

SLIDE 1. Ongoing Series: The Names of Jesus

Teaching: *The Mighty God*

Sunday March 1.2025

HELP.

THANKS.

WOW.

There is, of course, more to our prayer lives than these 3 categories of prayer – confession, for instance - but HELP / THANKS / WOW are a good place to start and an easy place to remember.

SLIDE 2.

HELP are those prayers we pray that ask God for help of some sort.

THANKS are those prayers we pray that thank God for who he is or what he's done.

WOW are those prayers we pray that acknowledge God showing us or teaching us something or us witnessing to any good we've done with him in his name.

In a moment, I'm going to invite you to share any one of these prayers with us so we can be informed and pray with you and worship with you.

Remember: We turn to God because he is our help. We thank God because he is our sufficiency. And we tell stories about how we relate to God because it dignifies our lives and gives Him the credit He deserves.

SLIDE 3.

Here are some tips for sharing:

- 1. Introduce yourself by name.**
- 2. Know what you plan to say.**
- 3. Be brief.**
- 4. Hold the mic. still and within 2 inches of your mouth.**

And with that – let's pray!

I'll pray – then open the floor for HELP / THANKS / WOW.

And I'll keep a journal as best I can 😊

SLIDE 4. Same as SLIDE 2

HELP

THANKS

WOW.

What's in a name? Shakespeare asked (once upon a time).
More than we tend to think about (I'd say).

And yet - of all the names in history to think about – none are so significant, so sacred, and so superlative as the names of Jesus.

More than 100 of them! To which we might ask, "Why so many?"

Because – as one author supposed – as much as names can be *descriptive* – they can also be *restrictive* (*Portraits of Christ*, Henry Garipey, p. 15).

How could one name, for instance, describe or define the infinite Jesus Christ?
In a sense – Jesus is the Un-nameable One – his being and greatness beyond description or definition!

This said - one of the best ways to know and understand Jesus Christ is to explore the names and titles he is given in the Scriptures.

And so we will briefly again – look at one this morning. And it is my hope to look at one each first Sunday of the month – when we will pray together, wonder together about the singularity of the person of Jesus Christ and his names, and when we will celebrate communion together – because of him.

SLIDE 5. The Mighty God (Isa. 9:6).

There are many who resist this thought: that the man – Jesus Christ – is also God - that the One who was born in a manger as a baby – is also divine – that the one who worked with his hands as a carpenter apprentice – is also THE Agent of Creation – that Jesus Christ – the man who was pinned to a cross to be our forgiveness – is also Lord.

I remember this very question popped up in my Instagram feed just recently -
"Where in the bible does it say that Jesus is God?"

And it's a good and fair question – because the bible doesn't explicitly say - THAT!
It is, however, implied in SEVERAL TEXTS to let us draw our own conclusions.

For instance...

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, MIGHTY GOD, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

About 700 years before Jesus Christ was born – the prophet Isaiah announced the birth of Israel's Messiah – a vision that spanned from Christ's lowly birth in Bethlehem to His glorious future reign in the New Jerusalem when peace will rule the day.

Among the names Isaiah used to describe Jesus was the name - MIGHTY GOD.

El Gibbor in Hebrew.

El – as in the most basic Hebrew form and way of saying God – meaning – *power* or *strength*. This word – *El* – which is a standalone word but often functions as a prefix of sorts - appears over 250 times in the O.T. – to describe the *God* of Israel.

El - Shaddai (The All Sufficient God).

El - Elyon (The Most High God).

El - Roi (The God Who Sees Me).

And *El Gibbor* (The Mighty God). God as warrior and champion.

So that altogether – Jesus is described by Isaiah as - Power and Strength and Warrior and Champion.

SLIDE 6. Did Jesus live up to His name?

I think He did!

He was mighty in His birth when time was invaded by eternity and split in two – the time before Christ and the time after Christ. He was mighty and God in the miracles He performed.

He was mighty in His teachings – putting the truths of the kingdom of God – the kingdom of forgiveness and love – into memorable plain-speak and stories. He was mighty in His death as He rescued us from the hell our sin deserves to make us heirs of His kingdom of heaven.

He was mighty and God in His resurrection as He rose from the dead, the Champion and Warrior, over man's last enemy – which is death – so that even though we will die – we can live again!

And He *will be* mighty as He comes again to judge the living and the dead, and to establish his kingdom on Earth – with power and strength – as warrior and champion!

Jesus lived up to His name. And so He kept it – The Mighty God - without apology. Esp. to His religious critics.

Who – at one time – cornered him in the temple. (Jn 10:22-33). It was winter. Jesus was walking under a porch with columns. The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ (the Messiah), tell us plainly" (v. 24).

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."

"No one can snatch them out of my hand."

"No one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."

The comparison made in this pair of statements is that Jesus is God – that Jesus and God are one and the same pair of hands – in which people are forgiven and loved and secured by faith.

SLIDE 7. And then Jesus said this, without the slightest hint of subtlety, **"I and the Father are one"** (vv. 25-30).

O boy!

Jesus uses a Greek word for "one" here that implies they are a "unity."

Rather than saying that Jesus and God are the same person, Jesus is claiming that He and God are "unified as one" – which is a partial explanation of the Trinity.

Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you a many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

"We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God" (vv. 31-33).

He sure did! They certainly didn't misunderstand His claim. They just didn't believe it!

They didn't believe that Jesus was the One who Isaiah spoke of more than 700 years earlier. They didn't believe in the name he'd given Jesus – *El Gibbor* – The Mighty God. They didn't believe what he told them by his actions – what he said by what he did – the miracles He did in God's name.

Even when they asked Jesus to tell them plainly if He was the Christ – and he clearly told them He was - by comparing Himself with God and then telling them even more clearly that He was - by saying He and God were a unified oneness – they didn't believe.

What more could they have wanted? What more could Jesus have done?

A trusted prophet named Him *The Mighty God*.

Jesus performed all kinds of miracles in God's name – as if He was God.

And then He said, "I am God" – when they asked Him to end the suspense about His identity.

"Where in the bible does it say that Jesus is God?"

Nowhere – and in lots of places – if we would choose to believe it.

And for those who do – we remember Him – The Mighty God – in communion.

COMMUNION

In this community of faith – who exists in the broader community of faith known as the British Columbia Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches – we believe in Jesus, and we celebrate his saving work of humankind – what we call salvation and the Lord's Supper (or Communion).

And so...

We believe that God is at work to deliver, heal, redeem, and restore. God reconciled the world to Himself by the atoning blood of Jesus. As people place their trust in Christ, they are saved by grace through faith. Through Christ's obedient life, his death on the cross, and his glorious resurrection, he triumphed over Satan and the powers of sin and death, opening the way for all people to follow (Article 5).

We believe that in the Lord's Supper, the church identifies with the life of Christ given for the redemption of humanity and proclaims the Lord's death until He comes. The supper expresses remembrance, celebration, praise, and the fellowship and unity of all believers (Article 9).

And so...

If you believe that you are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ – and so open your life to following him – I'd like to invite you to take this symbolic supper of bread and wine and remember and celebrate Jesus with me.

(Invite people to the bread and juice stations – and to return to their seats and wait to take the bread and juice together. When all are seated – read 2 Cor. 11:23-26).

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Take the bread and eat it together.

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Take the juice and drink it together.

Close in prayer!