

What a delightful text we have today from the prophet Isaiah. The joy and celebration oozes out of it. **“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not be quiet, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch.”** The Lord just can’t keep quiet, He is overfilled with excitement. BECAUSE OF THE MESSIAH, THE LORD DELIGHTS IN ZION.

One thing that is behind this text is the importance of names. A name is given at a significant event. Your first name is given you at your baptism. Such that we sometimes call your first name your Christian name. When you’re married, women often change their last name. When you become part of a new friend group, they might give you a nickname.

However, I. We are often tempted to name ourselves. Perhaps you want a new style when you get back from summer break, and you want people to start calling you by your middle name, or a different variation of your first name. Sometimes this can be practical. In college a girl named Jordan married a guy named Jordan, so when she got married, she asked people to start calling her by her middle name Nicole.

Other times it can be to command some respect. The high and mighty third grader wants to drop the “y” at the end of the name. I’m not Jimmy but Jim. I’m not Joey but Joe. I’m not Tommy, but Tom.

Perhaps the latest hot button issue is when a child comes back the next school year and wants to be called Josephine rather than Joseph, Earl rather than Elizabeth, or Samuel instead of Samantha. Some think that given enough effort or willpower, we can even reinvent ourselves from man to woman!

How have these attempts to recreate ourselves usually gone? That cool nickname you give yourself only lasts a few weeks into the semester before you’re Joey just like last year. Who actually earned respect by demanding that the other kids call you a name like boss or similar?

Even with transgender individuals, despite what popular culture and the media might make you believe, an identity change rarely fixes the struggles, traumas, and issues lying underneath. When we try to re-create ourselves, it’s the same person staring back in the mirror at us.

Yet often we call ourselves names only we know. In our Old Testament text, God’s people were termed forsaken and desolate. Sometimes we are our own worst critics. In our heads or when we’re alone we call ourselves nasty names: ugly, clumsy, awkward, and unpopular. Perhaps many of these attempts to re-create ourselves by a new name is born from the negative names we call ourselves. We look in the mirror and don’t like who we see, so we want to try to start fresh.

Ultimately, all these attempts to reinvent ourselves will fail. There's only so many ways you can bake a potato, it's still a potato. You can dress up a sinner, but a sinner is still going to be underneath.

For those wishing for a new start, we have hope. II. The Messiah wins us a new name. Look at all the amazing, comforting things the Lord God says to His people. **“The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory.” “You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.” “For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”** What an amazing words!

Is it because of all that we have done for God? No way! We need to back up to the previous chapter. Isaiah 61 gives us the clue as to why there is this sudden change. We read in verses 1 and 2 **“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;”**

The Lord has anointed this person to bring good news. Literally, the Lord has Messiah'd this person to bring good news. Where else do we read this? Next week we'll read from Luke 4 where Jesus goes to the synagogue at Nazareth and He preaches a sermon with this as the text. He concludes the sermon saying, **“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”** Jesus preached that He is this anointed one who would do all these things.

This is why Jesus came to this Earth: so He could accomplish your salvation, that he could proclaim good news to you poor sinners, that he could bind up your broken heart, and that he could proclaim your freedom.

Through His ministry, through His miracles, through His work as your substitute, He has won for you the beautiful names described in our Old Testament text today.

And Jesus endured the rotten names that we so often face. He was written off as merely the carpenter's son. He was called a glutton and a drunkard for dining with the wrong crowd. He was called a demoniac and insane. He was mocked as He was spat upon and sarcastically called King of the Jews. They picked up stones to stone Him when He revealed Himself as the Great I Am.

Even today, the name of Jesus is never dragged through the mud, right? God's name is profaned when we use it carelessly like seasoning to pepper our words and tell people we really mean what we say. Jesus' name is profaned in our speech, our movies, and our society.

Yet Jesus endured all this and endures all this for you. Eventually he was raised up and ascended to heaven. **“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,”**

This Messiah has taken on all sorts of evil and bad reputation for the sake of you, that you may be the apple of God’s eye, that you may be a delight to Him. We read in Isaiah 62, **“you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give.”** We cannot reinvent ourselves by a new name, but when someone gives us a new name. That’s what sticks. When the creator of the universe gives us a new name, well, that’s as good as gold.

And so we see in our text III. The Lord delights in newly named Zion! **“You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married.”** You will have a new name: Hephzibah, that is, My delight is in her. Beulah, that is, married.

As those who have been redeemed by the Messiah, Jesus Christ, we have a new identity. It’s not based on the name our parents gave us. It’s not based on how many X chromosomes we have. It’s not based on the talents and preferences we had in high school. Because of the Messiah’s work in creating for you a new name, the creator of the heavens and the earth looks at you and calls you “Beloved.”

This is what we see in last week’s sermon. What happened at Jesus’ baptism? A voice came down from heaven and said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. The same thing happens in your Baptism. The Father looks down and doesn’t see your faults, your foibles, and all the nasty things you call yourself. He sees a perfect, holy, wonderful child of God.

This is what it means to be a Christian, to know that you are one whose identity is in God and His Son Jesus Christ. You are beloved. You are forgiven. You are the crown jewels to our Heavenly Father. That is your first and foremost identity. That is your new name.

Your primary identity is not breadwinner, homemaker, student, or parent. Your identity is not ultimately found in whether you’re lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or heterosexual. You’re not the awful things you tell yourself on your worst day. God says pay attention to none of that.

God calls you delightful in Jesus the Messiah. God calls you Church, the beautifully adorned bride of Jesus the bridegroom. God has reinvented you and made you a new creation. To be a Christian is to have a new family, the Church. To be a Christian means to be valued and loved by your God. Thanks be to God that He gives us a new name in Jesus the Messiah. Amen!