

**Your Name**

Revelation 2:12-17

February 25, 2001

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Robert Fulghum tells a story about a time when he was placed in charge of eighty-some children in the church fellowship hall. The adults were off doing adult kinds of things, and there were *all these children . . . craziness . . .* he had to find a way to keep order.

So he had them play a game called “Giant Wizard Dwarf.” (It’s like the “Rock Paper Scissors” game, except it’s an enacted game.) Each child would take the name of a giant, wizard, or dwarf, and then at the proper time they would find a partner, get into groups, and enact that name, seeing who won.

All the kids were running around the fellowship hall, and Robert Fulghum yelled out, “Decide now! Are you a giant, a wizard, or a dwarf?” The kids all started running to their places, and Fulghum looked down to see a little girl standing right in front of him. She looked up with big eyes, and in a very concerned voice she said, “Where do the *mermaids* stand?”

Fulghum didn’t know what to say.

“Where do the *mermaids* stand?”

“Yes, where do the mermaids stand?”

“There *are* no such things as mermaids.”

“Oh yes there are—I *am* one.”

She knew she wasn’t a giant, wizard, or dwarf; she was a *mermaid*. And she was not about to leave the game and go stand where a loser would stand; she knew her name, she knew her identity, and she took it as an *a priori* fact—built into the very nature of things . . . the system of the universe—that there was a designated place for mermaids. And she was sure Mr. Fulghum, the king of the game, would know where that place was.

I wonder how she *knew* she was a mermaid. Wouldn’t you like to know your name like she knew her name?

It used to be that if you asked my daughter Becky what her name was, she would say, “My name is Pretty Pretty Princess.” How did she know that was her name? That was what her daddy called her, and it fit. She no longer goes by that name, however, because she’s older now and she has gone to elementary school where they have other names for her . . . like “B-.”

Revelation 2:12: “*And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword. . . .’*” That’s Jesus. In Revelation 19 the sword issues from his mouth, and with it He will . . .

smite the nations,  
    judge the nations,  
        cut the nations,  
            define the nations,  
                name the nations—  
            sheep, goats, giants, wizards, dwarfs . . .  
mermaids and “Pretty Pretty Princesses.”

*“I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throng is; (Pergamum was the capital of the Roman province of Asia) you hold fast my name and you did not deny my faith (“my faith”—that’s an interesting way to put it) even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. . . .”*

Jesus calls Antipas “my faithful witness.” We don’t know exactly how Antipas died. There are some traditions here or there, but whatever the case, he most certainly died because he would not renounce the name of Jesus. He would not worship the name of Caesar. More than likely he died in a coliseum, like in Smyrna, with a crowd of people chanting names at him.

In Rome they learned to control the crowd by issuing white stones. A white stone was a ticket to the coliseum where they would receive free bread as they watched people die. Jesus commends the church in Pergamum for holding fast *His name* in the days of Antipas.

Names are big in the Bible. In Scripture everything is created with *words* and *names*. In Hebrew “dabar” is “word,” but that word really means “thing.” They didn’t really *have* a word for “word.” A word was a thing. Likewise, a name was an extension of a thing.

- So God makes a place, for instance, for His *name* to dwell on earth.
- There is *power* in His name.
- People are saved by *calling* on His name.

By the time of Jesus the Hebrews were so terrorized by the power of His name they wouldn’t even speak it. But now God has revealed Himself in Jesus. We are saved in the name of Jesus, The Word.

“Through Him all things were made. And God has given Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth.”

He is also called the “Second Adam.” When God made Adam (the first man), He had him “name all the animals, which was asking Adam to help in the creation of their wholeness,” as Madeleine L’Engle put it. We call naming the animals “taxonomy” or “biology”—science.

Then when God makes the woman Adam just keeps going, and he names the woman. Then when they have kids, they name the kids. You see, in Scripture people usually get their name from a father or a bridegroom—a husband. I know that sounds kind of paternalistic and sexist.

That's because I think the Bible *is* kind of paternalistic and sexist. Consider for a moment that maybe it speaks a truth.

If we really understood that truth . . .  
if we could *really see* that truth . . .  
we would absolutely love it!

Like a beloved child loves his name,  
A cherished bride loves her new name  
on her wedding day;  
But an orphan or widow  
mourns the name.

