

Jeremiah 1:1-5

“The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month. Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

A Baptism, or as many around here call it a “Christening,” we know what baptisms are, but what is a “Christening?” The word “Christening” comes from old English culture and isn’t properly fitted for today. “Christening” originally was a service where the child was officially named; later it became a ceremony of naming ships. The word “Christening” obviously is derived from the word “Christ,” and could mean “to name after Christ.” The act of naming, an act which occurs at birth, and in many cases long before, is not seen as important today as it once was. We read about and/or hear of celebrities and sports figures who hang ridiculous names on their children. Some have named their children after days of the week, towns, one couple even named their child hashtag because they love to use twitter. In 1994 an astonishing 2,516 girls were named “Female.” Let’s not forget about the boys; 3,639 boys were named “Male” as well.

The act of naming has an enormous impact on the child as the child grows. Because the name is a part of speech by which we are recognized as a person. Remember, at birth we are named, not numbered, but named. Today our world would have us believe our social security number is more important than our name. Your number can be stolen, but not your name.

We are not classified as a particular species. We are not labeled as a list of compounds. How would you like to be introduced as “Mr. /Mrs. Proteins, Carbohydrates, Lipids, and Nucleic Acids?”ⁱ We are not labeled with a cash value. We are named with a name!

We cannot pick our own name that is something chosen for us. We are responsible for nick names. Our name is important, anytime we move from personal names to labels; we diminish our capacity to deal with life for which we were created. Our name gives us our character, not only who but what we are. It's not your family name but your given name that describes your nature. When a person's name is too far from a person's personality, we usually give the person a nickname. For years a man in my hometown was known as “Bucket” Smith. This was because as a child and teenager he was always seen with a bucket which was either full of vegetables for the family produce stand, or he was headed out to fill his bucket with fresh vegetables.

Apparently the Apostles felt names were important. They were not satisfied with the name “Joseph,” because they named him “Barnabas,” meaning “Son of Encouragement.”

After Abram's call, he was known as Abraham. Jesus changed the name of Simon to Peter meaning "Rock." After his conversion Saul was called Paul.

You might be asking at this time, "What kind of a name do I have? Does it honestly and properly reflect my nature?" My name Kevin is of Irish/Gaelic origin which means gentle, attractive, and handsome. What do you think? Well, maybe your given name of Tom or Mary may not say much about you, but your another name, your Christian name, which does describe your true nature as a person. You have a Christian name which was given to you at your baptism when you received a new nature by the Holy Spirit. In like manner, we are born again at baptism when God makes us new creatures in Christ. When we were baptized a pastor spoke our name and said, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." You were baptized in the name of Jesus. From that moment you have His nature, His mind, His spirit and attitude.

As you grew and matured in your faith you became a Christian and you bear the name of Christ. I wonder if that is the reason baptism is sometimes called "Christening?"

Legally we get our name when the birth certificate is signed by our parents, but spiritually we get our name when we are “Baptized.” Paul teaches that we become children of God only through adoption, and the act of adoption is baptism.

Having a Christian name, we face a daily challenge to live up to our name. We are to act according to who's we are. The Christian life is a process of becoming whose we are, bearers of the name of Christ. As a son went off to college, his father said, “Son, remember who you are.” As a child, Queen Victoria was told, “Be loyal to the royal in you.” Christian, you are somebody because you are Somebody's. You have a Christian name; as a Christian you are a name; your name is Christian.

A name describes a person's work. It shows what he is to do with his life. It explains the purpose, mission and ideals for life. The name describes a person's destiny, God's plan for his/her life, what he/she is here for. Jesus' name reveals not only His nature but His work. The name, Jesus, means “Yahweh saves,” or “He shall save.” This tells us just about all we need to know about Jesus. If He came to save, then He was the Messiah, the Son of God, deliverer and redeemer. Jesus came, as you have heard many times

before, to die for our sins. His mission was to reconcile people to God that they might be in harmony with each other. This meant that sin had to be dealt with, for sin means opposition and rebellion to God.

Jesus was born to die, and for this reason the cradle and the cross are two sides of the coin of Jesus' life. We cannot help but thank and praise God for Jesus' coming because his mission was to liberate people from their bondage to themselves and their sins. Christ came to bless, and to offer mercy and peace to all mankind. His name reveals that His purpose in coming was to bless, to help everyone, to give life to the dying, and light to those in darkness. No wonder we sing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name." "His name is wonderful," and "There is Something about That Name." Every Christian can now say that "my goal in life is to do with my life the same as Jesus did with his life." You and I have Christian names received at our baptism. Now we have the identical purpose and goal in life.

