

A NAME OR A VOICE?



Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. (Luke 10:20)

But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads him out. (John 10:3)

He who conquers shall be clad thus in white garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life; I will confess his name before my father and before his angels. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

(Revelation 3:5-6)

It should be the most wonderful thing in the world to know what we are known by God. So what do we do? We sit around and worry about whether we're known by men. It bothers us when our name seems to be losing its place among friends.

Here we are, still live on this earth, and our name is already going downhill. Before long there won't be anything left but a few letters cut in a gravestone.

Our great comfort is to have people call us by name!

Our great reassurance is to have a few places we can go and still be recognized.

Some of us have higher hopes. We think we're on the way up among the people who count with us.

-Our name is getting established.

-Greater things are yet to come.

But, let a few setbacks come along; give us a hint or two that our name isn't doing as well as we thought, and we're suddenly all out of sorts.

Some of us identify our name with....

- a cause
- or a particular church
- or a certain leader

Then we get our kicks out of seeing our thing get ahead, and worry when we see it slipping.

But whether we're working to put our name up on top, or our church's name, or our leader's name, it's the same old vanity.

This nonsense should have ended when we went down into the waters of our baptism.

It should have ended when we committed ourselves by faith, to the death of Jesus and died with him to this world.

From that point on, only one thing matters: I have a name before God.

- Jesus knows me and calls me by name.
- The Holy Spirit knows who I am....

I am dead to the world.

I am alive only to God.

To the world I have no name. The world doesn't know me. Only God knows me.

In the family of God, of course, I have a name. But it is only the name of a brother or a sister.

Call no man Father.

Call no man Rabbi, Teacher, Reverend.

There are no big shots in the Body, only brothers and sisters. Even those who are called to function as pastors, or teachers, or elders, or healers, are still only brothers and sisters.

When we are satisfied to have it God's way, to be nameless in the eyes of the world, then God gives us a Voice such as we have never had before. It's safe for God to give us this new and powerful Voice because, since we are nameless, our voice cannot draw attention to itself.

Our new Voice will only draw attention to the Son of God.



This new Voice in us will speak with fantastic boldness, with divine wisdom.

- It will cause hearts to tremble.
- It will wake the dead.
- It will open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf....

.... **Because it is not our voice at all, but the Voice of God.**

You wonder how those words spoken by Peter in Acts 2 could bring 3000 people to their knees before the Lord. The answer is that those words were spoken by the voice of the Spirit of God....

.....in a Peter who at last had become nothing.

Peter had finally been delivered from himself and all his bluster.

Peter had come to the place where it was no longer necessary for him to skim off at least 5% of the glory for Peter.

Peter was dead.

Peter was nameless.

So now he had a Voice which was able to command the attention of men to the crucified and risen Messiah.

When the priests and Levites came down from Jerusalem to John the Baptist in the wilderness, they wanted to find out his name.

“Who are you?” they said.

But John had no name, so John proceeded to tell them all the names he was not.

“I am not the Christ.”

“What then? Are you Elijah?”

“Well then, who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself? What do you call yourself?”

“I am not a name. I am a voice. I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord!’”

“Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor that prophet?”

“I baptize with water; but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I’m not worthy to untie. He has the name. He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”



- John announced Jesus Christ and got out of the way.
- John didn't hang around and try to catch some of the glory.
- John didn't set up a competing movement.

When John's followers came to him complaining that everyone was leaving their thing and running after Jesus, John rejoiced.

“...The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. This, my joy, therefore is made full.

He must increase, but I must decrease.”

John 3:29-30

There are those who will tell you that you can have both a name before men and a voice while you serve the living god.

Don't believe it.

You can seek to have a name before man while you preach the gospel. Many do. But as long as your name before man matters to you, your voice will not be clear.

- It will be mixed.
- It will have a spurious ring.
- It may fool a lot of people.
- It may build another Church of some kind....

