

WORSHIP ON
DEMAND

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Fourth Sunday After Easter

Pastor John Klawiter

John 10:22-33

May 8, 2022

Grace and peace to you my siblings in Christ,
What's the story behind your name?

Are you named after someone? Did you have other alternative names that were considered?

Have YOU had the responsibility of naming someone? It's kind of a big deal, isn't it?

There's actually a professional baby namer. She's based out of New York City. Her services start at \$1,500, but go up to \$30,000.

Her name is Taylor A Humphrey. For \$10,000, she'll conduct a genealogical investigation.

Here's what she had to say about her business:

"While it's easy to say that I name people's babies for a living, my work is so much deeper and more nuanced than that.

SLIDE of Taylor A Humphrey

My job is to hold space, and provide spiritual, emotional, and physical support for my clients as they progress through the major life transition of becoming a parent."

I have built my business on the premise that parents already know the right answer; sometimes they just need a bit of guidance to remember and access the knowledge that already exists inside of them."

Choosing the right name can be stressful. I know this, I've gone through it 8 times. Looking through websites, flipping through baby name books, and searching for appropriate names that fit the rest of the siblings is a bit of an artform.

Our last child had a unique naming experience. It actually starts with when the gender was revealed four years ago.

When Taryn went to the ultrasound, she brought our daughter, Cora, with her. The plan was that Taryn would find out the gender, come home and tell me, so we could have the name pinned down long before the actual delivery date.

However, when Taryn got home, our oldest child—Adina, named for MY great-grandma, declared that she did not want to know the gender.

Ok, whatever.

But THEN, she declared... that since SHE wasn't gonna find out, she wanted me to also be surprised.

Fine, I said, I figured this would last a day. Plus, I knew that I would get Cora to tell me.

But she didn't! She was a fortress. Wouldn't budge. Not even BRIBERY worked! For months she held onto the secret.

And so, on Thanksgiving night, 2018, Taryn and I went into the hospital and we faced a naming crisis. We had a name for one of the genders, but not the other. This was our tradition—we always had a name for a boy or a girl, just in case the ultrasound was wrong.

While waiting in the room, we went through all the options that were still on the table. I would suggest something, Taryn would immediately shoot it down.

This was a high pressure situation. If only I would've known about the professional baby namer and had a spare \$1500 lying around! The final name was still too tough to call, we'd have to do it on our own.

Finally, as our 8th child was delivered, **Taryn introduced me to Vienna (PIC)**, the girl name that we'd picked out months ago.

Because we had spent the whole morning desperately trying to agree on a boys name, I was convinced that it was a boy. My reaction was priceless.

Taryn had called her by name in her belly. **She was known. Finally, I was able to greet her by name, too!** (PIC of me)

Names give us belonging. It identifies us, it's how we refer to each other.

Sometimes, our name gets shortened, we get nicknames, we go by our middle names. But each and every one us, when we were born, were given a name.

Today is known as Good Shepherd Sunday in the church year. Every year, the gospel is taken from part of John 10. Jesus talks about this image quite a bit—how we are named to belong to the flock.

Yet, what Jesus is doing in this chapter is more than just talking about his herd.

Last week, if you recall, we were in a passage from John where Jesus appears to his disciples for the 3rd time. So, despite being in the Easter season, our brains go back in time. Back to the early chapters of John, when Jesus sets the stage for our call to tend to the flock, as Peter is told three times to do.

Jesus is NOT beloved by the leaders in the temple. His teaching is NOT welcomed. His healing and miracles are NOT appreciated—they're seen as work on the Sabbath and breaking with the law.

The leaders are trying to get rid of him. Set him up for blasphemy.

So they ask if he's the Messiah. Easy question. Yes or no. Tell us plainly.

Does Jesus tell them plainly?

Of course not. SLIDE: Scripture: **The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because you do not belong to my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me.**

They follow because they know his voice.

These leaders aren't gonna listen. They don't want to follow Jesus. They aren't trying to get to know him to learn from him, they're trying to get to know him to destroy him.

They see Jesus as a wolf; not a shepherd.

This answer does not lead to a positive response. What do the leaders decide to do?

31 They took up stones again to stone him.

They aren't successful, but what about that sentence sticks out to you?

"Again"—this isn't the first time that these guys are armed for a stoning... the beginning of this story starts in John 8, when a woman caught in adultery is brought before them (note—the man is not there, even though it takes two to tango).

The punishment for HER crimes according to the law? Death by stoning. *Pick up stone*

Jesus, responds:

Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to ...

Throw a stone at her

Then he bends down, into the dirt... and wrote. What do you think he wrote in the dirt? Some theologians believe that he's writing THEIR names in the dirt.

They each drop their stone and go away. *Drop my stone*

Now, they're armed again. Jesus, this time, is the violator of their laws. Death by stoning.

Jesus says **"37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. 38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and believe."**

This could have been the end for Jesus, but he escaped from their hands!

We believe in the works that God has done.

Through our belief comes belonging. We name this at baptism. "I have called you BY NAME, you are mine."

And we name this at the time of death through the commendation.

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant, who we call out by name.

Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive them into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

Through our name, we are part of the flock.

But we have another name. A name that unites us to Christ throughout the whole of our lives, no matter how old we are.

It's a name shared by two of our recently departed saints, **Art Anderson** who was 102, and **Mickey Lang**, who died on his 96 birthday.

It's a name shared by our newest departed saint, **Dylan Marshall**, claimed at the precious age of 15.

They are **named child of God**.

This name gives them belonging. It gives them confidence that, through it all, the voice of Christ is leading. It's a name we claim, too.

It's a name carefully bestowed through the waters of baptism and called out to through the whole of our lives.

That name, Child of God, is kind of a big deal. It's a name carefully bestowed by our loving God in heaven.

This church, Faith Lutheran, is a place of belonging. Whether you have been here since birth or are checking us out for the first time. Whether you are confident in God's grace or have your doubts how God could possibly love you.

We are a church that listens for God's guidance.

You are welcome here. You belong. You are a Beloved Child of God. Amen.