

Manuscript of Matthew 1:18-25 – What’s in A Name?

Outline:

Sermon Title: What’s in a Name?

Point One: Jesus: Christ Has Come so That He May Save Us

Point Two: Emmanuel: Christ Has Come so That God May Dwell with Us

INTRODUCTION:

In the 2002 film “The Importance of Being Ernest” (which is based on an Oscar Wilde play). The two main characters, Jack and Algy both deliberately use the false name Ernest for social endeavours. It enables Jack to slip under the radar and not have his actions effect his reputation. It enables Algy to pretend to pretend to be adventurous. However, their deception catches up to them when they both fall in love with girls from each other’s families. The problem is intensified when one of the girls declares that she could only love a man called “Ernest.”

Before they are married the women uncover that there are two Ernests, and yet neither of them is Ernest truthfully. The reason that they are disappointed is because they rightly expected that the name Ernest gave them an insight into the character of the men they were interested in. (Earnest means truthful they thought that the men where themselves truthful but they were not). What the girls’ reaction shows is that names are intended to give us an insight into the people that they represent.

We understand this to some degree, as there are in New Zealand certain names that you are not allowed to call your children. You are not allowed to call your child Emperor. Or Lord. Or V8. And you aren’t allowed to call twins Fish and Chips. This is because we recognize that names are not insignificant.

A Name in Biblical Times

- 1) In biblical times someone’s name was very significant and the mother or father who did the naming would often give a reason for the way they named their children. You will remember the story of Samuel. Hannah, his mother is barren and has been praying for a son for a long time, eventually God gives her a son. And I Samuel 1:20 says, “She called his name Samuel [which means I have heard from God] for she said “I have asked for Him from the Lord.”

- 2) It's even more significant in the bible when God tells someone what to name their children. God tells David in I Chronicles 22:9 "Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all of his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days."

So when God himself directly tells someone what to call their children it is very important. Matthew tells us in our text that God tells Joseph what he is to call his son. I wonder, do you know what Jesus name means? Perhaps you know that Christmas is more or less an important event, because that is when Jesus was born? And you know that Jesus is more or less important because the two central Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter centre on his life and death. You know that the best Christian songs, like Handel's Messiah, are about him. But, do you know what Jesus name means? Do you know who He is? Because His name tells us who He is.

Fortunately, Matthew in his account of Jesus' life, which was just read tells us what Jesus name means. Turn there with me. Matthew Chapter One. If you don't have a bible, or didn't bring it with you open up the black one on the back of the seat in front of you, Matthew One is found on page ____, turn there with me and we will read together.

The Background to Our Passage

"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."

- 1) Note that Matthew describes here an extra-ordinary scene. Joseph and his fiancé Mary are engaged. And as was common for first they are waiting for marriage. Matthew explicitly tells us that they have not been intimately related. And they find out that Mary is pregnant.
- 2) This puts Joseph in quite an awkward predicament. He to this point does not understand that Mary is pregnant not by immorality but by the power of the Holy Spirit. Nor that the Son of God himself has descended to become a baby in her womb.
- 3) In Verse 19, Joseph resolves to cancel the engagement. (Or your translation, like the ESV, might say divorce: the reason this word is used is that in Jewish times betrothal, roughly equivalent of our engagement,

was very serious, but could be dissolved with by the husband giving the wife a bill of divorce if she was clearly immoral).

- 4) Joseph is in quite a situation. So in verse 20, God sends an angel to explain the situation for him. The angel of the Lord explains that Joseph should continue to marry Mary. And the angel's explanation of the situation to Joseph centres on Jesus's name. So much so that verses 24 and 25 tell us that Joseph "took his wife" and when the child was born "he called his name Jesus".
- 5) The first half of this chapter has focused on Jesus's identity as saviour in light of His genealogy. He is the fulfilment of Old Testament expectation. He is the seed of the women prophesied in the Garden of Eden, the seed of Abraham prophesied in the land of Canaan, and the root of David prophesied in Jerusalem.

The second half of this chapter focuses on Jesus's identity in light of his name. Jesus is called two things in these next few verses 1) He is called Jesus, and 2) He is called Immanuel. Jesus means that He has come that He may save us. Immanuel means that He has come to enable God to dwell with us. We will look briefly at the meanings of these two names today.

