



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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January 1, 2011
New Year's Day Worship
Sermon Text: [Philippians 2:9-13](#)
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Numbers 6:22-27](#)
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 8](#)
Second Lesson: [Philippians 2:9-13](#)
Gospel Lesson: [Luke 2:21](#)

The Name Above Every Name

A Name of Wondrous Love
A Name of Priceless Worth

Imagine what it would feel like, just for one day, at work, at home, when you are out doing something with friends, if every time your friends or the people around you were frustrated with something or upset with something and they expressed their disgust, their displeasure, their frustration by uttering your name with contempt. How do you think you would feel by the end of that day? If I spent the whole day with people and every time they were upset when things didn't go the way they wanted it and they said, "Oh Randy Ott," I think I'd snap by the end of the day and drop a couple people. I'm pretty sure that would happen. I don't think you would like it either. You might smile the first couple of times, but by the end of the day, you'd probably be at your limit, I would guess, if not sooner.

So we talk about our God telling us that the name of Jesus is the name above every name. We sing a hymn that says Jesus, name of wondrous love, and yet think about how often you and I and the people around us, maybe from following our example, use the name Jesus Christ not to express our love for a God who lived and died in our place, not to call on him in praise, not to pray to him, not to give thanks to him, but just to express frustration, anger, unhappiness. It makes you wonder.

You know how common that is in our daily lives. It makes you wonder when Satan heard these words that God the Holy Spirit had Paul write to the Philippians if Satan said to himself, "Name above every name? We'll see about that. We'll make it the name that expresses everything that makes you upset." And all too often, you and I have done that.

This probably highlights for us all the more why we say Jesus is the name of wondrous love. Look at who he is and what he has gone through and how patient he is with us, how incredibly loving he is...this incredible patience that puts up with this from us, we who bear his name that often reflect poorly on his name as we go about our lives as little Christs or Christians. Yet he still loves us.

He knew as true God from all eternity all the things that we would do that would be sins against him. Yet, he who was in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing, taking the very form of a servant and being made in human likeness. He became obedient to death—even death on a

cross! Those are the three verses right before what I just read to you. Jesus as true God from all eternity didn't hang onto it, but he became one of us so that he could become obedient to his Father's will and obey the Law perfectly in our place and then die on the cross in our place. Therefore, in view of that, what Jesus has done, in view of this wondrous love that loves us in spite of who we are, that doesn't love us because we have done anything for him or because we are so loveable, therefore, God gave him the name that is above every name. It doesn't matter how often you or I may have misused his name. Our God has taken away those sins through Jesus' life and death. And our God assures us through his Word that he forgives us and he loves us. And because he knows how thickheaded you and I are at times, he gives us the Sacraments so that we have this visible, visual, tangible taste of his love and of his forgiveness. His very body and blood that was poured out for us so that when we are troubled by the fact that we have misused this wondrous name, this greatest gift we could ever have, our God comes to us and says to us "I forgive you and I love you."

That's why it's the name of priceless worth as well, right? Because there is going to come a day when everyone is going to stand before God. At the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. When everyone is gathered together, everyone is going to give glory to Jesus' name. Some out of pure joy because they know they are about to enter into eternal life and paradise and perfection and no more effects of sin. And they'll be gladly giving praise to Jesus and the name that is above every name.

But there will still be many that day who will bow their knee and give glory to Jesus and do it to their eternal shame. Many of them will have known who he is and at one time confessed faith in him, but their faith got crowded out of their lives because there are too many other things to do, too many more important things to do. People there on the Last Day, it will be too late to regret that they didn't value the name of Jesus the way they should have and value it as that priceless worth.

We talked last night about being failing flowers. It's not just physical. For many it will end up being eternal. That's sad. That should concern us now because when that day comes, it's too late to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with anyone. It's too late to encourage anyone to remain faithful to Christ. To them, they'll be confessing that Jesus is Lord to their eternal shame.

So if we truly believe it's a name of priceless worth and as Christians, we have this head knowledge that it is, we know it's a name that is the most valuable thing that we have, the question is, will the Holy Spirit transform our lives through his Word and Sacrament so that we live as though it's the most priceless thing we have, so we give the Word made flesh, the Gospel in flesh our top priority in life, not just in words but also in actions? That's where the rubber hits the road, isn't it? Jesus himself told us, "Many of you are going to say to me 'Lord, Lord,' many of you are going to say 'this name is priceless,' but your hearts will be far from me. And on the Last Day, I'll say 'Away from me. I never knew you.'" He warns us over and over. Don't let the things of this world crowd him out of your life. Live as aliens and strangers.

If you read the New Testament, how many times have you read that? Live as aliens and strangers. This isn't your home. Heaven is your home. When you recognize that, then this name becomes a name of priceless worth. You'll begin working out your salvation with fear and trembling, which means growing in that faith, getting closer to God, knowing him more and more and more. With the opportunity we presented last night, you can do that in this next coming year. That opportunity is there for you. The question is, will you continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling and seize that opportunity to be in his Word day after day after day so that God can work in you to will and to act according to his purpose?

His name is precious. His name is wondrous love. And his name is just there waiting to embrace you in his arms and build you up and strengthen you to take away the worries, the stress and anxieties out of your life and replace it with contentment and the confidence that your God loves you and he is with you. There is no doubt your God will do that for you.

The only question is, you who confess his name as Savior, will you let him?