Adam is a namer of things before the Fall, but he is still a namer of things after the Fall. It's just that he's a pretty *poor* namer! So what happens? He names a lot of orphans and makes a lot of widows. Today a lot of brides don't want to take the name of their groom. That's understandable. A lot of children renounce the name of their fathers, and that makes some sense. It's a fallen world.

In Scripture names work like mirrors. They reflect back the essence of a thing. But more than that, they help *create* a thing . . . maybe sometimes even desecrate a thing, but in the mouth of Jesus always *create* a thing.

- “No longer shall you be called Simon but ‘Rock’—‘Peter.’ I know you’re feeling kind of wimpy today, but in three years you’ll begin acting like your name. Your name is *Rock*.”
- “No longer ‘Abram’ . . . I know you’re old and tired, but I’m telling you—your name is ‘Abraham, Father of Nations.’”
- “Sarai, old and barren? It’s ‘Sarah, Mother of Nations.’”
- “Not Jacob but ‘Israel, The One Who Strives with God.’”

God is always showing up and giving people new names.

Sometimes we get bad, evil names . . . like “Worthless” or “Moron” or “No Good.” Good or bad, the names still . . .

shape us,  
cut us,  
define us,  
create us,  
or perhaps desecrate us.

Good or bad, we still keep on naming, getting names, and trying to make names for ourselves.

Even a *bad* name  
seems more desirable  
than no name at all.

Can you imagine never, ever, ever hearing someone call your name? I think that would be Hell . . . to be ultimately and finally orphaned . . . widowed. At the Fall we were cut off from our Father, and we were cut off from the Great Bridegroom, and we are desperate for a name.

Even a bad name  
seems better  
than no name at all.

Bobby Fisher shared his testimony a few months ago. It was incredible. In his testimony he shared about how one summer he spent the entire summer alone, curled up in a fort hidden from the world . . . no friends. He told me this last week: “The funny thing was, I didn’t really care about all those drugs. The reason I got into drugs and stuff was because I wanted a friend . . . a crowd . . . a name.”

Even a bad name  
is better  
than *no* name, it seems.

In Genesis 11 all those orphaned and widowed from the Garden get together and say, “Let’s make a name for ourselves. Let’s build a tower that reaches to Heaven!” When God finds out about this plan He comes down and busts up their tower—takes away their name.

Maybe you have been building a tower called “Success” or whatever in order to make a name for yourself. Don’t be surprised if God comes along and knocks it down. Maybe He has another name for you.

- Isaiah prophesied of the day that the towers of Jerusalem would be torn down; it actually happened in 586 B.C. at the hands of the Babylonians.
- In 70 A.D. it happened at the hands of the Romans. Jerusalem was an arrogant, adulterous, frigid bride, so Isaiah prophesied, “Instead of perfume there will be rottenness.” “Your men shall fall by the sword.” “Ravished she shall sit on the ground and seven women shall take hold of one man in that day saying, ‘We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name. Take away our reproach.’”

(God takes away their arrogant name, the name they made for themselves, but so desperate are they for a name, that they will hop into any man’s bed in order to get one.)

- In Isaiah 62 God says through Isaiah, “For Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest. . . . The nations shall see your vindication and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall give you.”

Maybe God is stripping us of our arrogant, evil, man-made names in order that one day we could really hear our real names. In that process of having the old name stripped away and learning to hear our new name, we are desperate for a name, like those women of Jerusalem who would go to bed with any man just to get a name . . . would bow down to any god in order to have any name.

*“You hold fast my name, but Pergamum, I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice immorality. . . .”*

If you’ll remember in Numbers Balaam taught King Balak how to entice the Israelites because they didn’t think they could beat them in an all-out battle. So he taught King Balak to use Moabite and Midianite women to entice Israelite men into marriage. Enticed into marriage, the men would worship the women’s gods. You see the tactic: Surely they won’t attack Midian or Moab if Midian and Moab are part of their name!

In Pergamum it appears that some there taught that surely a little sex outside of your marriage covenant won’t hurt.

Surely a little bowing down to Caesar here and there . . .  
 confessing his name a little bit . . .  
 a little worship of Zeus . . .  
 surely that’s not a big deal.

In The Revelation it is really hard to tell sometimes whether it’s talking about sexual immorality or idolatry. I think that’s because in Scripture it’s very clear that idolatry *is* adultery. It’s seeking after another bridegroom for a name.

