

John 6:35-40  
What's in a Name?  
WRCoB 2.13.22

What's in a name?

Bill, Bob, Billy Bob  
Sally, Sarah, Sue  
Ken, Kyle, Kerry

Elissa, Alyssa, Melissa, Aleesha  
Terry, Theresa, Tom  
Wiley, Willy, Wilma and Willadene

Name are names are names!

Some are unique and some pretty common.

If you think your name is unique  
Don't bother to google it.

You will be surprised.

There are a bunch of David Whittens out there.

Some rather impressive ones to boot!

One owns an art studio in Utah.

One is a professor at the University of New Mexico.

One is a biochemist  
And another is a lawyer in Toronto.

There's an African-American media personality  
Named David Whitten

And one who is an architect.

There are two pastors besides myself.

There is a David Whitten who pastors  
The Temple Baptist Church in Hattiesburg MS

And much to my chagrin  
There is David A. Whitten who is pastor  
Of the Great Bridge Christian Church  
In Chesapeake, VA.

Don't even bother looking up David Whitten on Facebook.

There are 76 David Whittens listed.

After that exercise, I feel less than unique.

~~

So what's in a name.

Well, we know what's in a name  
When you're with your loved one  
Whose name is Henrietta  
And you accidently call her, Georgetta!

You'll know what's in a name then, won't you?

~~

People grow into their names.

After awhile, George looks like a George.

Even his dog begins to look like George.

We become our names  
And to name us any different  
Would make us feel strange.

~~

But there are people not comfortable with their names.

My dad was called by his initials H.N. growing up.

But when he went to college  
He introduced himself as Hugh.

I worked with someone who in the course of four years  
Changed his name several times.

His name was John Moran Braniff.

He changed it to John Moran  
And then changed it again to Sean Braniff.

And he wasn't an escaped convict either.

~~

On the other hand  
There was a man named Fabio Morton Smith  
Who proudly used all his names

Fabio was named for his mother  
Who was proud of her Italian roots.

Morton is the name of his dad's best friend killed in Vietnam.

He lived the life he couldn't.

Smith was his dad's family name, solid Midwestern stock.

He tried living up to his name.

Nicknames are sometimes used as a form of identity.

Slim Whitman

Mean Joe Green

Nerdy Ned

And Silly Sal.

~~

When it comes to Biblical names

Some are doozies.

Don't ask me to pronounce them.

1

- Mahershalalhashbaz (Isaiah 8:1, 3)
- Zaphnathpaaneah (Genesis 41:45)
- Tilgathpilneser (1 Chronicles 5:6, 20)
- Chushanrishathaim (Judges 3:8-10)

~~

And so what's in a name?

Moses found out what's in a name

When he came upon a burning bush.

God was there.

God told Moses to go and save his people in Egypt.

Moses hesitated and asked

What if they ask who sent him?

What if they asked for a name?

God replied, “tell them, ‘I Am Who I Am’ sent you!”

In Hebrew

2 YHWH (I Am Who I Am)

What kind of name is that?

A name so sacred, so powerful

The people would never, ever speak it.

~~

Jesus had only one given name.

But he would have been identified this way.

Jesus, Son of Joseph, of Nazareth, in the region of Galilee.

But as far as nicknames go

According to Billy Sunday

Jesus had 256 of them.

Cruden’s Concordance published in 1737

Lists 198 names and titles for Jesus.

Either way, Jesus was known by a lot of names and titles.

Some of these names and/or titles were given to Jesus.

3

- Prince of Peace
- Wonderful Counselor
- Rabbi
- Christ

- Savior
- Son of God
- The Word
- Almighty King
- Alpha and Omega
- Lord
- And the Lamb of God.

To name a few.

Jesus named himself with a few.

4

- Son of Man
- Rabbi/Teacher
- Messiah/Christ
- Friend

~~

What's in a name?

The name of Jesus

Is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua.