MAIN POINT ONE: His Name Shall be called Jesus For – Salvation from Sin

What Does Jesus' Name Mean

Jesus name is a transliteration from Joshua in the Old Testament. You will remember that Joshua lead the Israelites into victory over the people of Canaan. Joshua was a saviour appointed by God for the people of Israel. He got victory over the enemies of God's people. Jesus has come a new and better Joshua. If Joshua saved Israel from the Canaanites, what does Jesus save from?

The angel provides Joseph with an explanation have a look at verse 21. "You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." This is Jesus' mission statement. It is what He is about. It is why He has come.

Political Slogans and the Mission of Christ

Let me illustrate this a little for you. "Make America Great Again" is the political slogan for who? Donald Trump right. Donald Trump has come as "an outsider" into the American as a political scene to "Make America Great Again." No one

has been able to figure out exactly what his definition of greatness is. Nor exactly when America was great. But the idea of a “great” America certainly sells votes. But it is doubtful that Trump has any ability or plan to make America “great” other than by building walls. In contrast, what Jesus’ offers the restoration that Trump cannot define when His political slogan was published “He will save his people from their sins.” He knows exactly what He is going to do.

Let’s get a breakdown of what Jesus’ mission statement means.

- 1) What will he do? – Save. He has come to fix fallen humanity and save us from the condemnation that we are all under since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden.
- 2) Who will he save? – His people. His people are those who believe. John 3:16 tells us this when it says that “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”
- 3) What will He save from? – Sin
 - What is sin? Sin is not treasuring the God who created us, by disobeying His law. As I John 3;4 says “sin is lawlessness.”
 - And we are all sinners for Romans 3:23 says “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”
 - Think about this children. When you disobeyed your mother, when you lied to your teacher about doing your homework, when you stole gum from the dairy, when you got angry and hit your sister. The bible calls this sin. And by doing these things we demonstrate that we are all have sin in our hearts. We need a savior.
- 4) How will He save? – He will save by dying. If Christ is to save from sin He must suffer under God’s wrath in our place and die. For Romans 6:23 says, “The wages of sin is death.” He “save us” by spilling his blood to pay for our sin. He is come as a sacrificial lamb to take our place and die for our sin. This is the way John the Baptist introduces him when he first meets him “Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” He gets victory over our sin by being lead like a lamb to slaughter. This is why Jesus came; He came as lamb. Mary had a little lamb and his

fleece was white as snow, but one day that fleece would be covered with blood as the perfect sacrifice paid for the sins that we committed.

Jesus' Mission is What the Incarnation is All About

This is why the incarnation is glorious. And the wise men come from the ends of the earth to worship the king born in Bethlehem. But, He took to Himself a human nature so that He could sympathize with our weaknesses and suffer as a human born under the curse. He entered into all the miseries and strife that humankind has been familiar with since the fall. He took on a physical stomach and learnt what it is to go have an empty stomach and hunger. He took on a physical brain and knew what it felt like to have no place to lay your head. He took on a human soul and knew what it felt like to be rejected by those most close to him, by his own brothers, and even by his own disciples. More than all this ultimately He took on a body and soul like us so that He could save us. He took on a human back so that it could be whipped. He took on a human side so that it could be pierced. On a human arms so that they could be stretched out and nailed to the cross. He took on humanity so that He could suffer in our place and take, even more than all the physical sufferings, the wrath of God in our place. This is what is so miraculous about God coming to live with man in the incarnation. Through this God-man, God made a way for us to then go and live with Him.

MAIN POINT TWO: Immanuel: Christ Has Come So That God May Dwell With US

He is come to save and reconcile us to God. By dealing with the sin of humankind he will undo the curse and bring us back to the garden. Where the people of God walk with God.

Matthew Henry puts it this way, *"By the light of the law, we see Him as a God against us; but by the light of the gospel, we see Him as Immanuel, God with us."* It is only by the gospel that you can know the God whom you were made for. It is only because He deals with our sin that we are able to sing, "O, Come, O Come Immanuel." God with us would be Hell apart from Christ. But since He has dealt with our ungodliness we can dwell with a Holy God again. We as fallen humans cannot be reconciled the joy of God's presence unless someone pays to remove the offenses we have committed against God.

