

Good News, Great Joy

Week 3: Heaven Gives You a Name

- If you have your bibles, go ahead turn with me to Matthew chapter 1.
- Today as we continue our Christmas series, I want to talk about one of my personal greatest heroes in the entire biblical narrative.
- And that is a man named Joseph.
- Now, we do not know a lot about Joseph:
 - We know that He is in the direct family line of King David.
 - We know that He is a carpenter by trade.
 - We know that he had been engaged to Mary.
 - We know that he was the earthly father of Jesus, but after the early parts of Jesus' childhood, he really isn't mentioned in the rest of scripture.

- So there isn't a whole lot said about him, but what IS said about him is so very profound in my opinion.
- If you look with me in Matthew chapter 1, beginning in verse 18,
“Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.” Matthew 1:18-19 (ESV)
- This is what makes Joseph so incredible to me. Here he is, an honorable, upright, man. Doing all of the right things the right way.
 - And one day he finds out that his soon-to-be-wife is pregnant. He has no context, or understanding of the situation.
 - The only thing that he knows is that she's pregnant and he's not the father!

- I can only imagine the sickening feeling of betrayal that he gets in the pit of his stomach.
- No one would blame him for being upset. No one would blame him for acting out. No one would blame him for letting everyone know how hurt he was and why!
- In fact, at this point in time of history, he actually would have been completely within his rights to have Mary stoned for her unfaithfulness.
- But that wasn't the type of man that Joseph was. No, the bible says that he was a "Just" man.
 - That word "**Just**," is the greek word, "**dikaios**" (Dik-eye-os) which means- **upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God; one who is such as he ought to be**
 - Therefore, because Joseph was upright, because he was a righteous man, because

he was virtuous, because he was adamant about keeping the commands of God,

- Because he acted they way he ought to act... he decided to divorce her quietly.
- Ladies, if you are single, find a man like Joseph.
 - *A just man doesn't allow his emotions to dictate his decisions*
 - *An upright man, doesn't make a spectacle of slandering others*
 - *A virtuous man, doesn't let his hurt feelings determine how he is going to treat the people around him.*
- *No, a man who acts as he ought to, handles his difficulty discreetly, quietly, and makes sure he does so for the betterment of the people around him.*
- *Because when a just man is low, his goal is not to bring others down with him.*

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- So Joseph had decided his next course of action, but he hadn't made any rash decisions yet. And in verse 20, it says.
- ***“But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called His name Jesus.” - Matthew 1: 20-25 (ESV)***
- *When Rachel and I were starting the process of pursuing a child, one of the most near and dear aspects of the process to my heart was the naming of the child.*
- *I don't know, I'm just one of those weird people that completely overthinks the naming process, but for me, whatever name that we chose had to have a rich, deep, spiritual meaning.*
 - *It actually rather annoys Rachel sometimes.*
 - *Praise God we weren't having a girl, because for the life of us we couldn't agree on any girl names.*
- *But we were both able to agree on the name Fletcher pretty easily.*
- *Now we first considered that name, whenever we were either still dating or just recently engaged, and we went to a Sixers-Hornets game together in Charlotte.*
 - *And after the game we were heading back to the car and we ended up walking and talking with a homeless man*

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- He was super nice, didn't ask us for a thing, just made pleasant conversation.
- And his name happened to be Fletcher.
- And that was when Rachel first said, "Fletcher, you know, I really like that name."
- So, did we name our son after a homeless man we met after a basketball game? Technically, you could say that!
- But for me, I loved the name so much because I loved the meaning of the name.
 - The Name Fletcher means "Arrow Maker"
 - I loved how that related to Psalm 127:4 that says, "Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!"
 - Also, I loved the symbolism of the Hebrew word for Praise, "Yadah," which means, by definition, "To revere or worship with extended hands. To hold out the hands. To throw a stone or [shoot an] arrow."
- I always loved that word picture of shooting our praise intentionally and consistently in God's direction.
 - Aiming our praise at God the way that an archer aims his arrow
- So My hope and prayer in naming Fletcher, was that he would be a constant, consistent, and committed worshipper of Jesus Christ, confidently shooting his praise and thanks to heaven whenever this life becomes difficult as well as when it is full of joy.
- So that's the spiritual meaning behind Fletcher's name, the not so spiritual side, is that he may or may not have been named after a homeless guy.
- But either way, for me the naming process was so special and important
- And in Joseph's day and age, the naming process was just as, or even more so, a special occasion.

