

"The Name of Jesus"

Scripture Lesson:-

Text:- Matthew 1: 21. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."

Introduction:- In war or in peace, in good times or bad, it remains true that no single word grips the hearts of men like the name of "Jesus". To say that history bears his imprint is putting it much too mildly. It would be more accurate to say that history is ploughed right and left with the deep furrows of his deathless influence. A great historian declares, "The simple record of three short years of Christ's active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the philosophy and all the exhortations of moralists".

If anyone doubts this, just let him try to imagine what it would be like in this world if suddenly the name of Jesus were to be torn from us, and, with it, everything for which it stands. Life is hard enough as it is. It would be intolerable without the message of Christmas. It would be almost unbearable without the angel's song. It would be unrelieved darkness if the light of Jesus were snuffed out of it.

Therefore, the grateful heart must exclaim with the song writer,

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ears;
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fears".

I.

Such music is ours because one quiet day, long ago, an angel said to the devout Joseph: "Take unto thee Mary; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins". Let us think of our Lord as he appears in the light of these words which fell that memorable day upon Joseph's hearing.

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus". If you are using a Bible with marginal notes, you will see that the translators suggest the word "Savior" as an alternate for "Jesus". It is the Hebrew word for "Joshua" meaning "Jehovah is salvation". A name is no trifling thing. We need it to identify ourselves. We are concerned that it be respected. That is why a man who came to our shores bearing the name of "Hitler" would probably ask court action to give him permission to change it to Henderson, or whatever you will, just so it was a name not stained with dishonor.

Even a good name leaves us less than content if it is too common. A certain man in the east changes his name from Carlson to Vallstrom, because there were too many Carlson's in the community. For sheer distinction in the superlative degree the name of Jesus is history's classic and humanity's rapture. It has heavenly overtones to be caught by our ears. The very word is a gift from heaven. Mary and Joseph did not choose it. It was chosen for them. It was the angel of the Lord who said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus". Obediently they bestowed it upon the virgin-born child.

What is thus suggested is that Mary's Son, who came by human birth, was nevertheless the gift of heaven, the putting forth of God, in a sense which can never be claimed for any other person. It is this fact, and this alone, that gives the name of "Jesus" the divine overtones which it so richly carries.

II.

In that name, for example, is the overtone of sinlessness. quietly, unflinchingly, he challenged his critics, "Which of you convinceth me of sin" (John 8:40). Peter was in a position to speak with authority when he said of Jesus: "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (I Peter 2:21) "Christ's Life," said Robert E. Speer, "bore no scars. There were no memories of past failures or mistakes. He came to each of the choices and tests of life, bearing no handicap from the past." So the name he bears rings with the music of his flawless holiness.

III.

His name also is the overtone of masterfulness. Winds obeyed him. The sea was clamed by him. Devils fled before him. Disease withered under his touch. Death was conquered by his power. Sins are forgiven at his word. A world conquest was boldly announced as his purpose, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." (Matthew 28:19). Horace Bushnell, his eyes wide with astonishment at those words, just as our eyes should be, said of him: "It is not human, we may safely affirm, to lay out projects beyond human ability, like this of Jesus, doing it in the airs of sobriety, entering on the performance without parade, yielding life itself to it as the inaugural of his triumph. what is not human, but divine".

IV.

But then, there is the overtone of humanness in the name of Jesus. Again and again he spoke of himself as "the Son of Man": through the mysterious doors of human childbirth he came among us. By tasting our griefs, feeling our hungers, sharing our sweat and toil, he identified himself with us as "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh".

At the same time he took this real but sinless humanity of his and by constant reliance upon the Holy Spirit, demonstrated how glorious man's life can be when it is conformed to the will of God. One scholar says of him, "He would designate himself thus as the normal man, charged with the victory of humanity over its own enemy and the enemy of God". Still another says of him, "Jesus was the perfect realization of the idea of man, with the mission of realizing it is humanity".

But these are scholars speaking. So ideal and winsome is the humanness of Jesus that even children catch the music of it and are charmed. When Olive Schreiner of England was a little girl, she got hold of a copy of the New Testament. Her home was not a home where the scriptures were used and

taught. The book was unfamiliar to her. One day, after she had read past the first half of Matthew, she rushed into her mother's room and said, "Oh Mummy, look what I've found. Isn't it lovely: Now we can all live like this." Ah, yes, to her childish eyes had come the vision of a life that was both ideal and real, a real life lived in a world of real humanity in real fellowship with a real God.