But it won't make straight the way of the Lord.

To make straight the way of the Lord, it has to be ***“the voice of one crying in the wilderness”***.

In the wilderness



- Not in the limelight.
- Not in the places of influence.
- Not amid the thunder of human acclaim....

But in those places and among those people who could care less who you are. People who will sit up and listen to the Word of the living God as it comes from your mouth; who will glorify Jesus. But they'll forget all about you before next week, praise God!

Are you willing to lose your name on earth in order that you may be a Voice crying in the wilderness?

Then, this is how you lose your name and be a Voice in the wilderness.

Tell God

“Take away my name on earth, oh lord, but let me be your voice.”

Don't tell Him unless you mean it, because He'll do it. You'll see your name sinking away, you'll see human glory going to all kinds of phonies, you'll see brothers and sisters who should know better going “big time” while you keep walking in the shadows.

But, as you walk in those shadows, God's word will go forth from you as never before. Men will see not you, but the shadows, and out of those shadows, from your voice, they will hear God.



And they will know that you are hearing God, and that is all that matters.

Start confessing the name of Jesus before men.

Confessing the name of Jesus will ruin you before the eyes of the world. Nothing will ruin you more quickly than confessing His name.

- Quit beating around the bush.
- Take off all the philosophical trappings.
- And tell people plainly what you know to be true....

.... That Jesus is Lord.

.... That Jesus is the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world.

When you start doing this, men will either shake their heads and turn away in revulsion, or they will get up and run in the direction you point.... to find the Christ you promise them and you'll be left behind.



**Jesus will increase --- you will decrease,
.... and the word of God will accomplish its purpose.**

Start exercising a hidden ministry.

Deliberately avoid anything that might make you appear to be something in the eyes of men.

- If you pray for a sick person and he gets healed, praise God and shut up about it. Don't go around telling everybody how you "prayed for so-and-so and God raised him up!"
- If you rebuke a demon and a man's mind comes back to him. Praise God and remove yourself from the scene.

***Rejoice not that spirits are subject to you,
but rather, that your name is written in Heaven.***

- If God leads you to perform an act of mercy, do it and leave. Don't make a production out of it.
- If someone from the newspaper comes and wants to take your picture, tell him "no".

For example, years ago the news wanted to do a report on a sister who was running a mission. She refused. She knew that for her ministry to be strong and clear....it needed to be hidden by the hand of God.... removed from the glare of publicity.

Somebody says,

"Oh, but think of all the good she could do if more people knew about her work and if money poured in to expand it."

If that had happened, that sister would instantly have had a name before men. And in that same instant, she would have ceased to be the Voice in the wilderness....a Voice which she became.

What good would the money and publicity do if, in the process, she had lost her voice?

So it comes down to a choice, what do you want to be on this earth...

.... a name,

.... or a voice?

You cannot be both.

If you want to be a name before men, then don't mess around. Go all out. And you'll become a name. Just one more name with a twisted voice.

If you want to be a voice crying in the wilderness....

“Make straight the way of the Lord.”

...then be satisfied that God has written your name in Heaven.

Let your name be forgotten on earth, and get on with the job of proclaiming the message God has given you in the time that's left.



Prayer: Oh Lord that we truly could be a voice crying in the wilderness.... A voice.... your voice. That we could discard any thoughts, any hopes of having a name before men so that instead we can sing your sweet tender songs to those around us. Oh Lord, make it so with us. Decrease our name, our need for recognition. Increase in us. Increase in us so that nothing interferes with us speaking your voice, so that when we speak it is your voice that others hear, and so that your wonderful purpose is accomplished in the lives and hearts of those we speak to. Amen.

Message: Richard Bieber unknown date, but most likely the late 1960's or early 1970's

Featured Art: Ramone Romero at WeepingJeremiahblogspot. The older pieces are by James Tissot and are in the public domain.

Maranatha Mirror Messages

mmirror.net