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- And Joseph was having to give up a lot of his dreams, plans, and goals throughout this surprise pregnancy of Mary's
 - He had to give up the timeline of when he thought they were going to have kids
 - His first kid, actually isn't even going to be his own biological child
 - He wasn't going to be able to live where he was planning on living the first few years of his marriage.
- But one of the most significant things he was going to have to give up, was the naming of the child.
 - Whenever a male child would be born in this culture, on the 8th day the child would be brought into the temple, with friends and family members gathered around, and they would have a special ceremony in which the male child would be circumcised, and the child would have his name bestowed upon him by his father.
- It was a very rich, meaningful ceremony. And traditionally the child would be given the name of his grandfather, some sort of relative, or at least the child would be given a prophetic name that would set the tone for the legacy that the child would live.
- So there would be a lot of anticipation around the child receiving his name, to see how his family legacy would be honored, or what kind of significant blessing the name would bring
- This was kind of the Father's moment to shine in the child's birth story.
 - But Joseph doesn't get to name the Child. Because Heaven had already given Him a name.
- In verse 21, the Angel is very clear, ***"She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."*** -Matthew 1:21 (ESV)

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- The Name **Jesus**, is the New Testament version of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means, “**Jehovah is Salvation.**”
- The Name that Heaven gives this baby boy, is indeed setting the legacy for this Child.
 - It’s the Name above all Names
 - The most meaningful, the most powerful Name in all of human history.
 - The only Name by which mankind can be saved
 - The only Name that makes darkness tremble
 - The only Name that has the power to completely alter the direction of anyone’s life.
- It’s a Name, in which it’s essence cannot be summed up in just one name.
- It makes me think of the scene in the movie Sandlot, when they first lose the infamous Babe Ruth signed baseball
 - And all of the kids are trying to make sense as to why Smalls, would ever let them play

with a ball that had been signed by Babe Ruth!

- And Smalls says, “Yea, you all keep saying that, “Who is She??”
- Then one by one they start naming off all of the different names for Babe Ruth
- “The Sultan of Swat!”
- “The King of Crash!”
- “The Colossus of Clout! The Colossus of Clout!”
- BABE RUTH!
- “The Great Bambino!”
 - That’s when it finally clicks, and Smalls goes, “OH! You mean that’s the same guy?!”
- Some could be thinking, throughout this Christmas season, “Who really is this Jesus?!”
- “Who is Jesus??”
 - “Immanuel! God with us!”

- “Wonderful Counselor!”
 - “Mighty God!”
 - “Everlasting Father!”
 - “The Prince of Peace!”
 - JESUS! JEHOVAH IS SALVATION!
- So the idea that I want to explore this morning, is the fact that because Heaven Named Him, Heaven can also name you!
- And I want to explore the implications of what these Names for Jesus really mean for us today.
- So the Angel says that His name will be Jesus, “Jehovah is Salvation,” because He will save the people from their sins.
- So first and foremost He is our Salvation from sin
- Sin is the most destructive spiritual disease that has ever been known to mankind
- And who has been inflicted with this disease? Every single one of us

- Every single human being has inherited a sin nature, except Jesus Christ.
- Why? Because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, He was not born with a sin nature because He was not conceived by a sinful human.
 - However, He was born of a woman, so He was fully human. Yet, conceived by the Holy Spirit, therefore He was fully God
- And because He was fully human, yet without sin, He was the only one who could fully pay the price for our sin and save us from our sins.
- So **Because Heaven Called Him “our Salvation,” Heaven can call you “Forgiven.”**
- Because Jesus came, lived a perfect, sinless life, died in our place, and rose from the grave... because He did that, the sin that had defined the human race no longer has to define your life.
 - If you simply accept the Salvation that He was born to give, all of your sins, faults,

failures, and shortcomings, that had held you short of God's standards are now forgiven and you are made New in His Name.