Joshua in Hebrew means

“The Lord is my salvation”

It is interesting to note

Jesus had no control over what he was named.

It was the angel Gabriel

Who told Mary and Joseph

To name their child Jesus.

Jesus lived up to his name.

Jesus also established nicknames  
Built upon the name YHWH  
“I Am Who I Am”

He used “I Am” in combination with a metaphor  
To define who he was and why he came.

~~

There are seven, “I Am” passages in the Gospel of John.

5

- I Am the Bread of Life (6:35)
- I Am the Light of the World (8:12)
- I Am the Gate for the Sheep (10:7)
- I Am the Good Shepherd (10:14)
- I Am the Resurrection and the Life (11:25)
- I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:6)
- I Am the Vine (15:1)

In the Gospel of John

With the use of the names Jesus chose to use  
He makes no mistake about who he thinks he is.

And through these metaphorical names  
He shows us the way of Salvation.

~~

So what's in a name?

William Willimon was a pastor of a large UM congregation  
Before becoming the Chaplain at Duke University.

A man came to him at the university  
And asked Willimon if he knew him.

Willimon says he hates when people do that.

“I’m Ron.” Willimon remembered.

Little Ron sat on the second pew with his mother  
At the large congregation he served.

He was, as Willimon remembered, a handful.

Ron told Willimon he was in college  
Because of the influence Willimon had on him.

Willimon, puffing up slightly, asked  
“How did I influence you?”

“Was it my sermons

“The pastoral care I gave your mom  
When she and your dad divorced?”

Ron said he didn’t remember any of those things.

“What I remember about you,” he said  
“Was that you always remembered my name.”

“That’s it?”  
“Yea, that’s it!”

~~

What’s in a name?  
Well, just about everything!

Back in the beginning, God gave Adam the task  
Of naming the animals.

By naming them, he brought them into being.

It used to be said on the farm

Don't name the animals you plan to eat.

~~

Maybe more than anything in life, we want to be known.

We don't want to be a number or a statistic

We want to be unique.

We like it when someone special calls us by name.

When someone we admire or respect

Who possesses a certain amount of authority

Uses our name.

It makes us feel valued.

And down deep inside of us all, we want God to know us.

Well, I am here today to tell you, brothers and sisters

Jesus, son of Joseph, of Nazareth in the region of Galilee

The Son of God, the Son of Man

Knows you and calls you by name.

And Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Wants you to know him by name!

To profess and claim his name!

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So what's in a name?

One day, the Apostle Paul writes,  
The world will come to know him

6

**Philippians 2:10-11 NLT**

**<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
<sup>11</sup> and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.**

In the name of Jesus, let's pray.

Jesus, come to us in the stillness of this sanctuary  
In the quietness of our hearts.

And ask, "Who do you say that I am?"

Savior?

Lord?

Counselor?

Healer?

Light of the World?

The Bread of Life?

Who are you?

Jesus, you are the Christ.

In your heart, name him.

The Apostle Paul tells us

That if we confess with our mouths

And believe in our hearts Jesus is Lord

We begin a breathtaking journey of salvation.

I pray, Lord, if there is someone here today  
That confesses Jesus as Lord and Savior

I pray they might turn the palm of their hands heavenward  
And let me prayer this prayer for you.

Merciful God  
Look upon the ones you name  
With eyes of compassion.

Let us commit soul and body  
Into your divine and gracious keeping

Guide us, through Jesus Christ, your Son  
Into all things that are well pleasing to you.

Preserve us by your Divine Word now and always.

Let us sleep without fear  
For you are our strength and shield.

Let us rest under the shadow of your wing  
For we are yours  
The sheep of your pasture.

Let us fear not, for you warm us with the rays of your love.

Let us hunger not  
For you feed us with the Bread of Life.

Let us thirst not

For you give to drink of the waters of your Holy Spirit.

And let us want not

For you are our treasure and wealth

For we dwell in the house of your peace.

In the name, the wonderful and mighty name of Jesus.

Amen.