**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 12-24-2020 Christmas Eve
The Wonder of a Name**

It has been said for many years, that Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. I know that with the challenges that we have all felt in 2020, you may think that it wouldn’t take much to be the most wonderful time of the year.

But the reality is that God is good all the time, and all the time God is good. And even though 2020 has been challenging, God’s presence has been with you through it all. He has been faithful and we can be thankful for his grace towards us.

Over this month we have looked at the wonder of the Christmas story in 3 different ways. We have spoken of the wonder of a manger. Pause a moment to take in the humility of God, that deity would become a helpless baby, totally dependent on his parents. Our Triune God is such a humble God, sisters and brothers.

And then we considered the wonder of a promise. The promise was that God would be with us. God Himself would walk among us. He knows what it’s like to be human. He knows our pains and our struggles. He understands us more than anyone else. And he offers the promise of His Holy Spirit to be with us today as well.

Last week we highlighted the wonder of a star. Maybe some of you have heard that just this week Jupiter and Saturn are the closest that they have been together in hundreds of years. And if the sky is clear they can appear as one extremely bright star in the sky. Whether this was what happened to lead the wise men to worship Jesus or if God used another star or sign in the heavens, we are reminded that God gives all of us signs to believe in Jesus and to worship Jesus. He is constantly speaking to us, communicating to us, in all different ways. And like the wise men, we are to follow His signs to the feet of Jesus.

Tonight, on this Christmas Eve, I would like for us to consider one final aspect of the wonder of Christmas. I would like for us to think about the wonder of a Name.

We will now be hearing from two accounts of the birth story of Jesus. First, I will read from Luke 1:26-33 and then we will hear from Matthew 1:18-25. We are so blessed to have four beautiful gospels, aren’t we? One of my professors in seminary, Doug Buckwalter is his name, he said that he believes that these four gospels are the four more beautiful books that were ever written. And I tend to agree with that.

So let’s turn to God’s Word at this time.

Luke 1:26-33

**26In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”**

**29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

Amen. And now from Matthew 1:18-25

**18This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about[**[**a**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18-25&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23163a)**]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18-25&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23164b)**] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.**

**20But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18-25&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23166c)**] because he will save his people from their sins.”**

**22All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”[**[**d**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18-25&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23168d)**] (which means “God with us”).**

**24When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.**

Today, friends, let us consider the wonder of the Name of Jesus. Names are special. As humans we are privileged to name things. Adam named the animals. We name our pets and we name our children. Names have significance. We usually don’t just pick names out of a hat. We think about names and we try to name in a way that reveals something out them or about us.

I really like my name. My full name is Timothy Steven Klein. My first name reminds me of my Dad and Grandfather, who are both Tim’s. We have different middle names, but we are all Tim’s.

The name Timothy means honoring God. And I am blessed that I follow after two Tim’s that honored God. It reminds me that I am called to live a life that honors God in everything that I do.

I also have a Timothy in the Bible that I can relate to as well. My middle name, Steven, reminds me of Stephen in the Bible. Stephen was a passionate follower of Christ. Stephen was the first martyr for the Christian faith. The Book of Acts describes how he powerfully shared the good news of Jesus even in the face of persecution. He is an inspiration to me as well.

And my last name, Klein, means “small.” And this is a reminder to me to walk in humility and stay small in my own eyes.

I believe that there is something powerful and beautiful about every name when we commit ourselves to the Lord.

God Himself has many Names. He is called Yahweh, the LORD, the I AM, and many other names.

But when God the Son was to become human, what name would He be given?

In both the Luke and the Matthew accounts, an angel of God instructs Jesus’ earthly parents that they were to name Him Jesus. The Lord must have wanted to make doubly sure that this was done.

You know how sometimes if two people are deciding on a name and one of them says I like this name and the other is like, “well, I don’t know. Any other ideas.”

Parents, God the Father wanted to cover all His bases to make sure that that didn’t happen. Why? Because God wanted to communicate something through the wonder of this Name – the Name of Jesus.