- And now within some of these other Names that the Bible gives for Jesus, we see some different ways how this salvation works out in our lives.
- You see, because whenever He saves you, He doesn't just forgive you and move on.
 - No, the salvation and forgiveness of God in your life begins a personal spiritual journey that effects every area of your life.
- Starting first and foremost with the truth that He is:
 - **IMMANUEL: GOD WITH US**
 - In Verse 22 and 23 it says, that all of this took place to fulfill what the prophet Isaiah had said. ***"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel. (which means, God with us)." -Matthew 1:23 (ESV)***

- So this prophecy is found in the book of Isaiah, chapter 7. And it's in the context of the reign of King Ahaz in Judah, who was not a righteous King
- And Ahaz finds out that two of their strongest enemies have decided to join forces against Judah. And when Ahaz hears about this, Isaiah says, ***"the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind."*** -Isaiah 7:2b (ESV)
- And the prophet Isaiah is sent to tell King Ahaz that he doesn't have to be afraid and that the schemes of the enemy are not going to work.
- Ahaz, however, is still afraid and is not believing that everything is going to be ok.
- And this is the context in which Isaiah gives the prophecy, ***"Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."*** -Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

- So the question is, how in the world is this prophecy that would not take place for another 700 years, going to be a sign for Ahaz that their enemies wouldn't win?
- The two situations don't seem to be related, or even within the same timeline!
- However, the promise is, that God has a plan to bring the Messiah through the virgin. This Messiah, would come through the House of Judah, therefore Judah would not fall, because that promise would have to be fulfilled.
 - God would not let this people be destroyed, no matter how strong the enemy, because God has a plan for this people, and there are no schemes of any enemy that can stop His plans!
- Now for us today, Immanuel has come, it has been over 2024 years since Immanuel has come, however, because He is "God With Us," the promise is that the enemy cannot destroy you either, because His presence is always with you.
- So **BECAUSE HE IS "GOD WITH US," YOU ARE NOT ALONE**
- There is no season you will walk through, that He won't be by your side
- There is no tear that you shed that He doesn't count
- There is no moment that you have that He doesn't share
- He is with you, He is for you, He'll never leave you, He'll never forsake you
 - He doesn't promise that difficulty will never happen, but He does promise to be there throughout it all and to bring you out victorious on the other side.
- If anyone would have needed that truth, it would have been Joseph.
- By the time Jesus is born, if I were him, I would be looking back over the entire past 9 months:
 - He went through the surprise pregnancy, he had to deal with all of the judgmental people

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that couldn't understand their situation, possibly including shaming from their own families

- He had to journey 70 miles with a 9 month pregnant wife just to register to pay taxes!
- And when they finally arrive, it took so long for them to get there that he can't find anywhere for them to stay.
 - So he ends up settling them into an animal shelter, and then Mary goes into labor, and has the baby in the dirty animal dump,
 - And then Mary wraps him up in swaddling cloths and lays Him in a manger. The word manger sounds cute and all but do you know what a manger is?
 - It's a feeding trough! So they have the Holy Son of God laying in a trough that animals eat from!
- If I'm Joseph in that situation, I'm feeling like a complete failure in that moment

- I feel like I'm letting Mary down, I feel like not providing the way I'm suppose to be proving as a husband and a new father, I may even feel like I'm letting God down!
- However, whenever life gets like that, God will always find ways to remind us how close and in control He really is.
- You can never measure the presence of God in your life based on your present circumstance.
- Because while Joseph would have been going through that internal rollercoaster, God sent the shepherds, with tales of angelic encounters, to confirm that this is indeed the God-Child, and they are right where they are supposed to be.
 - God then send's warning to Joseph when Herod begins his mass genocide of the babies in and around Bethlehem, and gets them out to safety just in time.
 - A few years later, when the excitement is wearing off and the mundane of toddler raising began, God had the wise men show up to pay honor and remind them that the

King of the Universe was indeed living within their house.

- Even when life gets chaotic and nothing seems to go your way, that never means that God is absent. In fact that's when His presence should become all the more real to us
- And we can rely on the promise of Isaiah 41:10, that says, "***Fear not, for I Am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.***" - ***Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)***
- Never forget, that because of Bethlehem, God is with you, and you are never alone.
- Isaiah, again prophecies about this virgin birth in Isaiah chapter 9, when he says, "***For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.***" - ***Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)***

- 4 more names to let us know exactly who Jesus is to us.
- First He is a **Wonderful Counselor**:
 - Have you ever been going through something difficult and it feels like there is just no one that understands you, or at least the struggle that you're dealing with?
 - And how much worse it can be whenever people try to counsel you through it who have never gone through what you are going through or felt what you are feeling?
 - But also, how encouraging it can be whenever you are able to talk with someone who has walked where you are walking and dealt with what you are dealing with.
 - Those are the best counselors, the one's who can really understand what you are dealing with and what you are going through.
- You see, that's what makes Jesus such a Wonderful Counselor, because there is no

hardship, temptation, or struggle that you can face that He does not understand.