So in Pergamum some may have been actually sleeping with some of the temple prostitutes. Some may have just been married to Caesar—married to government—to the systems of this world. Whatever it is, they are doing things to *fit in*—be accepted—have a name: giant, wizard, or dwarf—a reputation in Pergamum.

Married to the ways of this world for a name,  
 Whether it’s sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll  
 (Peer pressure like you talk to your kids about),

The Democratic party or the Republican party,  
 The stock market, *Vogue* magazine, or Fortune 500.

Whatever it is, if you’re married to it for a name, you’ve fallen into a trap: Old King Balak and the Ancient Dragon.

To name something is to exert *power* over that something. It's to judge, divide, quantify, and bring under control . . . to categorize. So the world, its Beast, and its Dragon really want to name you. "Oh look! It's one of those evangelical, fundamentalist, early potty-trained, homophobic Christians!"

We don't need to listen to them.

We do it too. In fact, we use psychology, anthropology, and sociology to name people. "Those tribal, animistic, Bronze Age thinkers . . . *you* know how they think."

- The Black Voter
- The Proletariat
- The Bourgeoisie (Middle Class)
- The Introvert
- The Extrovert
- ENFP
- INTJ
- Giant
- Wizard
- Dwarf

Did you ever notice that when someone is a threat, we love to name him? "You know, she is a borderline schizophrenic. I've heard she's on medication." Because we've named her, we don't have to listen to her.

God told us to name the animals. That's biology. But we better not get too cocky with anthropology, psychology, and sociology; that is, naming *people*. Sometimes those names can help, but it's not the final say. It's not their name in the end. God gets really uptight about our naming of people.

Let me put it another way: judging people.

What names has the crowd given you?

"Success"?

"Failure"?

"Rich"?

"Poor"?

Whatever it is, if you receive it as a name, Satan loves it. He loves to name, for names catch people, categorize people, and shape people . . . Not only *create* people but *desecrate* people.

This world, the Beast, and the Ancient Dragon love to name us. And we are susceptible to names: orphaned, widowed . . . We believe those names, so desperate are we for names.

When I was a child I wasn't a giant, a wizard, or a dwarf. I was named "Pussy." Every day I

rode the bus home from school, and sometimes I got teased mercilessly. I think it kind of got started in second grade after I kissed Leslie Brown in the tree in the front yard. Tim Wren, my old friend, kissed her too, but he turned on me.

So they would sing on the bus: [singing]

Two little lovers sittin' in a tree,  
K-i-s-s-i-n-g,  
First comes love, then comes marriage,  
Then comes baby in the baby carriage.

The whole bus would sing at me. Guys would come up afterwards and choose me to fight. I didn't want to fight. (I think I actually did fight once . . . I sat on Tim Wren and won. But I couldn't think of it as winning because I was a "pussy.") I didn't really know *how* to fight. You see, my dad was a minister. So this was another problem: I didn't cuss.

They had another name for me, a name I really, really hated: "Mr. Decent." I know you're laughing now, but you have to understand that "Decent" was not a good name in 1968 on the bus. Sometimes I tried to act a little indecent just to try to shake the name. So in second grade I did a really rude thing to this lonely girl, and I was caught by the teacher and by the girl. And my heart broke for that girl.

(This summer I wrote her a letter of apology. Of course, I didn't mail it, because it would just embarrass her. It was for *me* and for God.)

I really had trouble being indecent,  
so mostly I just curled up inside,  
hidden silently, hating myself,  
ashamed of my name—  
"Mr. Decent."

I do not think I would have made it, except I could go home, and I had a mom and a dad who called me another name and believed in me. I really do not know how some of you have *made* it. I've listened to Bobby, I've listened to others . . . the only thing I can figure is that you must have heard your Father in Heaven whispering your name.

Oftentimes when I preach, afterwards I have the hardest time not hating myself . . . curling up inside. Please hear me: It's not because of criticism or compliments so much as that I know I'm being *named*. Mostly they are very *good* names, but being addicted to the names of the mob, I'm terrified. Just the knowledge I'm being named by fickle people causes my heart to go right back to that bus in 1968.

Fear,  
Shame,  
Self-hatred . . .

. . . and I don't want to preach any more. I just want to go curl up under a broom tree and whisper, "Oh God—just kill me."

Do you see how Satan works? He even uses *good* names!

Very good wine can be used for drunkenness—  
To entice people into drunkenness,  
Good food can lead people into gluttony,  
And a good name can be idolatry.

