

"HEAR YE HIM"

A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: THE NAME BY WHICH YE ARE CALLED

Scripture: Book of Mormon, Mosiah 3:13-20

And now, it shall come to pass that whosoever shall not take upon him the name of Christ, must be called by some other name; therefore, he findeth himself on the left hand of God. And I would that ye should remember also, that this is the name I said I should give unto you, that never should be blotted out, except it be through transgression; Therefore, take heed that ye do not transgress, that the name be not blotted out of your hearts. I say unto you, I would that ye should remember to retain the name written always in your hearts, that ye are not found on the left hand of God, but that ye may hear and know the voice by which ye shall be called, and also the name by which he shall call you: For, how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart? And again, doth a man take an ass which belongeth to his neighbor and keep him? I say unto you, Nay; he will not even suffer that he shall feed among his flocks, but will drive him away and cast him out. I say unto you that even so shall it be among you, if ye know not the name by which ye are called.

If ye will not hearken unto the voice of the good shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold, ye are not the sheep of the good shepherd.

What a horrible thing it would be to wake up some day among perfect strangers -- perhaps after an accident or an illness -- with no identification papers and no recollection of who you were, or where you belonged, or what your name was! We are so accustomed to having a name, knowing that name, and being identified and called by that name, that it is difficult to imagine how horrible and frightening and frustrating it would seem to be without one.

A name satisfies two rather basic human needs. First, a given name serves to identify you as an entity or personality, distinct and different from all others. A number would perhaps do as well as a name in some respects, but there is a certain dignity in a name that a number can never have. And second, a family or surname establishes you as belonging to a group. We all rather desperately need to feel that we belong somewhere, that we are known and wanted and loved and respected. There is a great difference between being an inmate of an institution, or a servant in someone else's home, and being a person who is loved and wanted, and who belongs with a family in a family home. The son has rights that the inmate or servant can never have. "The servant abideth not in the house forever, but the Son abideth ever."

A child who is part of the family, and who bears the family name usually inherits and manifests certain family characteristics. He looks and acts like the family. He receives from the family a certain physical, mental, spiritual, and social heritage which will do much to shape his activities and his life. He is expected to be obedient and loyal to the family authority, to be industrious, sober, clean, and law-abiding, in order that the family resources may be conserved and the family name not brought into disrepute. In return for the satisfaction, the security, and the honor of being able to claim the family name, the good son or daughter feels that he owes this obligation to the family.

The prodigal son in Jesus' parable renounced his family. The parable does not state specifically whether he gave up the family name, but at any rate, he did reject all that the name stood for. He took his inheritance, which in one sense belonged to the family and not exclusively to him, and went into a far country, where he wasted the family resources in riotous living. We all either are or have been prodigals at some time or other. We have renounced the family of God, forgotten our brotherhood with each other and with Jesus, our elder brother. We have taken our share -- and sometimes more than our share of the family fortune,

and have gone into a far country, away from the family, to waste it in riotous living. Every one of us rightly belongs in God's family. It is only our own rebellion, our own carnal, sensual, and devilish nature, which keeps us out. And like the prodigal son, if we refuse to remain in or return to our Father's house, before long we find ourselves in the pig sty of sin, degradation, poverty, and want.

Man in his natural state is separated from God, is even an enemy to God. He ought to belong to God's family, but he cannot unless he renounces his old allegiance to the family of Satan, and takes upon him the name of Christ. In one of his appearances to the people of ancient America, as chronicled in the Book of Mormon, Jesus said; "Ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name, for by this name shall ye be called at the last day; and whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day."

To take upon you his name means that you must have been spiritually begotten of him -- that you have been born again-- that because of this new birth you have become a member of his family, subject to the family traits, characteristics, nature, customs, traditions, morals, standards, and ideals. As a member of the family of Christ you must have a settled determination that you will do nothing which will bring the family name into reproach, or bring shame or suffering or want to any other member of that family. As a member of the family you will have the inalienable right to call upon your Father for any and every kind of aid -- physical, spiritual, financial, or what not -- so long as it is for your best good and in keeping with the over-all needs and ideals of the total family.

On the other hand, if you don't know your family, or your family name -- if you have refused to take upon you the only family name given whereby men may be saved -- then in the last day you will have no family and no family name. You have no claim on the Father. There will be no place in God's kingdom where you can claim a place or a family inheritance. You will not be able to respond when the family name is called and the family of God gathers around his throne.

It is a principle of life that men receive their reward or their wages from the master whom they serve. We gain our blessings and our benefits from the family whose name we bear, the family which

we serve, and of which we are a part. For example, my children claim their support and their inheritance from me, not from you. Similarly, if I work for the Smith corporation, I don't draw my pay checks from the Jones Corporation or the Brown Corporation.

The Book of Mormon has an intriguing little parable to illustrate this principle. "How knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart? And again, doth a man take an ass which belongeth to his neighbor, and keep him? I say unto you, Nay: he will not even suffer that he shall feed among his flocks, but will drive him away and cast him out. I say unto you that even so shall it be among you, if ye know not the name by which ye are called." We don't supply grain and pasturage and water indefinitely even for a beast of burden who does all his work for another master. How, then, can we expect to belong to the family of Satan and serve him all our lives, and then claim a reward in the family and kingdom of God?

Jesus has often been characterized as the Good Shepherd. Again the Book of Mormon says: "The Good Shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you, which is the name of Christ; And if ye will not hearken unto the voice of the Good Shepherd, to the name by which ye are called, behold, ye are not the sheep of the Good Shepherd." To continue this line of reasoning --if you are not the sheep of the Good Shepherd, of what fold and family are you? The devil is your shepherd, and ye are of his fold, and his family. From him whom ye serve, then, you will receive your eternal reward.

It is not enough just to take upon us the name of Christ -- to go through an adoption ceremony and then forget our family name. We must remember Jesus, obey him, respect him and his wishes for us. We must remember to retain that name written always in our hearts. We must always be ready to respond to that name when the Good Shepherd calls his sheep, and to follow wherever he may lead.

You are invited to join the family of Christ -- to take his name upon you -- to live within the love and friendship and security of his family, and to claim your everlasting inheritance with all the sons and daughters of God who have named his name and served him with love and loyalty to the end of their days.