The Gospel Makes Immanuel Good News

Do you see now that the gospel is good news? Do you long to be reconciled to such a God? A God who would take on the frailty of human form not so that He could set himself up as a ruler and subdue the rebellious sinful world under him, but so that he could suffer to pay for the crimes of rebels like you. You might think this sounds ridiculous. You might be thinking to yourself, if I was God I certainly would not stoop so low and allow myself to undergo such humiliation. Well praise God that you are not God. What a tyrant you or I would be if we were God. But see what kind of God we have in the biblical real one. How low He stoops to love his enemies. How humiliated he will be so that he can take our place on the cross. Doesn't this seem like the kind of God that you want to spend the rest of your life with?

Have You Been Smitten By Christ?

Being a young man at a Christian school, I have frequently been involved in conversations with roommates about a girls whom they are interested in. They back to the room after a conversation they had in the corridor raving. She is so lovely, and sweet, and I just think I could spend my whole life with her. They are smitten.

Are you smitten by Christ? Has He won your affection? Think about how humble He has made himself to come as a baby that He could pursue a sinner such as you. Think about how willing He is to sacrifice heaven that He could condescend to seek His lost sheep. Think about how much He loves His people that He would come and suffer for their sins. Think about His willingness to forgive as He welcomes all who labour and suffer to come and find rest for their souls. This is the kind of God that is worth spending the rest of your life getting to know! The psalmist says, "You make known to me the paths of life, in your presence there is fullness of joy and at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

The Right Person Makes All the Difference

A friend of mine on campus often remarks to me. "People in love can do anything and think that it is fun." And tells a story of couple he knows that he used to watch throwing a card across the table to each other. It is just a card but they think it is the best game in the world. The reason is because it is not the card thrown that is special it is the person that the card is thrown to that is special. So in God's presence there is fullness of joy because it is God's

presence that you are in. He is the great treasure. He is the thing that brings the joy.

Jesus is the most Heavenly thing about Heaven

This is why the name Immanuel, God with us, is so glorious. The ultimate aim of the Gospel is to reconcile God and man. The Son of God, very God of very God, became man, found in human form and humbled himself even to the point of death, so that men and God may live together once more. We are saved so that we may know God. It is God himself who is the gospel. He is the thing that makes and heaven heavenly and salvation satisfying.

We began our time thinking about the significance of a name to understand someone. Jesus' names give us an understanding of who he is. We learn through the name Jesus that Jesus is the one who will save His people from their sins. We learn through the name Immanuel that He has made a way for us to again live with the only one who can satisfy our eternal souls; himself. You should be thinking now well did Jesus come to save me? Am I one of His people? How do I know that I will get to be one of those who will be with God when I die?

CONCLUSION: Everyone who Calls on the Name of the LORD Shall Be Saved

These are profoundly good questions. This is the answer that the bible gives. If you put your trust in Jesus to save you from your sins. You will be saved. If you call to him He will save you. There is power in His name. And Romans 10:9 says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Do you see Your Sin?

So do you see your own sin. Sin so vile that it must be God to come and suffer to save you from it. Do you hate your sin knowing that it is an offense against such a good and gracious God? Do you see how wrong your lying is in the eyes of the one who is the way, the truth and the life? Do you see how wrong your envious desire for your neighbour's car is in the eyes of the one who gave up heaven to save His people? Do you see how wrong you lust is in the eyes of the one who came from heaven to seek His bride? Do you see how wrong your hateful desire to hurt your brother is in the eyes of the one who was murdered so we could have life? Will you still love the sin that put Christ on the cross?

If you see your sin in the light of his righteousness. Don't hold back. Come to Christ He has come to save men from the exact types of sins that you just

convicted yourself of. His name is Jesus and He will save His people from their sins, so that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Call on His name today. He is the only way for you to deal with sin and have a relationship with God. As the apostle Peter says in Acts 4:12, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." You must come to God through the name of Jesus or you will not come to Him at all. So I plead with you, if you do not know Christ: you must come to Him.

Do you trust in Christ? If you do, then Christ has saved you from your sin. He has taken the punishment for it. And consequently you can know God. And you have in Him the best friend for your soul. Grow in your relationship to Him and you have an ever increasing joy for your soul. And one day He will come to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him and you will have at His right hand pleasures forevermore!

Let us pray,