Listen very closely. The one we let name us is our idol. Revelation 2:15: *So you also have some [in Pergamum] who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.*

We really don't know who the Nicolaitans were. However, "Nicolaitan" is made up of two Greek words:

1. The first Greek word is "Nicos" meaning *conqueror* or *superior*;
2. The second Greek word is "Laity" meaning *people*.

If you put the two together you get "Conqueror of the people," or "Superior to the people." So some people have postulated that Nicolaitan refers to a group of people who were beginning to advocate the clergy/laity split; that is, that the clergy is superior to the laity and judges the laity . . . names the laity . . . tells the laity exactly where to go . . . maybe even makes allowances for the laity. ("You're hyper-spiritual so *you* can save seats.")

It's clear that God calls people into places of authority in His Church but never as despot or judge of persons. What I'm saying is, I can't tell you your name. I might be able to *help* name you a little bit, but I don't *know* your name! I don't, even though it would make my job easier if I did.

For, you see, sometimes I think my job  
is to keep order in the fellowship hall  
and tell everybody exactly where to stand,  
exactly what to do, and who they are!

Sometimes you *want* me to have that job because *you want* to know your name.

"Giant?

Wizard?

Dwarf?

Tell me where to stand . . . what to do . . . who exactly I am."

That's *nice* for a while . . . kind of even *intoxicating* and *addicting* . . . but it's idolatry. In the end, it won't fit and it won't work.

Several years ago I went to a Campus Crusade Retreat with my friend Dave Jones. I had been a Christian for a long time and was involved in ministry . . . so was Dave. However, we had never been to a Campus Crusade Retreat before. So when we went to the counter, do you know what they gave each of us?—A red folder.

I don't know if I remember the colors exactly, but in Campus Crusade (then) they had red folders, blue folders, and green folders. A red folder was for a "baby" Christian, a blue folder was for like a "medium" Christian, and a green folder was for an "advanced" Christian. And they gave me a *red folder!* That was an *insult!*

Do you know what Dave Jones and I did? We snuck into the staff area and we *stole* green folders. Do you know *why?* To prove our maturity in Christ! "Take a look at this, pal! I've got a *green folder.* Yeah—I've got a name . . ."

I *think* it was wrong of them, if this was their intent, to try to name everybody's relationship with Christ—to reduce all relationships with Christ to red, blue, and green folders. Can you see *Jesus* doing that? "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of God? Well, here is a green folder." No.

But do you know what was much worse than that?

I *coveted* a green folder.

I let them name me red or green.

It was still idolatry.

I'm still the same way. I just got back from the National Pastors Convention, and it was really great. But I have to tell you . . .

1. After the very first speaker, I sat there thinking, "I should pastor a small church like him . . . prepare my sermons every Sunday morning like him."
2. After the second speaker I sat there thinking, "You know, I should write books like him."
3. After the third speaker I sat there thinking, "If I was really a good pastor (you see, I desperately wanted them to name me a "good pastor") I would be a pastor in the inner-city."
4. After the last speaker I thought, "If I was *really* spiritual I would be a Wycliffe Bible translator in Papua, New Guinea." No kidding.

So I was flying home on the plane feeling kind of confused . . . a little condemned . . . about who I am. I remember I looked out the window and thought to myself, "Gosh. I wonder if the people at home in church sometimes feel that way."

*So many people . . .*

- One Sunday you sit there and hear, "You need to join a Small Group."
- Next Sunday you hear, "You need to give 10%."
- Another Sunday you hear, "You need to pray for two hours every night."

All those things are *very good things*, but after a while do you begin to feel like a *category*? A *project*? Dehumanized? Depersonalized? Wondering, “Who *am* I? Do I *have* to be a giant, wizard, or dwarf?”

I remember looking out the plane window thinking of my Small Group a few months ago. They prayed for me (like the Prayer Team would like to pray for you . . . not to *put* that on you or anything . . .) about my shame after I preached. In prayer in our Small Group we went back to where I thought those feelings of shame came from: 1968 on the bus.

They prayed that I could picture Jesus there on the bus, in order to get *His* opinion of the situation. They asked me, “Can you see Jesus sitting there?” Now, I don’t usually see all that kind of stuff, but I did the best I could.

“I don’t know.”

“Try. What is *He* thinking? Can you imagine it?”

“Yeah, I think I can imagine Him . . .”

“Well, what is He *doing*?”