As Christians we witness to Jesus' name as the means of getting right with God. We call it "salvation" or "being saved." In the first chapter of his gospel, John says, "*But to all who received him, who believed in his name, He gave power to become children of God.*" The Bible promises "*Everyone*

who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” But it’s more than just sitting back and saying “I believe.” It’s following in the steps of Jesus, bearing His name, as Christians, we are concerned about “reaching lost souls.” Not really saving them, that’s God job, we are to reach them in His name; bringing people to the life and love of God in Christ. How do we go about it? Life and peace with God comes when you put your whole trust in the name of Jesus. As Christians it is our privilege to proclaim the name of Jesus that people might be saved.

We also serve in Jesus’ name. His name indicated that He was to save His people. He saved them by serving them. With a Christian name that is our purpose in life, too. This answers the question we often ask, “Why should I help people?” There are many reasons, some good and some not so good, but, the best reason for helping people in need is to do it in Jesus’ name. That means that we love people for Jesus’ sake. We should see Jesus in our neighbor, and what we do for him, we do for Jesus. This is the basic and noblest motive for Christian service. If we do it only for humanitarian reasons, we will eventually grow weary in just well- doing. That is what happened to the social action program and the civil rights efforts of recent

years. We ran out of steam and the train of human progress has slowed to a halt. We do not help people because they are worthy of our help or because they are lovable. We help them in the name of Jesus. Jesus said, *“I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”*

If we bear the name of Christian, we are to live daily in Jesus' name. In all of our actions, in our daily chores at home, work or school, we will do everything in Jesus' name. This means we should do everything in the mind and spirit of Jesus; honestly and cheerfully. Paul urges us to do this: *“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus ...”*

Again, how important is your name? This is a wonderful story. Not too theological but it certainly talks about the importance of a name.

The man's name was Butch O'Hare; One of the heroes of World War II. He was a fighter pilot assigned to an aircraft carrier in the South Pacific. One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he looked at his fuel gauge and realized that had not topped off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to the ship.

His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly, he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet. As he was returning, he saw something that turned his blood cold. A squadron of enemy fighters was speeding its way toward the American fleet. Since all the American fighters were gone, the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger. There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet. Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of the enemy planes. Wing-mounted 50 caliber bullets blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised plane after another.

Butch wove in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until finally all of his ammunition was spent. Undaunted, he continued the assault. He dove at the planes, trying to at least clip off a wing or tail in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as he could, rendering them unfit to fly. He was desperate to do anything he could to keep them from reaching the American ships. Finally, the exasperated enemy squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved, Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier. Upon his return he

checked in and told his amazing story. The film from the camera mounted on the wing told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He was recognized as a hero and given one of the nation's highest military honors. In case you're not that familiar with this name. O'Hare airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man.

Back in the 1920's there lived a man named Easy Eddie. At this time, Al Capone virtually owned the city. Capone wasn't famous for anything heroic. His exploits were anything praiseworthy. He was however notorious for bootlegged liquor, prostitution and murder. Easy Eddie was Al Capone's lawyer and for a good reason. He was very good! In fact, his skill at legal maneuvering kept Capone out of jail for a many years. To show his appreciation, Capone paid him very well. Not only was the money big, but Eddie also got special dividends. For instance, he and his family occupied a fenced-in mansion with live-in help and all of the conveniences of the day. The estate was so large that it filled an entire city block. Eddie lived the high life of the Chicago mob and gave little consideration to the atrocities that went on around him.

Eddie did have one soft spot however. He had a son that he loved dearly. Eddie saw to it that his young son had the best of everything – clothes, cars and a good education. Nothing was withheld. Price was no object, and despite his involvement with organized crime, Eddie even tried to teach his son right from wrong. He wanted him to be a better man than he was. Yet, with all his wealth and influence, there were two things that Eddie couldn't give his son; a good example and a good name.

One day Easy Eddie reached a difficult decision. Offering his son a good name was far more important than all the riches. He had to rectify all of the wrong that he had done. He would go top authorities and tell them the truth about Al Capone. He would try to clean up his tarnished name and offer his son some semblance of integrity. To do this he would have to testify against the mob and he knew that the cost would be greatly, but he wanted to be a good example, and he wanted his son to have a good name. So Eddie testified against Capone and within the year, Easy Eddie's life ended in a blaze of gunfire on a lonely Chicago street. Easy Eddie's son was Butch O'Hare.ⁱⁱ

How important is our name, the name Christian? It's very important!
Likewise, Christians should do everything in Jesus' name. We should praise His name; pray in His name; and heal in His name. With the name Christian we are called to believe in His name, and to die in His name daily. If everything you do, you do not do in His name then you are not living up to your name and if that's the case then maybe you're not really a Christian.ⁱⁱⁱ

i

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What are the different organic compounds found in human body#ixzz1M9INm3Kh](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_are_the_different_organic_compounds_found_in_human_body#ixzz1M9INm3Kh)

ii <http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/how-important-is-your-name-rich-anderson-sermon-on-jesus-life->

iii Wrinkled Wrappings, John R. Brokhoff, CSS Publishing Company, 1995, 0-7880-0700-9