

LUKE 13:31-35
THE NAME OF THE LORD

Get away from here! Go away Jesus! We don't want You. Don't need you. We can get to heaven without you. Harsh words begin our text as Jesus is told to flee for His life. Harsh words are still spoken today by those who are offended by Jesus. False words are spoken by those who want to soothe those who are offended by Jesus. Some Christians proclaim that you don't need to have faith in Jesus in order to get into heaven. Yet Peter clearly said, "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved", than Jesus' name – Acts 4:12.

The Second Commandment tells us that we shall not misuse the name of the LORD our God. And when you tell Jesus to go away, you're definitely misusing His name. When you tell Jesus that you don't need Him, or that you're entitled to enter His house, even when you don't have faith in Him, you're insulting Him and misusing His name.

Luther said that we should fear and love God so that we don't curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by God's name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

Were these Pharisees trying to get rid of Jesus, or were they trying to protect Him from Herod. We don't know for sure. There were some Pharisees who followed Jesus. So, let's give this group the benefit of the doubt, and put the best construction on what they say and assume that they were trying to protect Jesus. But for those who truly do want Jesus to go away – that's a bad thing. That's the sin of rejecting Jesus.

And let's not worry about Herod for today. At one time Herod desired to see Jesus, to see Him do miracles, and at another time he wanted to kill Jesus. Let's be more concerned about ourselves, and about Jesus. Do you want to see Jesus? Or do you want Jesus to depart from at least some parts of your lives, those sinful parts that you don't want Him to see, or stop you from doing?

Jesus ends our text saying, "You will not see me until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" Yet the people do see Him at that moment. So, we have to wonder at the meaning behind those words. Were the people not blessing Him?

People do say those words on Psalm Sunday, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!". They say that in the Gospel of Luke (19:38) and in Matthew (21:9), but in Matthew what we hear in our text from Luke comes after Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see Me **again**, until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'” (23:37-39).

So, if the seeing of Jesus isn't referring to Palm Sunday, then what? The hint is in the word 'again' in the Gospel of Matthew, and the twice repeated third day that Jesus says in our Gospel from Luke. His reference wasn't for the people of that day to see Him again on Palm Sunday, but rather for all people to see Him again when He returns after His Resurrection, after being in the tomb for three days.

The question then is, 'Who will see Jesus again when He returns on the Last Day?'. Those who'll see Jesus and enter heaven are those who say, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”, those who keep the Second Commandment and pray, praise and give thanks by God's name.

To understand the significance of what Jesus is saying we go to the Old Testament. There we find the words that Jesus refers to in our Gospels. In the Psalms we're told, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (118:26; Psalm 129:8). Jesus came in the name of the Lord.

When Jesus was asked what are the works of God that we must be doing, Jesus responded saying, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent” (John 6:29). This is the will of God for you, that you believe that Jesus was sent by God, and in doing that you bless His holy name. And why you would bless Jesus' name is found in more of God's will. Jesus said, “This is the will of My Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:40). You believe in Jesus because He promises you eternal life.

Yet, saying this seems too simple these days. People believe in Jesus very casually, they use Jesus' name very casually. Jesus' name is God's name. It's who He reveals Himself to us as by describing His essence and attributes. His name is Who He is. The name Jesus is meant to tell us that He will save us from our sins. This is why He died on the cross as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the World.

The name Jesus is not meant to be used as an expletive or exclamation mark at the end of your sentences. This is a Holy Name, and it and any other of God's names are meant to be spoken in holy ways – with reverence. In the Bible God uses a multitude of names to describe Himself. You can use those names in prayer, and in that way, you bless His name.

To impress upon you the seriousness of the proper use of God's name let's return to the Old Testament, to Isaiah now. There listen to God say, "From My mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance'" (45:23). The proper use of God's name isn't just about stopping using the name of Jesus to colour your vocabulary, or OMG when you text, but rather this is about you bowing before God and swearing allegiance to Him.

Complete loyalty is what God wants from us, and especially in reference to the Second Commandment He wants complete loyalty in how we use His name. Call upon **His name** in every trouble. Pray and praise through **His name**. It's as simple as saying blessed is Jesus who comes in the name of God.

Yet, as simple as it is, many are resistant to doing anything like that. So, Paul takes what we just heard God say in the book of Isaiah and He amplifies it. To the Romans Paul says, "it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.'" (14:11).

He's pretty much quoting Isaiah to the Romans, but to the Philippians he says, "Therefore God has highly exalted Jesus and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (2:9-11).

Paul leaves no room open for any other lord. There's no other god for you to bless, and there'll come a point when you'll have no choice but to bless Jesus. Paul says that everyone in heaven, on earth and under the earth, meaning hell, will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

At that point when you confess Jesus and bless His Holy name, and that God the Father sent Him to be the salvation of your souls, then you'll see Him. The people whom Jesus was speaking to in our text didn't properly or fully see Jesus. That's what Jesus meant by the people who saw Him not seeing Him until they said 'Blessed is He'. When Jesus returns everyone will say, 'Blessed is He'. Some will say it unwillingly in hell. Others will say it willingly and joyfully in heaven.

So, how about us getting a head start on that and saying that willingly and joyfully now, such as with the beginning words of Psalm 118(:1). "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!" This season of Lent will take us on a journey from today, through tomorrow and onto the Third Day of Jesus' resurrection. But before we get there, we'll stop along the way at Palm Sunday, and say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." And every day in-between, and after that, we can bless His Holy Name. Amen.