And I didn’t want to tell them, because He wasn’t doing the right thing. He was *laughing*.

I remember thinking about it closer, and I said, “I think he is *laughing*, but He is not laughing *at me*; it’s like He’s laughing *for me*! It’s as if he is saying, “Peter, all these names don’t matter! Just let them bounce off you. It doesn’t matter what these people say.”

Then I told my Small Group what they called me — “Decent.” I remember Dee Dee said this while she was praying for me, “Peter, I think Jesus is proud of you. And, you know, ‘Decent’ isn’t such a bad name.”

All at once something inside me snapped. Never in my life had I considered that “Decent” could be a good name. All at once I realized, “That’s a name of Jesus! Jesus is decent! I never really wanted to be decent; I just really liked Jesus! And when He was in me, He was *decent* in me. He even suffered for being decent.”

In that moment I realized:

*Our name* was “Decent.”

Not only that, but I’m beginning to realize that my name was not and is not “Pussy.” It’s “Rock.” Even on that bus, when I didn’t feel it, He was shaping me into a rock, by grace, so that *our* name would be “Rock.”

Listen closely. ‘. . . *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it.*’

Scholars debate about the name on that white stone. Some of them say, “That’s a new name for God or Jesus.” Some of them say, “No, that’s a new name for a *person*—for *you*.” And there is

great evidence in Scripture for *both* views. I believe that *both* views are right . . . that it's the *same name* . . . that it's Jesus' name *and* it's your name.

Dare I even say it?—  
It's *God's* name.

And, yes, maybe it's sexist and paternalistic, but . . .

In Scripture the children take the *father's* name,  
And the bride takes the *bridegroom's* name,  
And *we are* the Bride of Christ.  
It's not just we are *called*;  
Scripture says we *are* the little children of God.

We are His body, His people, His dwelling place, His city . . . the New Jerusalem.

Do you know the name “faithful witness”? (I think this is *so cool* . . . ) It appears only two places in all of Scripture for a person. Right here Antipas is called “my faithful witness” by Jesus. Do you know where *else* “faithful witness” shows up? In chapter one . . . we just read it a few months ago. Jesus says, “*I am* the faithful witness.” They have the *same name!*

And there's *more* to that name than just “faithful witness.” How do I know that? Because we *know* “faithful witness” now. So there's more . . .

- All of eternity Antipas will be coming up to you trying to tell you his name. “Look! Look at this *name!* Wow!”
- And all of eternity you'll be going up to Antipas and saying, “Look! Look! Look at this name! Wow!”

All the saints, Antipas, and you sing the same song, the song of the Lamb. But you *all* have different parts, because it's a symphony . . . the glory of God in the grace of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus wants you to find *your* part, not somebody else's.

In the world I believe Jesus is beginning to tell you your name so you'll recognize it on that great day when you first hear it. Other people may be *used* by Him to *help* name you, but they can never finally and ultimately name you. Don't let them! Why? I guarantee it: They *do not know* your name! It is utterly unique in all creation. God wants you to hear it.

A few weeks ago after I had preached, a member of the Prayer Team came up and said, “Peter, you need prayer.” I said, “That would be great.” They named the Dragon: my fear over receiving names. So they prayed for a while, and toward the end Steve Smith prayed, laying his hands on me, “Lord, I thank You that Peter [talking about *me*] is Your favorite person in all the world.” Do you know what I thought? “He's right.”

Then he prayed for Aram: “Thank You, Lord God, that Aram is your favorite person in all the world!” [Aram in crowd shouts “Amen!”] He is right! You say, “You can’t *both* be right!” Yes we can! Both can be right!

You say, “There can’t be two *favorites* with God.” You are wrong. There can’t be two favorites in *Flatland*. There can’t be two favorites if we are stuck in space and time.

Our Father, the Great Bridegroom,  
Loves us from *beyond time* and *beyond space*;  
From all eternity and before the foundation of the world.  
He wrote *your name* in a book. Wow! He can, and he does.

And you even taste it with your children. People ask you,

“Which child is your favorite?”

“Well, actually they are *all* my favorite.”

“They can’t *all* be favorites!”

“I don’t know . . . I love them all the same!”

“Is that because they are tied?”

“No, they’re not *tied*! Each one is totally different. They are *all* my favorites!”

How can that *be*? Maybe it’s a love that comes from some place else.