- And He because He became a human, He has the ability to understand you and counsel you through anything.
 - He knows what it's like to be born into a broken world
 - He knows what it's like to learn and grow
 - He knows what its like to lose loved ones
 - He knows what it's like to be rejected by those closest to Him
 - He knows what it's like to be falsely accused
 - He knows what it's like to have His reputation slandered
 - He knows what it's like to be hungry and struggle financially
 - He knows what it's like to face temptation.
- Hebrews tells us, "***For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our***

weaknesses, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. -Hebrews 4:15-16 (ESV)

- He knows exactly the grace that we need when we need it, and He can be there for us now because He has been there before.
- **BECAUSE HE IS OUR WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, YOU ARE UNDERSTOOD**
 - He knows you, He get's you, He understands you. He is here with you, to show you the exact grace that can help you the most in your greatest time of need.
 - And while He is kind and gentle enough to help you process your feelings, struggles, and emotions, He is also:
- **MIGHTY GOD**
- I think wayyyy to often whenever we talk about Jesus, we talk about Him in a way that makes

us picture this guy floating around in a white robe, speaking about peace and love as if He's more like the first hippie rather than the All-Powerful Son of God

- Now He did talk about Peace, but He talked about a powerful Peace that surpasses all understanding
 - He said “Peace I leave with you, peace I give to you, but I do not give as the world gives.”
- He did talk about Love, but He talked about a Mighty Love of which there was none greater than a man would lay down His life for His friends
 - And He showed the greatest act of this powerful love in all of human history whenever He poured out His blood on that cross for you and for me.
- All throughout His ministry, people were captivated by the power and authority with which He spoke.

- Make no mistake, He was Mighty God in flesh and all of the Power of who God is flowed through Him at all times as He walked this earth.
 - Darkness was no match for His strength, sickness was no completion to His Power, and death had no chance against His Might.
- Beyond that, the Power in which He walked in, He has made available for you to walk in as well.
- Paul tells us in Romans 8, ***“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” -Romans 8: 35-37 (ESV)***

- The promise of his presence tells me that difficulties will not defeat me, and the troubles that make the rest of the world bitter, will only make me better
- Because the truth is:
 - **BECAUSE HE IS MIGHTY GOD, YOU MORE THAN A CONQUEROR**
 - You see, because Mighty God walks with you, that means you have the opportunity to share in His victory
 - His victory over this troublesome world, which He has overcome
 - Where the rest of the world gets beaten down by the struggles and stresses of life, if you have Mighty God at your side, that means any difficulties this world may throw at you will only make you stronger
 - With Him, burdens become blessings in which we encourage and strengthen those around us
 - With Him, Tribulations become Testimonies in which we share the Goodness of God in our lives that could impact someone else's eternity
 - With Him, Pain becomes a Platform in which God's glory is shown in and through our lives in greater ways
 - Because Mighty God walks with us, we can stand in the promise of Psalm 118:6 that says, ***"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do to me?" -Psalm 118:6 (ESV)***
 - Mighty God is your strength, He is your stronghold in a time of trouble, He is your Rock, He is your fortress, He is your refuge
 - And with Him, not even death can defeat you.
 - And that is because not only is He your Salvation, not only is He your wonderful Counselor, Not only is He Mighty God, but He is also the:
 - **EVERLASTING FATHER:**

- The Angel Gabriel told Mary of His Kingdom there would be no end.
 - In a world full of constant change, fleeting emotions, and temporary fixes, we are so desperate for something that is Everlasting
 - We need something reliable, we need something consistent, why?
- Because you can be confident in what is consistent
 - And there is nothing and no-one more consistent in all of time and space than ***“Jesus Christ [who] is the same yesterday and today and forever.” -Hebrews 13:8 (ESV)***
 - We need the beautiful truth that even though ***“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.” -Isaiah 40:8 (ESV)***
 - We need to cling to the truth of Lamentations 3 that says, ***“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never***

come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” -Lamentations 3:22-23 (ESV)

- And Paul tells us that even ***“If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.” -2 Timothy 2:13 (ESV)***
- He is consistent, He is never changing, He is everlasting
- And **BECAUSE HE IS EVERLASTING, YOU ARE ETERNALLY SECURE**
 - He is the reason why to live is Christ and to die is gain
 - He is the reason why to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord
 - He is the reason why not even death cannot separate us from the Love of God
- The birth of Jesus was the beginning of our redemption story, our rescue story.

