

## Christmas Eve Worship Services

Wednesday, December 24, 2008

### Face to Face: New Beginnings *What's in a Name?"*

Rev. Dr. Steven M. Marsh, Senior Pastor

What's in a name? In the naming of a child, great care is taken to choose the name that will bring distinction to the new life. Sometimes a family name is bestowed, one that's been passed down from generation to generation. A name is a characterization – it's how individuals are known and identified.

Christmas is about Jesus. Jesus' name derived from the Hebrew *Yehoshua* means "Yahweh is salvation." Jesus is the name given to the son of Mary and Joseph who will "save his people from their sins." Jesus is the promised Messiah who as God incarnate is God's self-revelation who brought salvation to the world. We have heard other names for Jesus tonight. What do they mean?

*Immanuel:* This Jesus is God present with his people.

*Wonderful Counselor:* This Jesus is God. He will show us the way to new life. The world is often a confusing and overwhelming place. We need someone to help us get through the fog. We have a sin problem that we cannot handle by ourselves. We may try to be good but we fail. We need someone who can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We need someone who can lead us to salvation and new life. We yearn for a relationship with God. Jesus is "an unerring Counselor."

*Mighty God:* This Jesus is God. He is able to do what he promised. The most important thing he promised is eternal life. Jesus promises that not only can he give us eternal life, but once he has given it to us no one can take it away. The promise of Jesus is that in spite of our sin we can be made new because of him. In spite of the stupid, rebellious and even wicked things we have done, if we will place our faith in Christ, his death will cover our sin. Jesus' death and resurrection open the door to a new beginning and to everlasting life. Because Jesus is the Mighty God, he can save those who have abused others through their words or actions; who have lied, cheated and manipulated their way through life; who have committed criminal acts; who have stolen from others; who have abandoned family members. This Jesus is able to help where we need it. Jesus will draw close to the person who is filled with loneliness; he will give strength to the one who is engulfed with fear; he will provide comfort to the one whose heart is broken; he will give direction for the one who doesn't know which way to turn; he will provide for

the one who is jobless; he will give new courage to the one who is discouraged; and he will bring justice to the evil doers. Jesus, the Mighty God is the Redeemer himself.

*Everlasting Father:* This Jesus is God. He has given us life; he will provide for us; he cares for us. Our biological father is the one who united with our mother and gave us physical life. A Father gives us life. Jesus is our Everlasting Father in the sense that he is the one who brings us to spiritual life. We are new creatures in and because of Christ. It is because of Jesus that we have the opportunity to know eternal life. It is because of Jesus that we can know a new and life-giving relationship with the Father.

*Prince of Peace:* This Jesus is God. He is the One who brought and continues to bring the Reign of Peace on earth. The word "peace" in the Hebrew is the word "shalom". Shalom is a rich word that carries with it the sense of wholeness or completeness. This peace that Jesus brings is that illusive "something" for which we have been looking. The peace he brings is that peace that can make you complete. Jesus makes it possible for us to be friends with God. He brings calm in the trials of life. Jesus helps us reconcile with each other. He will eventually end the conflict amongst the nations.

*Son of Man:* This Jesus is who man really is. The phrase, "Son of Man" is from the Hebrew *ben adam* which designates a collective humanity or an individual within the collective humanity. In the Greek *huios tou anthropou*, Son of Man is a self-designation for Jesus. The first Adam is representative of you and me; the second Adam is Jesus, which is representative of whom we become through faith in Jesus. Man who is broken, Adam; Man who is sinless, Jesus. In Jesus Christ we become adopted into his family as brothers and sisters.

What's in a name? The person's character. What's in Jesus name? The very character of God, because he is God. What's in your name?

In Jesus we find the presence of God, counsel, power, nurture, peace and identification with our humanity, which we need to be restored in our relationship with the Father. There is redemption in the name of Jesus. Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, the one who will "save his people from their sins?" If you haven't, please do so tonight. Merry Christmas. Let us pray!

Christmas Eve Sermon  
"What's in a Name?"  
Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Wichita, KS  
Rev. Dr. Steven M. Marsh, Senior Pastor

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*This sermon was preached on Christmas Eve 2008 by the Rev. Dr. Steven M. Marsh  
at Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Wichita, Kansas.*

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