So *believe* the name your Father gives you in Christ Jesus our Lord. I believe He’s speaking it all the time. You ask, “How will I know it when I hear it?” It will *fit* on Jesus—the resurrected Jesus—because it’s the same. You *share* it.

If you belong to Christ, He has been everywhere you have been. In every situation He wants to tell you your name, from each perspective and each place. You say, “Well, I’ve been to some awful places. I’ve been to *hell* and back!” So has Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, He went to hell and back with *you*.

Your story is His story and your name. He covers you in every place with His righteousness . . . His grace . . . His name on you. Listen for *His* name given to you in grace. Do not listen to the Dragon, his Beast, or this world. Don’t listen to the mob in the coliseum in Pergamum chanting names: “Antipas! Traitor! Scum of the earth!” Don’t listen to it.

If you believe in Jesus, one day you will find yourself holding a white stone. It’s a ticket to the coliseum of God where you will be surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. You will sit at a table and eat the hidden manna—the bread of life. I think Jesus will lean over and say, “Read your stone.” And for the very first time you will *hear* it—*your name*. When you hear it you will know . . .

“I’m home!  
I’m finally home at my Father’s table . . .  
the Marriage table . . .

the table of my Bridegroom . . .  
the King's table. I'm home."

So Robert Fulghum stood there in the church fellowship hall not knowing what to say to the mermaid. Then he writes, "Every once in a while I say the right thing. 'The mermaid stands right here by the King of the Sea,' says I. So we stood there hand in hand reviewing the troops of wizards, giants, and dwarfs. It is not true (by the way) that mermaids do not exist. I know at least one personally. I have held her hand."

Who knows what incredible, wondrous, amazing creatures sit right here in this room. In the name of Jesus, grab somebody's hand, close your eyes, and listen to the truth.

"And I saw the new Jerusalem coming down adorned as a bride for her husband. . . . And he who sat on the throne said, 'I make all things new' and 'It is done!' He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

"[The new Jerusalem] had a great, high wall, with twelve gates [twelve is our number], and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed . . . . And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."

And if you have faith in Jesus, let me tell you—and this is Scripture—you will conquer. John said so. It is our faith that conquers the world. You will conquer, and you have a name. It's inscribed in the eternal city right now. Believe it.

While I was preaching some of you may have heard other names. Maybe you heard "whore" . . . "murderer." Jesus took those names from you as He hung on the cross. And He gives you a new name. Even those old names He uses to reinforce your new name.

- Instead of "whore," "bride."
- Instead of "lies," "truth."
- Instead of "sin," "forgiven" . . . "beloved" . . . "precious."

He is the second Adam. Let Him name you.

If you have never given your life to Jesus the Christ, do it now. "Now is the day of salvation." I'm not asking you to let us put you in some group with a folder. I'm just inviting you right now, in the stillness of this moment, to say to the living God, "I want to go home." If you never have, just tell Him.

"I want to go home . . . I want to receive Your name. God, I want You to forgive me because of what Jesus has done. And I want you to open my ears so that all my life I can hear who *You* say I am."

If you just said that to the Lord, put your faith in Him. (Even if you're not sure He exists but you *want* Him to exist, ask Him to *help* you believe. He even jumps at that!) He is so eager to call

you His own. If you did that for the first time it is important that you tell people. Your job for all eternity will be telling people about the cool name Jesus has given you. Just as He stands up for you, He wants you to stand up for Him.

I want you to believe and know you belong to Him. That is salvation. Right now I can begin to tell you your name . . .

Chosen Race,  
Royal Priesthood,  
God's own people,  
The Bride,  
Beloved . . .

And He paid *everything* for you.

I can't tell you your final and full name;  
Only *He* can do that, and that's good.  
Believe it in Jesus' name  
Every morning when you wake up.

Have you ever said something like this?—"I'm a jerk" . . . "I'm a loser" . . . "I'm such a butthead." Don't ever say it again. You may have some buttheadedness-like tendencies that you're dealing with; you may be struggling with jerkness even more than you know. But listen—that is not *who* you are! Who you are is who *Jesus* says you are.

So in the name of Jesus I renounce all those curses you have spoken on yourself. *You* renounce them too. Listen to who Jesus says you are. He gives you a name in grace, and then He shapes you into what he says you are. That is really good news, isn't it?!

One day you'll get a stone,  
Look at it, and say,  
"Wow! I could have never thought up  
Such a great name!"

And you'll spend all eternity  
Trying to tell Him about it.

Amen.