- It was the first step in death being defeated and God's relationship with mankind becoming restored.
- That is why last but not least, He is:
 - **THE PRINCE OF PEACE**
 - When sin entered into the world, it did not just separate us from God, our sin actually made us enemies of God
 - But God was not content to leave the relationship with His creation on those terms
 - So He became a human, in the person of Jesus Christ, so He could provide the opportunity for all of us to be at Peace with Him.
 - ***“Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” -Romans 5:1-2 (ESV)***
- Peace with God is not obtained by good works and a healthy track record.
- It's not obtained by accomplishments and obedience
- It's only obtained by faith in the Son of God, who put on human flesh, lived the life we couldn't live, died the death we deserved, and saved our lives which we could not save ourselves.
- ***“For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” -2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)***
 - Make no mistake, He did not just die FOR our sin, He died AS our sin
 - He took that which separated us from God upon Himself, so our relationship with Him could be restored
 - CS Lewis once said “The Son of God became a man, to enable men to become Son's of God.”

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- So here's the good news and great joy of it:
- **BECAUSE HE IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE, YOU CAN BE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD**
- That's what it means to be righteous, to be right with God
- And there's only one way to be right with God, and it's not philosophy, ideology, its not through religion, tradition, or customs
- The only way to be right-with-God is to put your faith and trust in the Prince of Peace, who made a way for you to be saved, forgiven, set free, and redeemed.
- No matter how far off you may have been or feel right now, Jesus offers you unconditional Peace with God
- ***“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility.” -Ephesians 2:13-14 (ESV)***
- Because of the Good News and Great Joy that God became a baby, He makes a way for us to have Peace with God, but He also made a way for us to have Peace on Earth and Goodwill toward men this Christmas season
- If He offers us peace with Him, than peace with others is more than possible
- The whole world will not receive His peace or experience His peace
 - But we can.
 - You see because of His peace in our lives: We don't have to let the troubles of this world steal our peace and our joy this Christmas season
 - Because of His Peace in our lives: We don't have to allow petty disagreements to cause hostility among our families
 - Because of His Peace: We don't have to let the loss of a loved one make us miss out on the comfort of eternity

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- If we allow the Prince of Peace to rule in our hearts and our homes this Christmas, we will allow His generosity and goodness to set the tone for every aspect of our attitude, relationships, our celebrations.
- The more you appreciate His identity, the more you can begin to understand yours.
- And do not forget this Christmas season, that if Heaven Named Him, Heaven can also name you:
 - Heaven named Him our Salvation
 - *So Heaven could Name you Forgiven*
 - Heaven named Him God with Us
 - *So Heaven could name you A New Creation*
 - Heaven named Him The Wonderful Counselor
 - *So Heaven could name you Redeemed*
 - Heaven named Him Mighty God
 - *So Heaven could Name you More than a Conqueror*
- Heaven named Him Everlasting Father
 - *So Heaven could name you A Child of God*
- Heaven named Him Prince of Peace
 - *So Heaven could name you the Righteousness of God in Christ Jesus*
- Don't let anything other than the Name of Jesus define who you are!
- Heaven wants to give you these names, but you have to make the choice to accept it
 - Heaven wants to bestow upon you a new name, give you a new identity, and set a new legacy for your life, but you'll never have it if you don't receive it.
 - All of history was changed forever, that night Jesus was laid in a manger
 - And all it takes is to believe in Him, and your life will be changed forever as well.

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- And for those of us in this room who have accepted His gift of salvation, we have to remember the forgiveness was only the beginning
 - His salvation is still being worked out in our lives
 - And many of us need to be reminded of how great and extensive His identity is
- And we need to allow Him once again to be our Wonderful Counselor
- We need to stop trying to fix ourselves and let Him be our Mighty God
- We need to be reminded that He is our Everlasting Father
- And allow Him to be our Prince of Peace in a newer and greater way this Christmas Season.