Now the name of Jesus was not that uncommon. It was a pretty popular name at the time of Jesus’ birth. But what is so significant about this name?

Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. Joshua was the leader who followed after Moses and Joshua led the people of Israel out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land.

Jesus, like Joshua, offers to lead all people out of the wilderness to the Promised Land of heaven. When we trust in Him, he will safely guide us home.

Now you may not know this, but Joshua was originally named Hoshea. The name Hoshea means salvation. This would be a fitting name for parents to name their slave. His name was a reminder that he and the people of Israel wanted to be free from slavery in Egypt.

But **Number 13:16** tells us that Moses actually gave Hoshea the name Joshua. The name Joshua means “the Lord is salvation.”

Moses wanted his successor’s name to be a reminder that salvation comes from the Lord. That the Lord is the One who saved them from slavery. So every time someone would say the name Joshua, it would be a reminder that “the Lord is their salvation.”

And again, the Name Jesus, or yeshua, as it said in Hebrew, it is to be a reminder that salvation comes from the Lord.

I love how the angel tells Joseph, “**She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,[**[**c**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18-25&version=NIV#fen-NIV-23166c)**] because he will save his people from their sins.”**

Did you notice the because there? They were to give him the Name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.

As we all know, the world has its share of problems. If humanity’s biggest problem was ignorance or poverty, perhaps the Messiah would be named someone that would convey how Jesus is the answer to those problems.

While the Lord does not want us to be ignorant and while he cares deeply for the poor, our biggest need is salvation.

Jesus came to save us to rescue us, to free us from something more powerful than Pharaoh was to Egypt. Jesus came to free us from the power of sin.

And friends, it is through following Jesus and submitting to Jesus and trusting in Jesus’ sacrificial death for us and His resurrection for us, we can find freedom from sin. He not only offers forgiveness to us, He offers to transform us through His Spirit to make us victorious over sin and evil.

And so, today, on this Christmas Eve, we celebrate the wonder of the Name of Jesus. Every time we say His Name, we are saying “the salvation is salvation.” Jesus is our Savior and He loves us more than we can imagine.

But before I close today, I would like for us to consider the wonder of one more name – the name Christian. Do you know what the name Christian means? It means “little anointed one,” or “little Christlike one.”

It is a privilege to claim the name of Christian. It reminds each believer that we are called to look more like Jesus every day.

As the Father anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit at His baptism, Jesus has anointed His followers with the Holy Spirit.

If you call yourself a Christian, take a moment to stand in awe and amazement of the fact that you are called to be a little Christlike one in this earth.

You and I, friends, are to be the light of the world. This world certainly needs the light of Christ. You are called to be part of God’s answer.

So, in light of the wonder of the Name of Jesus and the Name of Christians, how are we to respond?

**First, trust in Jesus as your savior**. We can know a lot about Jesus without trusting Him by surrendering your life to Him and seeking to follow Him with all your heart. He came to save us and to save everyone from our sins. If we do not know our sins to be forgiven, we can call on His Name and He will save and give us that assurance that we are forgiven. Those our sins we are scarlet, He makes us white as snow.

**Second, we are to joyfully celebrate our savior**. The gospel message is good news that is to bring great joy to those that receive Christ as their savior.

We are called to have joy in Jesus that is greater than any circumstance. Please do not let the negativity of the world around you overpower. The joy of Jesus is meant to be stronger than any of that. So stay close to Jesus and His joy will stay with you.

**And third and finally, be excited that you are called to be a Christian**. You are called to be a little Christlike one in this world. You are God’s answer. You do not have to know all the answers. We just need to point people to THE ANSWER – JESUS. May all of our words and all of our actions witness to the greatness of our great savior.

Let’s pray…

The Wonder of Christmas by Ed Robb & Rob Renfroe

[Luke 1:26-33 NIV - The Birth of Jesus Foretold - In the - Bible Gateway](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A26-33&version=NIV)

[Matthew 1:18-25 NIV - Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son - This - Bible Gateway](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+1%3A18-25&version=NIV)