, 'Christian names'. Even more recently, converts might opt for this. When I was a teacher in Africa, we held a Christian camp for school children in our town. One of our guest speakers, who stayed with me for the week, was from another tribe. Pastor Joash. But one day, when the team were holding an open air meeting in the town, a local woman (reputed to be a witch) approached him and called him by another name - the name he had renounced when he became a Christian (his father had been a witch doctor). She didn't know him, or even his language, but by naming him, she had power - and he was unable to speak. Others on the team took her away, and prayed for protection. She never came back, but Joash was unable to preach that evening, as planned. (God was not thwarted, though - the replacement preacher had a real word from God, and there was much blessing!)

Evil spirits know people's names - there are examples in the Gospels and Acts of this - so it is important that God knows our name. It shows that he cares for each of his own.

But although he calls us by name, he also puts his name on us:

I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. *Revelation 3:12*

God is described as labelling each of us, with our new address. We are rebranded, if you like - part of the divine brand now.

We have come full circle. The God who, in Genesis 1, created the heavens and earth, and named their features, now brings heaven itself down to earth, and puts his name on our foreheads (Rev. 22:4). The prophecy in Isaiah 43 is finally fulfilled:

*Bring my sons from afar  
and my daughters from the ends of the earth—  
everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made. Isaiah 43:6-7*

## **Concluding Blessing**

Jesus is Lord, and has the name above all names. Let's celebrate this in our closing blessing.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is alive!  
The grave could not hold him. Christ is alive!  
There is joy because He is exalted and is Lord!  
Go into the world with joy.  
Tell the world Christ lives.  
Tell the world of God's love.

Go, my sisters and brothers, go without fear; go without shame; go without apology.  
Go in the name of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

That's it for today - may God bless you in the coming week and we'll see you next week. Stay safe and good bye.

### **For Reflection and Discussion**

It is suggested that you read through the sermon transcript again before answering these questions.

1. God's name is holy? What does that mean to you? Andrew took us through some of the names of God in the Bible and also talked about the words used to describe God in different civilizations. Why is it that as Christians we address God using different names for Him? Why should we never take the name of God lightly?
2. Why is it important that we pray in the name of Jesus?
3. We have a God who calls us by name. What does that tell us about the nature of our relationship with Him? How may that help us in our prayer lives, particularly when we go through difficulties in life?

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,

***“This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”***

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying,

***“This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”***

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

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**Your glory is sung by all of your creation!**

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**You are the God of life, crowning us with glory and honour to serve you all our days. O God, our God, how glorious is your name in all the earth!**